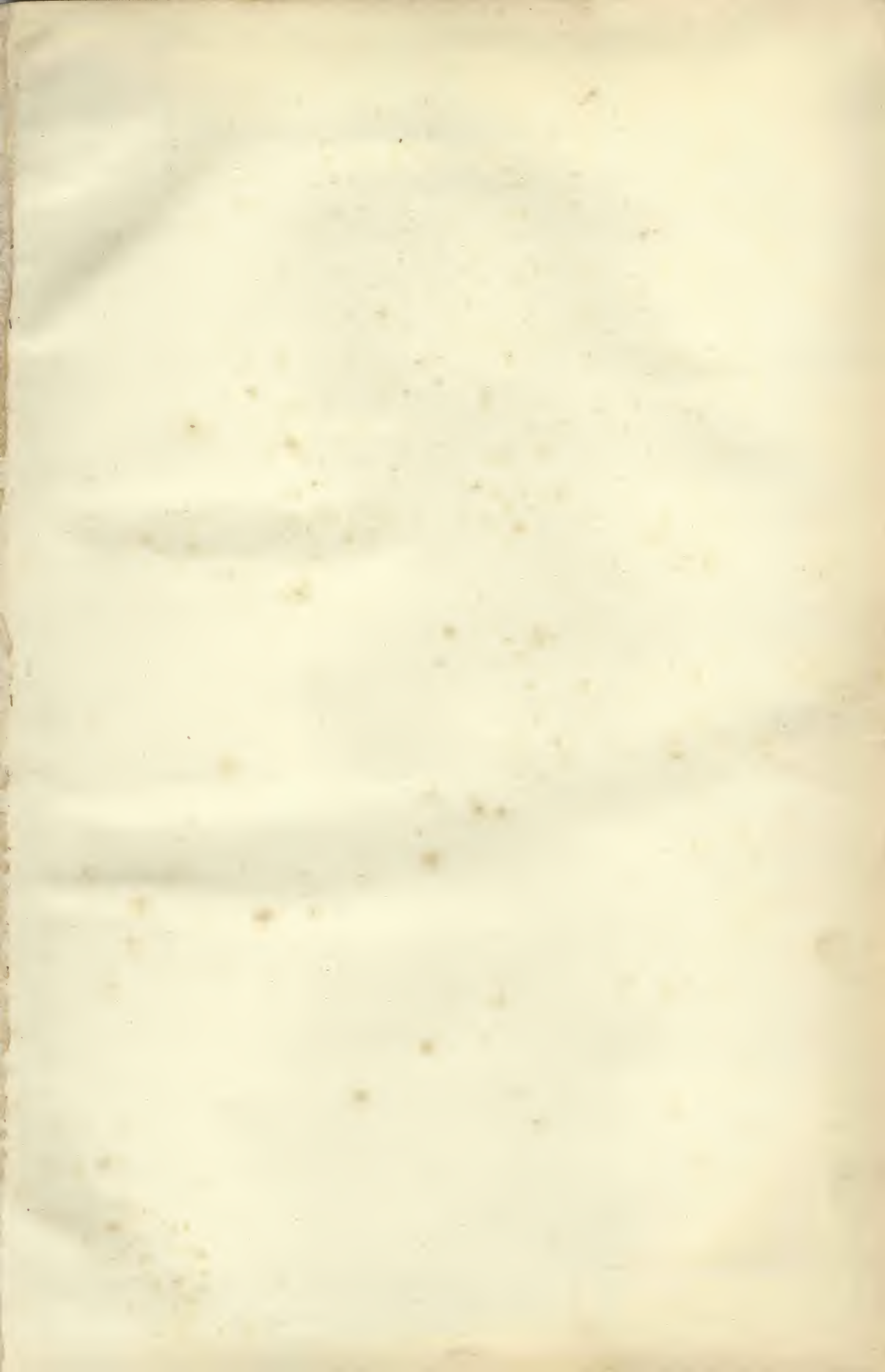


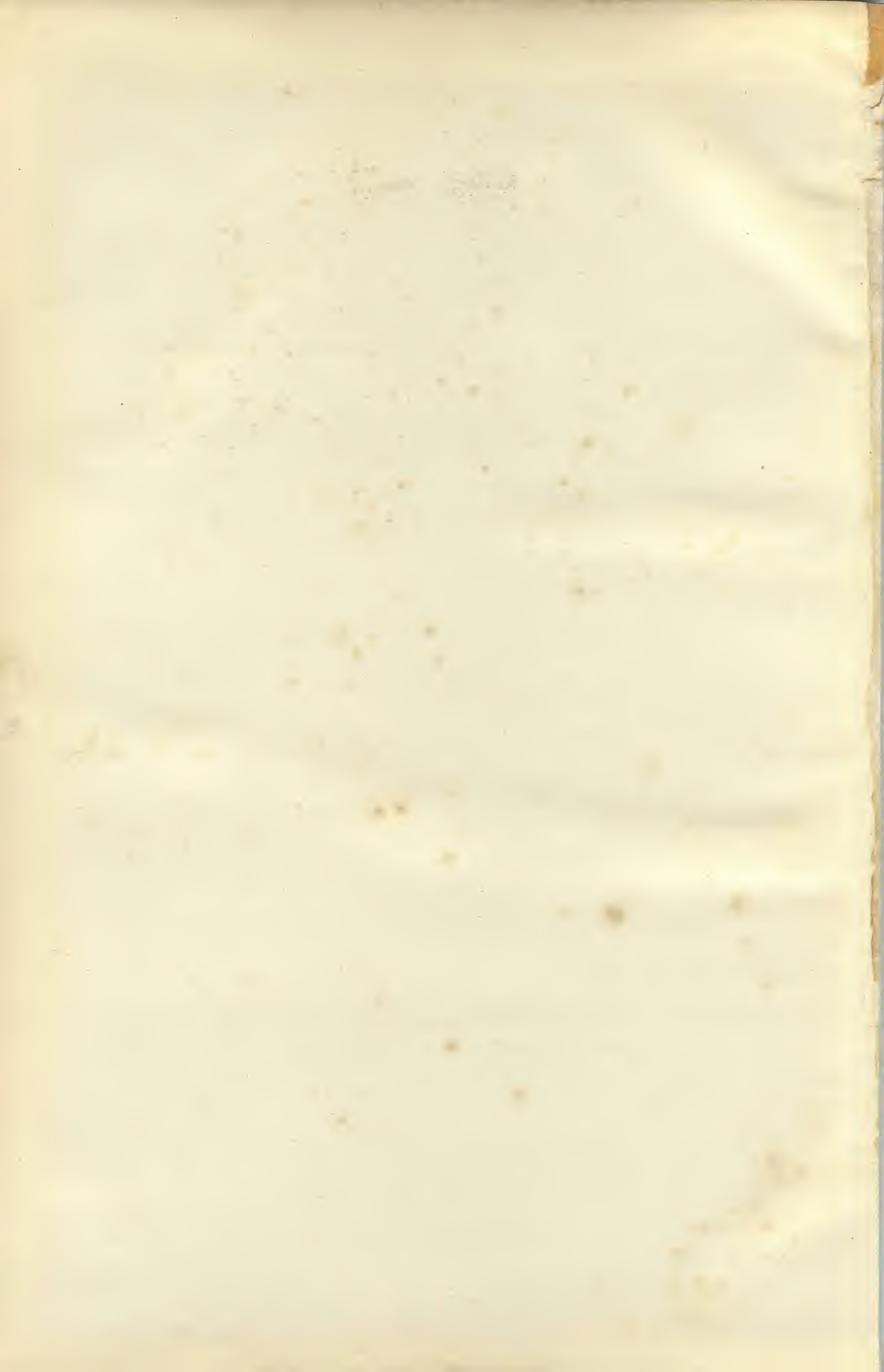
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THIS MORTAL COIL.

BY GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.—BOHEMIA.

WHOEVER knows Bohemian London, knows the smoking-room of the Cheyne Row Club. No more comfortable or congenial divan exists anywhere between Regent Circus and Hyde Park Corner than that chosen paradise of unrecognised geniuses. The Cheyne Row Club is not large, indeed, but it prides itself upon being extremely select—too select to admit upon its list of members peers, politicians, country gentlemen, or inhabitants of eligible family residences in Mayfair or Belgravia. Two qualifications are understood to be indispensable in candidates for membership: they must be truly great, and they must be unsuccessful. Possession of a commodious suburban villa excludes, *ipso facto*.

The Cheyne Row Club is emphatically the headquarters of the great Bohemian clan; the gathering-place of unhung artists, unread novelists, unpaid poets, and unheeded social and political reformers generally. Hither flock all the choicest spirits of the age during that probationary period when society in its slow and lumbering fashion is spending twenty years in discovering for itself the bare fact of their distinguished existence. Here Maudle displays his latest designs to Postlethwaite's critical and admiring eye; here Postlethwaite pours his honeyed sonnets into Maudle's receptive and sympathetic tympanum. Everybody who is anybody has once been a member of the 'dear old Cheyne Row.' Royal Academicians and Cabinet Ministers and Society Journalists and successful poets still speak with lingering pride and affection of the days when they lunched there, as yet undiscovered, on a single chop and a glass of draught claret by no means of the daintiest. Not that the Club can number any of them now on its existing roll-call: the Cheyne Row is for

prospective celebrity only; accomplished facts transfer themselves at once to a statelier site in Pall Mall near the Duke of York's Column. Rising merit frequents the Tavern, as scoffers profanely term it: risen greatness basks rather on the lordly stuffed couches of Waterloo Place.

No man, it has been acutely observed, remains a Bohemian when he has daughters to marry. The pure and blameless ratepayer avoids Prague. As soon as Smith becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, as soon as Brown takes silk, as soon as Robinson is elected an Associate, as soon as Tompkins publishes his popular novel, they all incontinently with one accord desert the lesser institution in the Piccadilly byway, and pass on their names, their honours, their hats, and their subscriptions to the dignified repose of the Athenæum. For them, the favourite haunt of judge and bishop: for the young, the active, the struggling, and the incipient, the chop and claret of the less distinguished but more lively caravansera by the Green Park purlieus.

In the smoking-room of this truly great and unsuccessful Bohemian society, at the tag-end of a London season, one warm evening in a hot July, Hugh Massinger, of the Utter Bar, sat lazily by the big bow window, turning over the pages of the last number of the *Charing Cross Review*. That he was truly great, nobody could deny. He was in very fact a divine bard, or, to be more strictly accurate, the author of a pleasing and melodious volume of minor poetry. Even away from the Cheyne Row Club, none but the most remote of country-cousins—say from the wilder parts of Cornwall or the crofter-clad recesses of the Isle of Skye—could have doubted for a moment the patent fact that Hugh Massinger was a distinguished (though unknown) poet of

the modern school, so admirably did he fit his part in life as to features, dress, and general appearance. Indeed, malicious persons were wont at times unkindly to insinuate that Hugh was a poet, not because he found in himself any special aptitude for stringing verses or building the lofty rhyme, but because his face and bearing imperatively compelled him to adopt the thankless profession of bard in self-justification and self-defence. This was ill-natured, and it was also untrue; for Hugh Massinger had lisped in numbers—at least in penny ones—ever since he was able to lisp in print at all. He had taken to poetry almost from his very cradle; and had astonished his father at sixteen by a rhymed version of an ode of Horace, worthy the inspiration of the great Dr Watts himself, and not, perhaps, far below the poetic standard of Mr Martin Farquhar Tupper. At Oxford he had perpetrated a capital Newdigate; and two years after gaining his fellowship at Oriel, he had published anonymously, in parchment covers, *Echoes from Callimachus, and other Poems*, which had fairly succeeded by careful nursing in attaining the dignity of a second edition under his own name. So that Massinger's claim to the sodality of the craft whose workmen are 'born not made' might perhaps be considered as of the genuine order, and not entirely dependent, as cynics averred, upon his long hair, his pensive eyes, his dark-brown cheek, or the careless twist of his necktie and his shirt-collar.

Nevertheless, even in these minor details of the poetical character, it must candidly be confessed that Hugh Massinger outstripped by several points many of the more recognised bards whose popular works are published in regulation green-cloth octavos, and whose hats and cloaks, of unique build, adorn with their presence the vestibule pegs of the Athenæum itself. The undistinguished author of *Echoes from Callimachus* was tall and slight, and a trifle affected-looking. That his face was beautiful, extremely beautiful, even a hostile reviewer in the organ of another clique could hardly venture seriously to deny: those large sad eyes, that long black hair, that exquisitely chiselled and melancholy mouth, would alone have sufficed to attract attention and extort admiration anywhere in the universe, or at the very least in the solar system. Hugh Massinger, in short, was (like Coleridge) a noticeable man. It would have been impossible to pass him by, even in a crowded street, without a hurried glance of observation and pleasure at his singularly graceful and noble face. He looked and moved every inch a poet; delicate, refined, cultivated, expressive, and sicklied o'er with that pale cast of thought which modern æstheticism so cruelly demands as a proof of attachment from her highest votaries. Yet at the same time, in spite of deceptive appearances to the contrary, he was strong in muscular strength: a wiry man, thin, but well knit: one of those fallacious, uncanny, long-limbed creatures who can scale an Alp or tramp a score or so of miles before breakfast, while looking as if a short stroll through the Park would kill them outright with sheer exhaustion. Altogether, a typical poet of the newest model, that dark and handsome æsthetic-

looking man: and as he sat there carelessly, with the paper held before him, in an unstudied attitude of natural grace, many a painter might have done worse than choose the author of *Echoes from Callimachus* for the subject of a pretty Academy pot-boiler.

So Warren Relf, the unknown marine artist, thought to himself, in his armchair opposite, as he raised his eyes by chance from the etchings in the *Portfolio*, and glanced across casually with a hasty look at the undiscovered poet.

'Has the *Charing Cross* reviewed your new volume yet?' he asked politely, his glance meeting Massinger's while he flung down the paper on the table beside him.

The poet rose and stood with his hands behind his back in an easy posture before the empty fireplace. 'I believe it has deigned to assign me half a column of judicious abuse,' he answered, half yawning, with an assumption of profound indifference and contempt for the *Charing Cross Review* and all its ideas or opinions collectively. 'To tell you the truth, the subject's one that doesn't interest me. In the first place, I care very little for my own verses. And in the second place, I don't care at all for reviewers generally, or for the *Charing Cross Snarler* and its kind in particular. I disbelieve altogether in reviews, in fact. Familiarity breeds contempt. To be quite candid, I've written too many of them.'

'If criticism in literature's like criticism in art,' the young painter rejoined, smiling, 'why, with the one usual polite exception of yourself, Massinger, I can't say I think very much of the critics.—But what do you mean, I should like to know, by saying you don't care for your own verses? Surely no man can do anything great, in literature or art—or in shoe-blackening or pig-sticking, if it comes to that—unless he thoroughly believes in his own vocation.'

Massinger laughed a musical laugh. 'In shoe-blackening or pig-sticking,' he said with a delicate curl of his thin lips, 'that's no doubt true; but in verse-making, query? Who on earth at the present day could even pretend to himself to believe in poetry? Time was, I daresay—though I'm by no means sure of it—when the bard, hoary old impostor, was a sort of prophet, and went about the world with a harp in his hand, and a profound conviction in his innocent old heart that when he made "Sapphic" rhyme to "traffic," or produced a triolet on the theme of "Catullus," "lull us," and "cull us," he was really and truly enriching humanity with a noble gift of divine poesy. But who in London, in the nineteenth century, can for a moment affect to believe in the efficacy of poetry? Look at this last new volume of my own, for example!—You won't look at it, of course, I'm well aware, but that's no matter: nobody ever does look at my immortal works, I'm only too profoundly conscious. I cut them myself in a dusty copy at all the libraries, in order to create a delusive impression on the mind of the public that I've had at least a solitary reader. But let that pass.'

Warren Relf looked up at him a little uneasily. 'I don't like to hear you run down poetry like that,' he said, with an evident tinge of disapprobation. 'I'm not a poet myself, of course; but still I'm sure it isn't all a mere matter of rhymes

and refrains, of epithets and prettinesses. What touches our hearts lies deeper than mere expression, I'm certain. It lies in the very core and fibre of the man. There are passages even in your own poems—though you're a great deal too cynical to admit it now—that came straight out of the depths of your own heart, I venture to conjecture—those Lines on a Lock of Hair, for example.—Aha, cynic! there I touched you on the raw.—But if you think so lightly of poetry as a pursuit, as you say, I wonder why you ever came to take to it.

'Take to it, my dear fellow! What an Arcadian idea! As if men nowadays chose their sphere in life deliberately. Why, what on earth makes any of us ever take to anything, I should like to know, in this miserable workaday modern world of ours? Because we're simply pitchforked into it by circumstances. Does the crossing-sweeper sweep crossings, do you suppose, for example, by pure preference for the profession of a sweep? Does the milkman get up at five in the morning because he sees in the purveying of skim-milk to babes and sucklings a useful and important and even necessary industry to the rising generation of this great Metropolis? Does the dustman empty the domestic bin out of disinterested regard for public sanitation? or the engine-driver dash through rain and snow in a drear-nighted December like a Comtist prophet, out of high and noble enthusiasm of humanity?' And he snapped his fingers with an emphatic negative.—'We don't choose our places in life at all, my dear boy,' he went on after a pause: 'we get tumbled into them by pure caprice of circumstances.' If I'd chosen mine, instead of strictly meditating the thankless muse, I'd certainly have adopted the exalted profession of a landed proprietor, with the pleasing duty of receiving my rents (by proxy) once every quarter, and spending them royally with becoming magnificence, in noble ways, like the Greek gentleman one reads about in Aristotle. I always admired that amiable Greek gentleman: the *megaloprepēs*, I think Aristotle calls him. His berth would suit me down to the ground. He had nothing at all of any sort to do, and he did it most gracefully with princely generosity on a sufficient income.'

'But you *must* write poetry for something or other, Massinger; for if it isn't rude to make the suggestion, you can hardly write it, you know, for a livelihood.'

Massinger's dark face flushed visibly. 'I write for fame,' he answered majestically, with a lordly wave of his long thin hand. 'For glory—for honour—for time—for eternity. Or, to be more precisely definite, if you prefer the phrase, for filthy lucre. In the coarse and crude phraseology of political economists, poetry takes rank nowadays, I humbly conceive, as a long investment. I'm a journalist by trade—a mere journeyman journalist; the gushing penny-a-liner of a futile and demoralised London press. But I have a soul within me above penny-a-lining: I aspire ultimately to a pound a word. I don't mean to live and die in Grub Street. My soul looks forward to immortality, and a footman in livery.'

Relf smiled dubiously, and knocked the ash off his cigar into the Japanese tray that stood by his side. 'Then you look upon poetry merely as an

ultimate means of making money?' he suggested, with a deprecatory look.

'Money! Not money only, my dear fellow, but position, reputation, recognition, honour. Does any man work for anything else? Any man, I mean, but cobblers and enthusiasts?'

'Well, I don't know. I may be an enthusiast myself,' Relf answered slowly; 'but I certainly do work at art to a great extent for art's sake, because I really love and admire and delight in it. Of course I should like to make money too, within reasonable limits—enough to keep myself and my people in a modest sort of way, without the footman or the eligible family residence. Not that I want to be successful, either: from what I've seen of successful men, I incline to believe that success as a rule has a very degenerating effect upon character. Literature, science, and art thrive best in a breezy, bracing air. I never aim at being a successful man myself; and if I go on as I'm doing now, I shall no doubt succeed in not succeeding. But apart from the money and the livelihood altogether, I love my work as an occupation. I like doing it; and I like to see myself growing stronger and freer at it every day.'

'That's all very well for you,' Massinger replied with another expansive wave of his graceful hand. 'You're doing work you care for, as I play lawn-tennis, for a personal amusement. I can sympathise with you there.—Let's quit the subject. It turns me always into a gloomy pessimist.—What are you going to do with yourself this summer?'

'Me? Oh, just the usual thing, I suppose. Going down in my tub to paint sweet mudbanks off the coast of Suffolk.'

'Suffolk to wit! I see the finger of fate in that! Why, that's just where I'm going, too. I mean to take six or eight weeks' holiday, if a poor drudge of a journalist can ever be said to indulge in holidays at all—with books for review, and proofs for correction, and editorial communications for consideration, always weighing like a ton of lead upon his unhappy breast: and I propose to bury myself alive up to the chin in some obscure, out-of-the-way Suffolk village they call Whitestrand.—Have you ever heard of it?'

'Oh, I know it well,' Relf answered with a smile of delightful reminiscence. 'It's grand for mud. I go there painting again and again. You'd call it the funniest little stranded old-world village you ever came across anywhere in England. Nothing could be uglier, quainter, or more perfectly charming. It lies at the mouth of a dear little muddy creek, with a funny old mill for pumping the water off the sunken meadows; and all around, for miles and miles, is one great flat of sedge and seapink, alive with water-birds and intersected with dikes, where the herons fish all day long, poised on one leg in the middle of the stream as still as mice, exactly as if they were sitting to Marks for their portraits.'

'Ah, delightful for a painter, I've no doubt,' Hugh Massinger replied, half yawning to himself, 'especially for a painter to whom mud and herons are bread and butter, and brackish water is Bass and Allsopp; but scarcely, you'll admit, an attractive picture to the inartistic public, among whom

I take the liberty, for this occasion only, humbly to rank myself. I go there, in fact, as a martyr to principle. I live for others. A member of my family—not to put too fine a point upon it, a lady—abides for the present moment at Whitestrand, and believes herself to be seized or possessed by prescriptive right of a lien or claim to a certain fixed aliquot portion of my time and attention. I've never admitted the claim myself (being a legally-minded soul); but just out of the natural sweetness of my disposition, I go down occasionally (without prejudice) to whatever part of England she may chance to be inhabiting, for the sake of not disappointing her foregone expectations, however ill-founded, and be the same more or less.—You observe, I speak with the charming precision of the English statute-book.'

'But how do you mean to get to Whitestrand?' Relf asked suddenly after a short pause. 'It's a difficult place to reach, you know. There's no station nearer than ten miles off, and that a country one, so that when you arrive there, you can get no conveyance to take you over.'

'So my cousin gave me to understand. She was kind enough to provide me with minute instructions for her bookless wilds. I believe I'm to hire a costermonger's cart or something of the sort to convey my portmanteau; and I'm to get across myself by the aid of the natural means of locomotion with which a generous providence or survival of the fittest has been good enough to endow me by hereditary transmission. At least, so my cousin Elsie instructs me.'

'Why not come round with me in the tub?' Relf suggested good-humouredly.

'What? your yacht? Hatherley was telling me you were the proud possessor of a ship.—Are you going round that way any time shortly?'

'Well, she's not exactly what you call a yacht,' Relf replied, with an apologetic tinge in his tone of voice. 'She's only a tub, you know, an open boat almost, with a covered well and just room for three to sleep and feed in. She's a perfect treasure to a marine painter in the mud-and-buoy business. But I won't for a moment pretend to say she's comfortable for a landsman. If you come with me, in fact, you'll have to rough it.'

'I love roughing it.—How long will it take us to cruise round to Whitestrand?'

'Oh, the voyage depends entirely upon the wind and tide. Sailing-boats take their own time. The *Mud-Turtle*—that's what I call her—doesn't hurry. She's lying now off the Pool at the Tower, taking care of herself in the absence of all her regular crew; and Potts, my mate, he's away in the north, intending to meet me next week at Lowestoft, where my mother and sister are stopping in lodgings. We can start on our cruise whenever you like—say, if you choose, to-morrow morning.'

CHAPTER II.—DOWN STREAM.

Tide served next morning at eleven; and punctual to the minute—for, besides being a poet, he prided himself on his qualities as a man of business—Hugh Massinger surrendered himself in due course by previous appointment on board the *Mud-Turtle* at the Pool by the Tower. But his

eyes were heavier and redder than they had seemed last night; and his languid manner showed at once, by a hundred little signs, that he had devoted but small time since Relf left him to what Mr Herbert Spencer periphrastically describes as 'reparative processes.'

The painter, attired for the sea like a common sailor in jersey and trousers and knitted woollen cap, rose up from the deck to greet him hospitably. His whole appearance betokened serious business. It was evident that Warren Relf did not mean to play at yachting.

'You've been making a night of it, I'm afraid, Massinger,' he said, as their eyes met. 'Bad preparation, you know, for a day down the river. We shall have a lippy sea, if this wind holds, when we pass the Nore. You ought to have gone straight to bed when you left the club with me last evening.'

'I know I ought,' the poet responded with affected cheerfulness. 'The path of duty's as plain as a pikestaff; but the things I ought to do I mostly leave undone; and the things I ought not to do, I find, on the contrary, vastly attractive. I may as well make a clean breast of it. I strolled round to Pallavicini's, after you vacated the Row last night, and found them having a turn or two at lansquenet. Now, lansquenet's an amusement I never can resist. The consequence was, in three hours I was pretty well cleaned out of ready cash, and shall have to keep my nose to the grindstone accordingly all through what ought by rights to have been my summer holiday. This conclusively shows the evils of high play, and the moral superiority of the wise man who goes home to bed and is sound asleep when the clock strikes eleven.'

Relf's face fell several tones. 'I wish, Massinger,' he said very gravely, 'you'd make up your mind never to touch those hateful cards again. You'll ruin your health, your mind, and your pocket with them. If you spent the time you spend upon play in writing some really great book now, you'd make in the end ten times as much by it.'

The poet smiled a calm smile of superior wisdom. 'Good boy!' he cried, patting Relf on the back in mock approbation of his moral advice. 'You talk for all the world like a Sunday-school prize-book. Honest industry has its due reward; while pitch-and-toss and wicked improper games land one at last in prison or the workhouse. My dear Relf, how on earth can you, who are a sensible man, believe all that antiquated nursery rubbish? As a matter of fact, is it always the good boys who pull the plums with self-appreciative smile out of the world's pudding? Far from it: quite the other way. I have seen the wicked flourishing in my time like a green bay-tree. Honest industry breaks stones on the road, while successful robbery or successful gambling rolls by at its ease, cigar in mouth, lolling on the cushions of its luxurious carriage. If you stick to honest industry all your life long, you may go on breaking stones contentedly for the whole term of your natural existence. But if you speculate boldly with your week's earnings and land a haul, you may in time set another fellow to break stones for you, and then you become at once a respectable man, a capitalist, and a baronet. All the great fortunes we see

in the world have been piled up in the last resort, if you'll only believe it, by successful gambling.'

'Every man has a right to his own opinion,' Warren Relf answered with a more serious air, as he turned aside to look after the rigging. 'I admit there's a great deal of gambling in business; but anyhow, honest industry's a simple necessary on board the *Mud-Turtle*.—Come aft, here, will you, from your topsy-turvy moral philosophy, and help me out with this sheet and the mainsail.'

Massinger turned to do as he was directed, and to inspect the temporary floating hotel in which he was to make his way contentedly down to the coast of Suffolk. The *Mud-Turtle* was indeed an odd-looking and original a little craft as her owner and skipper had proclaimed her to be. A centre-board yawl, of seventeen tons registered burden, she ranked as a yacht only by courtesy, on the general principle of what the logicians call excluded middle. If she wasn't that, why, then, pray, what in the world was she? The *Mud-Turtle* measured almost as broad across the beam as she reckoned feet in length from stem to stern; and her skipper maintained with profound pride that she couldn't capsize—even if she tried—in the worst storm that ever blew out of an English sky. She drew no more than three feet of water at a pinch; she could go anywhere that a man could wade up to his knees without fear of wetting his tucked-up breeches. This made her a capital boat for a marine artist to go about sketching in; for Relf could lay her alongside a wreck on shallow sands, or run her up a narrow creek after picturesque waterfowl, or approach the riskiest shore to the very edge of the cliffs, without any reference to the state of the tide, or the probable depth of the surrounding channel.

'If she grounds,' the artist said enthusiastically, expatiating on her merits to his new passenger, 'you see it doesn't really matter twopence; for the next high tide'll set her afloat again within six hours. She's a great opportunist: she knows well that all things come in time to him who can wait. The *Mud-Turtle* positively revels in mud; she lies flat on it as on her native heath, and stays patiently without one word of reproach for the moon's attraction to come in its round to her ultimate rescue.'

The yawl's accommodation was opportunist too: though excellent in kind, it was limited in quantity, and by no means unduly luxurious in quality. She was a working-man's yacht, and she meant business. Her deck was calculated on the most utilitarian principles—just big enough for two persons to sketch abreast; her cabin contained three wooden bunks, with their appropriate complement of rugs and blankets: and a small and primitive open stove devoted to the service of the ship's cookery, took up almost all the vacant space in the centre of the well, leaving hardly room for the self-sacrificing volunteer who undertook the functions of purveyor and bottle-washer to turn about in. But the lockers were amply stored with fresh bread, tinned meats, and other simple necessities for a week's cruise. Thus equipped and accoutred, Warren Relf was accustomed to live an outdoor life for weeks together with his one like-minded chum and companion.

As for Hugh Massinger, a confirmed landman, the first few hours' sail down the crowded Thames appeared to him at the outset a perfect phantasmagoria of ever varying perils and assorted terrors. He composed his soul to instant death from the very beginning; not, indeed, that he minded one bit for that: the poet dearly loved danger, as he loved all other forms of sensation and excitement: they were food for the Muse; and the Muse, like Blanche Amory, is apt to exclaim, 'Il me faut des émotions!' But the manifold novel forms of enterprise as the lumbering little yawl made her way clumsily among the great East-Indiamen and big ocean-going steamers, darting boldly now athwart the very bows of a huge Monarch-liner, insinuating herself now with delicate precision between the broadsides of two heavy Rochester barges, and just escaping collision now with some laden collier from Cardiff or Newcastle, were too complicated and too everpressing at the first blush for Massinger fully to take in their meaning at a single glance. Hugh Massinger was at once amused and bewildered by the careless confidence with which his seafaring friend dashed boldly in and out among brigs and schooners, smacks and steamships, on port or starboard tack, in endless confusion, backing the little *Mud-Turtle* to hold her own in the unequal contest against the biggest and swiftest craft that sailed the river. His opinion of Relf rose rapidly many degrees in mental register as he watched him tacking and luffing and scudding and darting with cool unconcern in his toy tub among so many huge and swiftly moving monsters.

'Port your helm!' Relf cried to him hastily once, as they crossed the channel just abreast of Greenwich Hospital. 'Here's another sudden death down upon us round the Reach yonder!' And even as he spoke, a big coal-steamer, with a black diamond painted allusively on her bulky funnel, turning the low point of land that closed their view, bore hastily down upon them from the opposite direction with menacing swiftness. Massinger, doing his best to obey orders, grew bewildered after a time by the glib rapidity of his friend's commands. He was perfectly ready to act as he was bid when once he understood his instructions; but the seafaring mind seems unable to comprehend that landmen do not possess an intuitive knowledge of the strange names bestowed by technical souls upon ropes, booms, gaffs, and mizzen-masts; so that Massinger's attempts to carry out his orders in a prodigious hurry proved productive for the most part rather of blank confusion than of the effect intended by the master skipper. After passing Greenhithe, however, they began to find the channel somewhat clearer, and Relf ceased for a while to skip about the deck like the little hills of the Psalmist, while Massinger felt his life comparatively safe at times for three minutes together, without a single danger menacing him ahead in the immediate future from port or starboard, from bow or stern, from brig or steamer, from grounding or collision.

About two o'clock, after a hot run, they cast anchor awhile out of the main channel, where traders ply their flow of intercourse, and stood by to eat their lunch in peace and quietness under the lee of a projecting point near Gravesend.

'If wind and tide serve like this,' Relf observed philosophically, as he poured out a glassful of beer into a tin mug—the *Mud-Turtle's* appointments were all of the homeliest—'we ought to get down to Whitestrand before an easy breeze with two days' sail, sleeping the nights in the quiet creeks at Leigh and Orfordness.'

'That would exactly suit me,' Massinger answered, draining off the mugful at a gulp after his unusual exertion. 'I wrote a hasty line to my cousin in Suffolk this morning telling her I should probably reach Whitestrand the day after to-morrow, wind and weather permitting.—I approve of your ship, Relf, and of your tinned lobster too. It's fun coming down to the great deep in this unconventional way. The regulation yacht, with sailors and a cook and a floating drawing-room, my soul wouldn't care for. You can get drawing-rooms galore any day in Belgravia; but picnicking like this, with a spice of adventure in it, falls in precisely with my own view of the ends of existence.'

'It's a cousin you're going down to Suffolk to see, then?'

'Well, yes: a cousin—a sort of a cousin: a Girton girl: the newest thing out in women. I call her a cousin for convenience's sake. Not too nearly related, if it comes to that; a surfeit of family's a thing to be avoided. But we're a decadent tribe, the tribe of Massinger; hardly any others of us left alive; when I put on my hat, I cover all that remains of us; and cousinhood's a capital thing in its way to keep up under certain conditions. It enables a man to pay a pretty girl a great deal of respectful attention, without necessarily binding himself down in the end to anything definite in the matrimonial direction.'

'That's rather a cruel way of regarding it, isn't it?'

'Well, my dear boy, what's a man to do in these jammed and crushed and overcrowded days of ours? Nature demands the safety-valve of a harmless flirtation. If one can't afford to marry, the natural affections *will* find an outlet, on a cousin or somebody. But it's quite impossible, as things go nowadays, for a penniless man to dream of taking to wife a penniless woman and living on the sum of their joint properties. According to Cocker, nought and nought make nothing. When a man has no patrimony, he must obviously make it up in matrimony. Only, the great point to avoid is letting the penniless girl meanwhile get too deep a hold upon your personal feelings. The wisest men—like me, for example—are downright fools when it comes to high play or the domestic instincts. Even Achilles had a vulnerable point, you know. So has every wise man. With Achilles, it was the heel; with us, it's the heart. The heart will wreck the profoundest and most deliberate philosopher living. I acknowledge it myself. I ought to wait, of course, till I catch the eminent alderman's richly endowed daughter. Instead of that, I shall doubtless fling myself away like a born fool upon the pretty cousin or some other equally unprofitable investment.'

'Well, I hope you will,' Relf answered, cutting himself a huge chunk of bread with his pocket clasp-knife. 'I'm awfully glad to hear you say so. For your own sake, I hope you'll keep your

word. I hope you won't stifle everything you've got that's best within you for the sake of money and position and success.—Have a bit of this corned beef, will you?—A woman who sells herself for money is bad enough, though it's woman's way—they've all been trained to it for generations. But a man who sells himself for money—who takes himself to market for the highest bidder—who makes capital out of his face and his manners and his conversation—is absolutely contemptible, and nothing short of it.—I could never go on knowing you, if I thought you capable of it. But I don't think you so. I'm sure you do yourself a gross injustice. You're a great deal better than you pretend yourself. If the occasion ever actually arose, you'd follow your better and not your worse nature.—I'll trouble you for the mustard.'

ASSOCIATION.

I WAS walking the other day through one of the leading thoroughfares in London, when the sun suddenly blazed forth, illuminating a gilt decoration over a shop door and rendering it for the moment conspicuous above its surroundings. The glorified object consisted of two gigantic arms, clad in voluminous sleeves, the arms terminating in hands which were clasped in a death-like grip. Above, were the words 'Association of Capital and Labour;' and the sight of the device and legend brought into my mind a meaning altogether different from that which the word Association conveys.

We have all heard of spiritual mediums, people whose souls are attuned to such fine issues that they are able to act as intermediaries between the spirit-world and those mortals who, by reason of their coarser mould, are debarred this ethereal intercourse. Few of us enjoy the somewhat doubtful advantages of this communion, but all are conscious at times of that subtle and mysterious link between the spiritual and material life, which is known as the power of association. It is exercised through the medium of the senses, of which the most fertile in influence are sound, sight, and scent; the weakest of the five in this capacity being touch and taste.

As sound is conveyed to our ears in its highest form through the divine art of music, it follows that in that form it becomes the strongest agent of association. Who cannot recall occasions in his life when some melody, once known and loved, but long forgotten, burst on his ear, carrying his soul back in a lightning flash to the past, and dissolving the palpable and sentient present into a dim unreality! At such moments, the man who has borne 'blasts of adversity and frosts of fate,' only to grow hardened in the process, becomes weak as a child in the presence of a power mightier than himself. He does well to be humble and reverent under its influence, for it may be the Eternal Spirit is speaking to him through the channel of association.

Many and varied are the emotions awakened by music, and there is not a note in the scale of feeling which does not vibrate to its touch. The

following story illustrates one phase of its power. It was told by a man full of years and honours, the revered head of a beautiful English home.

Many years before, the license of unbridled youth had banished him from his native land. Relatives and friends alike had refused further assistance, and at last the prodigal found himself at the antipodes, friendless and unknown. Lacking utterly the moral stamina necessary in such a case, he sank from bad to worse. One day, having wandered for many hours, absorbed in melancholy thought, he found himself in a scene of peculiar wildness. Giant rocks and awful chasms surrounded him, while the unbroken stillness of evening intensified the gloom of the scene. Suddenly the demon of self-slaughter entered the unhappy man; the means were ready to hand. There, at his feet, was a lake, whose dark waters would soon close the record of a wasted life. None would learn his fate, for in that remote spot human foot seldom trod—seldom, but yet sometimes, for at that moment, sweet and clear, rang out a sound which moved the exile as all the thunders of Jove could not have done. It was a traveller, singing as he went a ballad which had been a favourite with the unhappy man in his distant home. What pen could describe the emotions it aroused at such a time! 'It changed,' said the narrator of the incident, 'the very current of my being; it roused in me a passionate yearning to see my home again; and I vowed solemnly that, please God, I would yet be worthy to return to it.'

An equally forcible though by no means so pleasing an example of the power of association through music is afforded by the following anecdote. A lady was present at an entertainment given by a famous amateur Club. Throughout the evening she had been remarkable, even in that brilliant assembly, for her sparkling humour and the brightness of her sallies; but no sooner had the first bars of Haydn's famous *Surprise Symphony* been played, than she was seen to change colour; a ghastly pallor overspread her face, while her eyes were distended as if in the extremity of fear. Greatly alarmed, her friends bore her from the room, and with some difficulty restored her from a prolonged fainting-fit. 'That dreadful music—that dreadful music!' were the first words she spoke; nor was it until long afterwards that the following explanation of her panic was given to an intimate friend.

Many years previous, she was sitting one day in a room with an elder sister, who was taking a music lesson. The piece under practice was the *Surprise Symphony*, and over and over again, with tedious persistence, did the exacting master make his pupil travel through the symphony, until every note of it was indelibly fixed in the mind of the listener. As the piece was in progress for about the twentieth time, a piercing shriek was heard; the door of the music-room was flung open, and a valued servant, who had been a mother to the sisters all their lives, staggered in, the blood flowing from a fearful wound in her side—staggered, and fell to the floor in a death-agony. She had been murdered by a foreign servant whom she had dismissed for theft, and the assassin had sprung on her from a dark recess in the corridor. Though the horror of that scene had necessarily somewhat faded with the lapse of time, it was revived in all its ghastliness for one

of its witnesses when she again heard the *Surprise Symphony*.

To most of us, some homely sound is fraught with power to bring back scenes of the past. I have a special fondness—which I fear is almost peculiar to myself—for the buzzing of a fly, and was delighted one early winter when a fine large pompous fellow made his home in my room, and whenever the air was warmed, would fly about with tuneful buzz. I had only to close my eyes, and, though winter and rough weather raged without, for me the sun again shone, the birds sang, myriads of insects made a concert of sweet sounds, and the indescribable essence of summer returned.

Somewhat less subtle, but still very powerful, is sight as a medium of association. It has chanced to most of us to revisit some scene after long absence, and to be so moved by familiar objects, that our added years fall from us like a weight in their presence, and for a brief span our souls regain the freshness of a time when all things, even belief, were possible. The poet says, 'Ourselves we cannot re-instate,' yet that is precisely what does happen under such an influence, and our souls are 'set to the same key of the remembered harmony.' It was some such 're-instatement' as this that made Claude Melnotte (the hero in the *Lady of Lyons*), returning home, after many changes and vicissitudes, cry with a passionate rush of memory, 'How the old time comes o'er me!'

A comical instance of the power of sight to arouse association occurs to me. I was present with some schoolfellows at a concert. The entertainment was held in a large public room, which was decorated in the oriental fashion, gilt dragons forming a conspicuous item in the *ensemble*. Now, in this same room we had previously attended a great many religious meetings, for in that fashionable seaside resort, the number and class of persons who undertake to expound the Scriptures are remarkable, even in an age of progress. No sooner had we glanced at the familiar surroundings and taken our seats, than the boy next to me fell on his knees in an attitude of devout supplication. 'Get up!' said I, scandalised; 'what on earth are you doing?' He rose, gave a bewildered look round, and exclaimed: 'Why, I thought I was at a prayer-meeting!'

Very frequent are the allusions of poets to the power of association through the medium of scent. One amorous bard relates that, having succeeded, after countless struggles, in banishing a fair but too fickle *Dulcinea* from his heart, his whole affection for her revived on coming near a flower she was in the habit of wearing. This was rather hard on the poet, and the best we can hope is that his woes were no stronger than the verses in which he expressed them.

That the power of association is possessed by the lower animals is beyond dispute, and has been frequently proved. A friend of mine has a parrot, a bird of unusual attainments, who is in the habit of accompanying his mistress in her summer excursions. Once, during their sojourn in a small village, the bird's cage was placed in the garden, to the unbounded delight of the villagers, who assembled in the evening and listened to his prattle. Among many rustic expressions which Polly picked up was one which

was his peculiar delight. A woman was in the habit of screaming for her child all over the place in a very shrill voice, rising in crescendo at the last syllable, and 'Han-nee, Han-nee!' rang out in the air at all hours. So exact was the bird's imitation, that the unfortunate child was for ever running to and fro, supposing herself called. A winter in town and indoor pursuits banished this cry from Polly's répertoire, and was apparently forgotten by him. However, strange to say, no sooner did he find himself the following summer once more in a village garden than he screamed out 'Han-nee!' and continued to do so at intervals during his stay. What was this, if not the revival of association through the medium of sight?

A similar instance came under my notice some time since. A friend in the country had a valuable Newfoundland dog, between whom and a neighbouring retriever there was a family feud of long standing. The Newfoundland, whom we will call 'Montague,' accompanied his mistress one day on a visit to the home of his rival, 'Capulet.' Those were the days of goloshes, now happily departed. The lady removed hers and placed them inside the door of the house, before entering the drawing-room. Up started Capulet, who had been lying in ambush, seized a golosh in his mouth, and was about to make off with it, when he was pinioned by Montague. A deadly combat ensued. At length, Montague, the victor, seizing his mistress's goloshes, ran off with them triumphantly through the village, and never stopped until he had deposited them safely inside his own door. After that day, never did he pass the gates of his enemy's domain without going in and bearing away some trophy—if only a stick or a stone—as an emblem of his mastery. Years passed by, during which Montague wandered in many lands. He was an old dog when he returned to his early home, and that of Capulet was inhabited by strangers, who knew him not; nevertheless, the first time he passed by the old scene of combat, he disappeared within the gates, and when next seen, was running up his own garden path with a huge hunting-boot between his teeth!

We all know that when the routine of our daily life has been for some time monotonous in its regularity, the slightest deviation from that order will appear to change the very essence of life, as much as if the entire *mise en scène* had been shifted. This is simply because a link in the chain of association has been broken, and it proves how marvellous is its power to weld together the spiritual and material. Doubtless, the most mysterious and subtle form taken by association is embodied in that indescribable sensation that the scene passing before our eyes is in all its minutiae but a reproduction of something which has happened to us before. That this feeling is of comparatively rare occurrence, I believe; but when it is experienced, so overpowering is it, and none the less so because evanescent, that it produces an absolute sense of awe. Whence it comes, its origin and causes, are among the many things which, though dreamt of in our philosophy, have certainly not been explained by it. Some have thought it traceable to dreams, the memory of which, though long faded, revived on a corresponding combina-

tion of circumstances in waking moments; others consider it a shadowy link to some pre-natal existence, of which 'our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.'

THE GOLDEN INCUBUS.

A NOVELETTE.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.—SIR JOHN DRINKWATER IS ECCENTRIC.

'You're an old fool, Burdon, and it's all your fault.'

That's what Sir John said, as he shook his Malacca cane at me; and I suppose it was my fault; but then, how could I see what was going to happen?

It began in 1851. I remember it so well because that was the year of the Great Exhibition, and Sir John treated me to a visit there; and when I'd been and was serving breakfast next morning, he asked me about it, and laughed and asked me if I'd taken much notice of the goldsmiths' work. I said I had, and that it was a great mistake to clean gold plate with anything but rouge.

'Why?' he said.

Because, I told him, if any of the plate-powder happened to be left in the cracks, if it was rouge it gave a good effect; but if it was a white preparation, it looked dirty and bad.

'Then we'll have all the chests open to-morrow, James Burdon,' he said; 'and you shall give the old gold plate a good clean up with rouge, and I'll help you.'

'You, Sir John?'

He nodded. And the very next day, he sent all the other servants to the Exhibition, came down to my pantry, opened the plate-room, and put on an apron just like a servant would, and helped me to clean that gold plate. He got tired by one o'clock, and sat down upon a chair and looked at it all glistening as it was spread out on the dresser and shelves—some bright with polishing, some dull and dead and ancient-looking. Cups and bowls and salvers and round dishes covered with coats of arms; some battered and bent, and some as perfect as on the day it left the goldsmith's hands.

I'd worked hard—as hard as I could, for sneezing, for I was doing that half the time, just as if I had a bad cold. For every cup or dish was kept in a green baize bag that fitted in one of the old ironbound oak chests, and these chests were lined with green baize. And all this being exceedingly old, the moth had got in; and pounds and pounds of pepper had been scattered about the baize, to keep them away.

'I'll have a glass of wine, Burdon,' Sir John says at last; 'and we'll put it all away again. It's very beautiful. That's Cellini work—real,' he says, as he took up a great golden bowl, all hammered and punched and engraved. 'But the whole lot of it is an incubus, for I can't use it, and I don't want to make a show.'

'Take a glass yourself, my man,' he said, as I got him the sherry—a fresh bottle from the outer cellar. 'Ha! at a moderate computation, that old gold plate is worth a hundred thousand pounds; and a hundred thousand pounds at only three per cent. in the funds, Burdon, would be three thousand a year. So you see I lose that income by letting this heap of old gold plate lie locked up in those chests.—Now, what would you do with it, if it were yours?'

'Sell it, Sir John, and put it in houses,' I said sharply.

'Yes, James Burdon; and a sensible thing to do. But you are a servant, and I'm a baronet; though I don't look one, do I?' he said, holding up his red hands and laughing.

'You always look a gentleman, Sir John,' I said; 'and that's what you are.'

'Please God, I try to be,' he said sadly. 'But I don't want the money, James; and these are all old family heirlooms, that I hold in trust for my life, and have to hand over—bound in honour to do so—to my son.—Look!' he said, 'at the arms and crest of the Boileaus on every piece.'

'Boileau, Sir John?'

'Well, Drinkwater, then. We translated the name when we came over to England. There; let's put it all away. It's a regular incubus.'

So it was all packed up again in the chests; for he wouldn't let me finish cleaning it, saying it would take a week; and that it was more for the sake of seeing and going over it than anything that he had had it out. So we locked it all up again in the plate-room. And it took five waters hot as he could bear 'em to wash his hands; and even then there was some rouge left in the cracks, and in the old signet ring with the coat of arms cut in the stone—same as that on the plate.

I don't know how it was; perhaps I was out of sorts, but from that day I got thinking about gold plate and what Sir John said about its worth. I knew what 'incubus' meant, for I went up in the library and looked out the word in the big dictionary; and that plate got to be such an incubus to me that I went up to Sir John one morning and gave him warning.

'But what for?' he said. 'Wages?'

'No, Sir John. You're a good master, and her ladyship was a good mistress before she was took up to heaven.'

'Hush, man, hush!' he says sharply.

'And it'll break my heart nearly not to see young Master Barclay when he comes back from school.'

'Then why do you want to go?'

'Well, Sir John, a good home and good food and good treatment's right enough; but I don't want to be found some morning a-weltering in my gore.'

'Now, look here, James Burdon,' he says, laughing. 'I trust you with the keys of the wine-cellar, and you've been at the sherry.'

'You know better than that, Sir John. No, sir. You said that gold plate was an incubus, and such it is, for it's always a-sitting on me, so as I can't sleep o' nights. It's killing me, that's what it is. Some night I shall be murdered, and all that plate taken away. It ain't safe, and it's cruel to a man to ask him to take charge of it.'

He did not speak for a few minutes.

'What am I to do, then, Burdon?'

'Some people send their plate to the bank, Sir John.'

'Yes,' he says; 'some people do a great many things that I do not intend to do.—There; I shall not take any notice of what you said.'

'But you must, please, Sir John; I couldn't stay like this.'

'Be patient for a few days, and I'll have something done to relieve you.'

I went down-stairs very uneasy, and Sir John went out; and next day, feeling quite poorly, after waking up ten times in the night, thinking I heard people breaking in, as there'd been a deal of burglary in Bloomsbury about that time, I got up quite thankful I was still alive; and directly after breakfast, the wine-merchant's cart came from St James's Street with fifty dozen of sherry, as we really didn't want. Sir John came down and saw to the wine being put in bins; and then he had all the wine brought from the inner cellar into the outer cellar, both being next my pantry, with a door into the passage just at the foot of the kitchen stairs.

'That's a neat job, Burdon,' said Sir John, as we stood in the far cellar all among the sawdust, and the place looking dark and damp, with its roof like the vaults of a church, and stone flag floor, but with every bin empty.

'Going to lay down some more wine here, Sir John?' I said; but he didn't answer, only stood, with a candle in the arched doorway, which was like a passage six feet long, opening from one cellar into the other. Then he went up-stairs, and I locked up the cellar and put the keys in my drawer.

'He always was eccentric, before her ladyship died,' I said to myself; 'and now he's getting worse.'

I saw it again next morning, for Sir John gave orders, sudden-like, for everybody to pack off to the country-house down by Dorking; and of course everybody had to go, cook and house-keeper and all; and just as I was ready to start, I got word to stay.

Sir John went off to his club, and I stayed alone in that old house in Bloomsbury, with the great drops of perspiration dripping off me every time I heard a noise, and feeling sometimes as if I could stand it no longer; but just as it was getting dusk, he came back, and in his short abrupt way, he says: 'Now, Burdon, we'll go to work.'

I'd no idea what he meant till we went down-stairs, when he had the strong-room door opened and the cellar too; and then he made me help him carry the old plate-chests right through my pantry into the far wine-cellar, and range them one after the other along one side.

I wanted to tell him that they would not be so safe there; but I daren't speak, and it was not till what followed that I began to understand; for, as soon as we had gone through the narrow arched passage back to the outer cellar, he laughed, and he says: 'Now, we'll get rid of the incubus, Burdon. Fix your light up there, and I'll help.'

He did help; and together we got a heap of sawdust and hundreds of empty wine-bottles; and these we built up at the end of the arched

entrance between the cellars from floor to ceiling, just as if it had been a wine-bin, till the farther cellar was quite shut off with empty bottles. And then, if he didn't make me move the new sherry that had just come in and treat that the same, building up full bottles in front of the empty ones till the ceiling was reached once more, and the way in to the chests of gold plate shut up with wine-bottles two deep, one stack full, the other empty.

He saw me shake my head, as if I didn't believe in it; and he laughed again in his strange way, and said: 'Wait a bit.'

Next morning, I found he'd given orders, for the men came with a load of bricks and mortar, and they set to work and built up a wall in front of the stacked-up bottles, regularly bricking up the passage, just as if it was a bin of wine that was to be left for so many years to mature; after which the wall was whitewashed over, the men went away, and Sir John clapped me on the shoulder. 'There, Burdon!' he said; 'we've buried the incubus safely. Now you can sleep in peace.'

'Yes, Sir John.'

'I ought by rights to kill you now, and bury you in the sawdust, to make you keep the secret. But I'll let you off, for I don't think *you* will tell.'

CHAPTER II.—WHY EDWARD GUNNING LEFT.

It's curious how things get forgotten by busy people. In a few weeks I left off thinking about the hiding-place of all that golden plate; and after a time I used to go into that first cellar for wine with my half-dozen basket in one hand, my cellar candlestick in the other, and never once think about there being a farther cellar; while, though there was the strong-room in my pantry with quite a thousand pounds-worth of silver in it—perhaps more—I never fancied anybody would come for that.

Master Barclay came, and went back to school, and Sir John grew more strange; and then an old friend of his died and left one little child, Miss Virginia, and Sir John took her and brought her to the old house in Bloomsbury, and she became—bless her sweet face—just like his own.

Then, all at once I found that ten years had slipped by, and it set me thinking about being ten years nearer the end, and that the years were rolling on, and some day another butler would sleep in my pantry, while I was sleeping—well, you know where—cold and still—and that then Sir John would be taking his last sleep too, and Master Barclay be, as it says in the Scriptures, reigning in his stead.

And then it was that all in a flash something seemed to say to me: suppose Sir John has never told his lawyers about that buried gold plate, and left no writing to show where it is. I felt quite startled, and didn't know what to think. As far as I could tell, nobody but Sir John and I knew the secret. Young Master Barclay certainly didn't, or else, when I let him carry the basket for a treat, and went into the cellar to fetch his father's port, he, being a talking, lively, thoughtless boy, would have been sure to say something. His father ought certainly to tell him

some day; but suppose the master was taken bad suddenly with apoplexy and died without being able—what then?

I didn't sleep much that night, for once more that gold plate was being an incubus, and I determined to speak to Sir John as an old family servant should, the very next day.

Next day came, and I daren't; and for days and days the incubus seemed to swell and trouble me, till I felt as if I was haunted. But I couldn't make up my mind what to do, till one night, just before going to bed, and then it came like a flash, and I laughed at myself for not thinking of it before. I didn't waste any time, but getting down my ink-bottle and pens, I took a sheet of paper, and wrote as plainly as I could about how Sir John Drinkwater and his butler James Burdon had hidden all the chests of valuable old gold cups and salvers in the inner wine-cellar, where the entrance was bricked up; and to make all sure, I put down the date as near as I could remember in 1851, and the number of the house, 19 Great Grandon Street, Bloomsbury, because, though it was not likely, Sir John might move, and if that paper was found after I was dead, people might go on a false scent, find nothing, and think I was mad.

I locked that paper up in my old desk, feeling all the while as if I ought to have had it witnessed; but people don't like to put their names to documents unless they know what they're about, and of course I couldn't tell anybody the contents of that.

I felt satisfied as a man should who feels he has done his duty; and perhaps that's what made the time glide away so fast without anything particular happening. Sir John bought the six old houses like ours opposite, and gave twice as much for them as they were worth, because some one was going to build an Institution there, which might very likely prove to be a nuisance.

I don't remember anything else in particular, only that the houses would not let well, because Sir John grew close and refused to spend money in doing them up. But there was the trouble with Edward Gunning, the footman, a clever, good-looking young fellow, who had been apprenticed to a bricklayer and contractor, but took to service instead. He did no good in that; for, in spite of all I could say, he would take more than was good for him, and then Sir John found him out.

Miss Virginia got him forgiven at least twenty times, and Mr Barclay spoke up for him too; but when it came to a smell of fire in the house, and me being woke up by Sir John and Mr Barclay at two in the morning, and we all went and found Edward dead drunk in the servants' hall, where he had been reading in bed, and the clothes all smouldering on the floor, there was a row. Sir John said he didn't mind about himself and me, for we were two old useless people, who had had our day, and smothering was an easy death, while being afterwards burnt to ashes was a good Roman kind of an end; but he wasn't going to have his son's life shortened; and he'd hang any man sooner than harm should happen to his darling, Miss Virginia.

So Edward Gunning had to go; and I breathed more freely, and felt less nervous, though I must

say I thought Sir John's remarks about me anything but kind, seeing how I had served him well, and being only seventy-one, with a good deal of work in me yet.

CHAPTER III.—MR BARCLAY THINKS FOR HIMSELF.

So another ten years had slipped away; and the house opposite, which had been empty for two years, was getting in very bad condition—I mean as to paper and paint.

'Nobody will take it as it is, Sir John,' the agent said to him in my presence.

'Then it can be left alone,' he says, very gruffly.—'Good-morning.'

'Well, Mr Burdon,' said the agent, as I gave him a glass of wine in my pantry, 'it's a good thing he's so well off; but it's poison to my mind to see houses lying empty.' Which no doubt it was, seeing he had five per cent. on the rents of all he let.

Then Mr Barclay spoke to his father, and he had to go out with a flea in his ear; and when, two days later, Miss Virginia said something about the house opposite looking so miserable, and that it was a pity there were no bills up to say it was to let, Sir John flew out at her, and that was the only time I ever heard him speak to her cross.

But he was so sorry for it, that he sent me to the bank with a cheque directly after, and I was to bring back a new fifty-pound note; and I know that was in the letter I had to give Miss Virginia, and orders to have the carriage round, so that she might go shopping.

Now, I'm afraid you'll say that Mr Barclay Drinkwater was right in calling me Polonius, and saying I was as prosy as a college don; but if I don't tell you what brought all the trouble about, how are you to understand what followed? Old men have their own ways; and though I'm not very old, I've got mine, and if I don't tell my story my way, I'm done.

Well, it wasn't a week after Mr Bodkin & Co., the agent, had that glass of wine in the pantry, that he came in all of a bustle, as he always was, just as if he must get everything done before dark, and says he has let the house, if Sir John approves.

Not so easily done as you'd think, for Sir John wasn't, he said, going to have anybody for an opposite neighbour; but the people might come and see him if they liked.

I remember it as well as if it was yesterday. Sir John was in a bad temper with a touch of gout—bin 27—'25 port, being rather an acid wine, but a great favourite of his. Miss Virginia had been crying; and I had heard Mr Barclay make use of a word that ought never to have been used in that house, unless it was by Sir John, who, being master, had a right to do as he liked. The trouble had been about Mr Barclay going away. He'd finished his schooling at college, and was now twenty-seven, and a fine strong handsome fellow, as wanted to be off and see the world; but Sir John told him he couldn't spare him.

'No, Bar,' he says in my presence, for I was bathing his foot—'if you go away—I know you, you dog—you'll be falling in love with some

smooth-faced jade, and then there'll be trouble. You'll stop at home, sir, and eat and drink like a gentleman, and court Virginia like a gentleman; and when she's twenty-one, you'll marry her; and you can both take care of me till I die, and then you can do as you like.'

Then Mr Barclay, looking as much like his father as he could with his face turned red, said what he ought not to have said, and refused to marry Miss Virginia; and he flung out of the room; while Miss Virginia—bless her for an angel—must have known something of the cause of the trouble—I'm afraid, do you know, it was from me, but I forget—and she was in tears, when there was a knock and ring, and a lady's card was sent in for Sir John: 'Miss Adela Mimpriss.'

It was about the house; and I had to show her in—a little, slight, elegantly dressed lady of about three-and-twenty, with big dark eyes, and a great deal of wavy hair.

Sir John sent for Mr Barclay and Miss Virginia, to see if they approved of her; and it was settled that she and her three maiden sisters were to have the opposite house; and when the bell rang for me to show her out, Mr Barclay came and took the job out of my hands.

'I'm very glad,' I heard him say, 'and I hope we shall be the best of neighbours;' and his face was flushed, and he looked very handsome; while, when they shook hands on the door-mat, I could see the bright-eyed thing smiling in his face and looking pleased; and that shaking of the hands took a deal longer than it ought, while she gave him a look that made me think if I'd had a daughter like that, she'd have had bread-and-water for a week.

Then the door was shut, and Mr Barclay stood on the mat, smiling stupid-like, not knowing as I was noticing him; and then he turned sharply round and saw Miss Virginia on the stairs, and his face changed.

'James Burdon,' I said to myself, 'these are girls and boys no longer, but grown-up folk, and there's the beginning of trouble here.'

ODD ACTORS.

ALTHOUGH a good stage-presence, striking face, and polished manners are much to the advantage of all adopting the stage as a profession, there have been many instances in which physical defects have been turned by actors to good account. Beauty, if of the type that a poet would call spiritual, is not for the glare of the footlights. Striking features and expressive eyes are the chief recommendations, and the cunning 'make-up' can hide a multitude of imperfections. In this way, positive ugliness is no great drawback to an actor, unless his features are absolutely distorted, as in the case of the French actor, who looked so hideous, that once in a piece where some one said to him, 'You are changing your face,' a cruel wag in the pit shouted: 'Why, let him do so.'

There are only one or two cases where persons born blind have gone on the stage; but there are numerous instances of actors sticking to their work after being afflicted with blindness. In

1744 there was a remarkable performance at Drury Lane for the benefit of a blind author named Dr Clancy. The playbill intimated that 'it was the first instance of any person labouring under so heavy a deprivation performing on the stage,' and hoped that the 'novelty as well as the unhappiness of the case would engage the favour of a British audience.' The blind man played the part of the blind prophet Teresias in the play of *Œdipus*, and achieved much success. In 1790 and succeeding years of the century, we read that a manager named Briscoe, although totally blind, played in the Midland towns, representing the heroes in tragedies and the lovers in comedies. The famous Mrs Dancer was so near-sighted, that once, in an impassioned scene, having unfortunately dropped a dagger, she was unable to find it. One of the attendants tried to push it towards the actress; but it was no use; and the weapon had to be picked up and handed to her in full sight of the audience, thus entirely spoiling the scene.

Numerous stage-accidents have been caused by defective vision. There was a sad scene once at the Dublin theatre, where a young actress, who had to cross a narrow plank representing a bridge, stepped off on to a piece of gauze, and was dashed down to the well of the stage and killed. The late Herr Staudigl, too, when playing Bertram in the opera of *Robert le Diable*, could not find the 'trap' by which he had to sink into the infernal regions, and always afterwards he had to be carefully led to the spot. One of the finest actors Glasgow has produced was the late J. B. Fitzroy, who struggled for years against failing eyesight, and at last was left in darkness. At a benefit organised for him in 1878, he played Sampson Burr in the *Porter's Knot*; and those who witnessed that memorable performance will not soon forget the emotion experienced as the blind old man tottered on to the stage, friendly hands in the 'wings' pushing on his porter's barrow. Although that was his 'last appearance,' he was induced to make some other appearances, and among other parts played one of the witches in *Macbeth*.

There have been one or two instances of insane persons playing parts, the most remarkable being that of a Mrs Verbruggen towards the close of the last century. She lost her reason owing to a disappointment in love, and had to be placed under restraint. Having escaped one afternoon from her attendants, she wandered back to the theatre, where, oddly enough, the play was *Hamlet*. As Ophelia, she had often gained much applause on these very boards. The unfortunate lady concealed herself till Ophelia's cue came, whereupon she rushed on the stage before the real Ophelia could enter. The stage-manager was filled with astonishment, a feeling which changed to wonder and awe as he contemplated the thrilling rendering of the mad scene. Poor Mrs Verbruggen was not 'playing' the part; she *was* Ophelia. It is recorded that 'Nature having made this final effort, her vital powers failed her.'

Dumb actors can of course only appear in pantomime, and that very imperfectly. There are no notable cases; but several good actors have been quite deaf. Hinton, a Birmingham actor, was so deaf that some one had always to stand

in the wings and let him know by a movement when to speak. There is the notable modern instance of the late J. B. Buckstone. How we used to look forward to the visits of the Haymarket Company—a fine combination originally, for Buckstone,

As every well-bred person should,
Kept the best company he could.

He was latterly 'as deaf as a post;' and it was only by intently watching the lips of the other actors and marking the expression of their faces, that he was able to 'pick up his cue.' The difficulty of acting under these circumstances may be imagined; but there was no real falling-off in 'Buckie's' inimitable humour. Of course, his difficulties were fewer in his own pieces; but he could not always be writing dramas, for—as he remarked once, with mingled drollery and pathos—he got to be so busy writing 'orders,' that he had no time for other literary work. Poor old Buckie! his last years were clouded by darker sorrows than deafness. They ought not to have been so, as the venerable comedian really deserved the compliment paid him in 1876 by Mr Gladstone: 'You are, like me, an old public servant.'

Many mummers have suffered from faulty limbs. The famous Foote had to get his left leg amputated, and afterwards wrote the *Lame Lover*, in which he appeared as Sir Luke Limp, and gave a comical account of his loss: 'I have neither strain, splint, spavin, nor gout; have no fear of corns or kibes, and no dread lest any fool should kick my shins or tread on my toes. A leg forsooth—a mere nothing—a very redundancy.' Unfortunately, we cannot all look on our losses in such a philosophical fashion. Charles Mathews the elder was crippled for life by an accident, and once played the part of a lame harlequin in an extravaganza specially written for him. Numerous stories of cripples are told in connection with minor theatres. We remember once seeing in a penny gaff, as the temple of cheap art is called, a young man acting who was supported by a crutch, and we were told that he was regularly in the company, and played all kinds of parts. We should like to have seen him try his hand, or rather his foot, at Romeo, especially when climbing up the balcony! Gout, that most painful and aristocratic of complaints, is no stranger to the stage. A celebrated actor used to play some of his parts seated during the entire performance with his limbs wrapped in flannel; and a well-known comedian of our own day is sometimes seen, in his funniest scenes, to writhe in agony from the same cause.

Hunchbacks have a very small choice of plays. *Richard III.* and the *Hunchback* have both been played by real hunchbacks; but, as a rule, people whose backs are 'all there' would be preferred. A little padding makes quite an effective hunch. Some years ago, a hunchback named Mr Norton went about playing parts suitable to him. He was rather a clever actor, and made a hit in the pantomime of *Humpty Dumpty*.

Drunken actors are fortunately becoming scarcer every day, although it cannot be said that the cause of temperance has as yet many adherents in 'the profession.' Volumes could be filled with the ludicrous exploits of inebriated mummers;

but perhaps it is best to forget the follies of the past.

Child actors and actresses have long been a recognised institution on the stage, but it is a pity to see them introduced unless when absolutely necessary. Of late years, we have had some remarkable instances of precocity, especially in the Children's Opera Companies, and in the recent production of the sensational piece *Human Nature*. Some of our greatest actresses have been on the stage almost from infancy; but it seems to be true that very few great actors have been on the boards as children. During a performance at Aberdeen, some years ago, we were struck with the many curious ways there are of turning an honest penny. The play was a version of the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the sensation scene was the smashing of the prison gate, after which a crowd rushed in, prominent amongst the people being Dumbiedykes with Effie's child. The management, not content with a 'dummy' baby, hired a 'sonsie' young Scotch-woman to bring her baby to the theatre every night at the hour required. We were much struck with the appearance of this youngster—a fine healthy boy of a few weeks old—sleeping peacefully in his mother's arms till the time came for his performance. There was an involuntary scream of excitement from those behind on one occasion when Dumbiedykes fell over a beam as he ran on, but luckily the baby was unharmed. It cried lustily, and of course the audience laughed—audiences always do seem to laugh at every awkward *contretemps*.

We could speak feelingly of the parts enacted by those unfortunate people whom we call 'supers,' but do not deem it necessary to add another to the many denunciations which have been hurled at their stupid heads. After all, they work pretty hard for their shilling a night, and the lot of many of them is so utterly wretched that it seems a positive cruelty to be hard on them.

There is yet another species of Odd Actors, but not belonging to the human family; we refer to the 'lower animals,' many of which have reached a high degree of perfection in their parts. Dogs have been the most successful, and have often been introduced in romantic and sensational plays. In such pieces, we have seen dogs pull ropes, ring bells, and otherwise distinguish themselves. In a recent production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there was a pack of real bloodhounds introduced, and their savage baying had certainly a stirring effect on the audience. In 'variety' entertainments, many animals perform tricks—even pigs have been shown to possess much intelligence by the well-known clown, Mr Walker—but we wish to talk only of the 'legitimate drama.' The horse is not often introduced on the stage, unless under very close supervision, for he is apt to take fright too easily. There have, however, been some astonishing performances seen in such plays as *Mazeppa*; and some years ago, Mr George Rignold created a sensation in *Henry V.* by the realistic dash with which he brought up the rear in the triumphal procession, mounted on his white charger Crispin. About ten years ago, we remember seeing a sensational piece, the *Brigand's Bride*, in which a handsome gray mule plunged into a river (of

cloth), and saved his master's little girl from a canvas grave. Except for an occasional 'walk-on'—as in the case of the royal camel in the *Sultan of Mocha*—few animals, except dogs and horses, have been used in serious drama. In the magnificent production of *Round the World in Eighty Days*, at the Paris Porte St-Martin, however, the stage in one of the tropical scenes was converted into a vast cage filled with wild animals. And in pantomimes, as every schoolboy knows, all sorts and conditions of beasts and birds have contributed their share to the amusement of the British public.

MY FIRST BEAR.

DID any of my readers ever see a wild bear? Not one of the shivering, half-starved animals to be found in the country menagerie with staring coat and bleary eyes, looking anything but fierce as it crouches in its corner insensible to the 'stirring-up' of the attendant's stick, or pacing aimlessly across its cage and nibbling in the friendliest way the nuts which the fearless schoolboy tenders—but a real, roaring, unchained wild bear. The one is very different from the other. Before I knew what a wild bear really was, I had a great contempt for the tribe, and often dreamed of the slaughter I would work if I could only come across a few good specimens. I got the chance one day when I least expected it. It was in September 1885, in Manitoba, towards the close of the Riel Rebellion. I had been sent from Battleford with a detachment of mounted police to scour the country as far as Stony Lake in search of several half-breeds and Indians who were wanted for complicity in the murders of the white settlers at Frog Lake. It was on the homeward journey that I met my bear. We had left Frog Lake in the gray dawn of the morning, and had ridden steadily along all the hot day, pausing only for an hour by an alkaline marsh-pond to water the horses and eat a meal. The police were riding 'easy,' with unbuttoned jackets, and pipes in their mouths; and the prisoners, wrapped in their gaudy blankets, were huddled together in the wagons, asleep for the most part, quite indifferent to the jolting of their carriages and the blistering heat. I had ridden myself so long, that my horse 'Dragoon,' a magnificent animal of seventeen hands, and a pure Broncho, showed signs of fatigue; and I had eased him for a few miles by tying him to the tail-end of a buckboard into which I jumped for a little rest. My companions were two Indian prisoners, young fellows, and both entertaining and interesting to the last degree.

Pas-qui-ac, the elder, was tall and strong, magnificently built, and accounted the best long-distance runner of his tribe. More than once he offered to run for his liberty against any horse in my little troop, an invitation which I was obliged to decline. Mass-ega-wap, the younger, was a mere lad, fine in limb and feature, and with large, melting, coal-black eyes, which would have been a fortune to any Bel-gravia belle. (Pas-qui-ac was tried for arson on my return to Battleford, but although acquitted by the jury, was held on another charge of horse-stealing, and sent back to Edmonton by the police. Mass-ega-wap was found guilty of manslaughter,

and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment in the Wood Mountain Penitentiary at Winnipeg, from which he was subsequently discharged, on account of the general amnesty granted by Her Majesty the Queen.)

Shortly before sundown, the sharp eyes of Pas-qui-ac descried a small black object almost on the horizon line, and as we neared it, his excitement knew no bounds, for he declared it to be an antelope. Mass-ega-wap, not long behind his dusky brother in the discovery, was also certain that it was a large head of game; and it was amusing to see the frantic gesticulations and hear the guttural chatter of these native hunters as they grew more and more excited. When we came to within five hundred yards of the place where it lay, apparently asleep, I fancied I could discern an animal, but to my unpractised eyes it seemed no larger than a dog, for this extraordinary discrepancy between the real and the imagined size of objects is well known on the prairie. At any rate, it was now certain that a wild animal of some sort was before me, and so far unheeding of my presence. To seize my Winchester and ram a few shells into my pocket took but a moment, and the next saw me out of the buckboard and into the saddle again. With the reins hanging on his neck, and guiding 'Dragoon' with my knees, I loaded as I rode, and managed to get within three hundred yards of my victim, when, to my surprise, he rose, and standing high on his hind-legs, proclaimed himself to be a bear. The sight of the galloping horse must have disconcerted him somewhat, for he dropped at once on all-fours and turned tail. It was with difficulty I gave him a snap-shot as he ran, for he was far to my right; but I could just hear his scream of defiance as 'Dragoon' threw up his heels and bolted. I had never fired a shot from his back, and had taken it for granted that he would 'stand the racket.'

After a circuitous gallop, during which I bewailed my ill-luck, and wondered if I should get within range again, I managed to pull up in the neighbourhood, indicated by two little shrubs, of where I had fired my shot. I tried in vain to track by blood or footmark the retreating quarry, for the hard sandy soil refused to give a sign, and there was nothing for it but to ride ahead and hope. I had not far to go, for, after a canter up a steepish bit of slope, not two hundred yards away, was my bear, standing on his hind-legs, roaring with fury and full of fight. Then followed a brief but ineffectual fight with my horse. Neither voice nor spur availed to force him another inch nearer the pawing adversary; and fearful of losing the game, but without a thought as to the recklessness of the proceeding, I jumped from his back, and saw him flying away while I advanced alone. It will be forgiven me, I trust, if I acknowledge that during these moments I was excited; I know it was not the correct thing to do, and most hunters are so cool and collected on paper—are they not?

I walked on quickly till I was about a hundred yards from Master Bruin, and determining to make a sure shot, I knelt and aimed at him. He did not look very big, and all my nervousness had disappeared as I pulled the trigger. For a second I was blinded by the smoke; but I heard the thud of the bullet; and before I could rise,

the bear was coming at me, stumbling along with a broken shoulder and screaming with fury. If he had looked insignificant a moment before, he seemed big enough now! How loud his scream was, how fast his gallop, how sharp and white his teeth! Retreat was impossible. I was only fifty yards from him now, and to run meant simply to be overtaken and killed; so I knelt again with a strange calmness I could not understand. I remember that I heard the twitter of a bird near by, and noticed the sky growing red with the sinking sun as I raised my rifle. How near he was! What a long aim I took, straight at his head. As I fired, he stopped an instant, turned right round, and ran away from me! I found afterwards that I had hit him right in the throat. I fancy he must have been delirious, if bears ever arrive at such a stage, and imagined, after he turned and ran, that he was still making for me. I was in no hurry to follow him at too close a distance, and I let him run until I marked him into a thicket of trees half a mile away. Then I followed slowly, tracking him easily step by step by his heavy blood-trail. As I entered the thicket, however, the trail was lost; and I peered about here and there, longing to catch another glimpse of him, when suddenly, just at my feet there rose a mighty roar, that made my heart stand still and my cheeks blanch with fear. Half hidden by the trailing vines, and not to be distinguished from the blackened stumps about me, lay the bear in his death-agony, but possessed of sufficient strength still to make an angry bound, half jump, half stumble, in my direction. Mechanically, I thrust the muzzle of my rifle at his head, fired again straight into his ear, and Bruin fell for the last time—dead! I confess that I was afraid for some minutes to make a close examination of the beast. How often I had dreamed of such a scene—how different from the dream was the reality!

A shot at the other end of the thicket made known to me that help was at hand; for the advent of 'Dragoon' riderless and covered with foam had sent a squad of men to search for me in the wilderness. The bear was dragged to the nearest buckboard, and carried there till camp was pitched for the night. He was a fair-sized beast, in fine condition, and weighed, at a rough guess, about three hundred and fifty pounds.

The delight of Pas-qui-ac and Mass-ega-wap when they saw the carcase knew no bounds. To themselves belonged the honour of the original discovery, and this fact they proclaimed on all sides again and again. And to me, the Pale-face, was not praise also due, for had I not gone forth unaided to fight the bear, and conquered him? That night, when the camp-fires were blazing and the silver stars were twinkling overhead, I was halted as I made my usual visit to the prisoners' tent, and made to listen while old Kee-way-tin sang my praises and christened me Wass-sass-ega-ya (The Red Deer's Horn), in token of my skill and prowess. Pas-qui-ac and Mass-ega-wap volunteered to skin the bear on condition that they should have the entrails for their supper (a favourite Indian dish). This was gladly promised, and the skinning was done with surprising skill and quickness. The carcase was afterwards cleaned and quartered, the sharpening of the knives and

the clank of the butcher's leg-irons making music the while. It was with fear that I sat down to the first bear-steak; but who shall tell of its goodness and worth? Was it because my own hand had slain the bear, or because I was tired and very hungry?—or was it because it was a novel dish? Who can tell? But it was more delicious than the finest Club steak I had ever tasted. I had bear's meat for three days on the homeward march, and enough left to feast the mess with for a day on my return to Battleford. The claws were mounted as watch-charms and given to wondering friends; the teeth made brooches for others; and the skin, rich, soft, and ebony black, adorns my sleigh, keeps me warm in spite of Canadian frost and snow, and sets me always thinking of the autumn evening far away when I bagged my first bear.

SLIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES.

It is stated that when Leopold von Ranke began to collect facts for his History, a singular accident occurred in his native town. A bridge gave way one morning, and some persons were swept away in the current beneath. Von Ranke, who was absent at the time, on his return inquired into the details of the catastrophe. 'I saw the bridge fall,' said one of the neighbours. 'A heavy wain had just passed over it, and weakened it. Two women were on it when it fell, and a soldier on a white horse.'—'I saw it fall,' declared another; 'but the wain had passed over it two hours previous. The foot-passengers were children; and the rider was a civilian on a black horse.'—'Now,' argued Von Ranke, 'if it is impossible to learn the truth about an accident which happened at broad noonday only twenty-four hours ago, how can I declare any fact to be certain which is shrouded in the darkness of ten centuries.' To this trivial incident—which to many persons would have borne no lesson—was due much of his caution and impartiality.

A few moments' consideration will convince any one that some of the most momentous crises in history have hinged upon very slight circumstances. A glass of wine, for instance, changed the history of France for nearly twenty years. Louis-Philippe, king of the French, had a son, the Duke of Orleans, and heir to the throne, who always drank only a certain number of glasses of wine, because even one more made him tipsy. On a memorable morning he forgot to count the number of his glasses, and took one more than usual. When entering his carriage, he stumbled, frightening the horses, and causing them to run. In attempting to leap from the carriage, his head struck the pavement, and he soon died. That glass of wine overthrew the Orleans rule, confiscated their property of twenty million pounds, and sent the whole family into exile.

If Mr Grenville had not carried, in 1765, his memorable resolution as to the expediency of charging stamp duties on the plantations of America, the Western world might still have been under British rule. In connection with this matter, there is another slight, albeit remarkable, circumstance, which may be told in Thackeray's own words. 'It was strange,' says he, 'that, in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot, and waken up a war

which was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow.'

If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, says Pascal, the condition of the world would have been different. His meaning is, that if Cleopatra had had a nose short to deformity, she would have failed to attract Antony, who would not have been drawn into the conduct which culminated in the loss of the battle of Actium, which loss made way for the close of the Roman Republic in the inauguration of the Roman Empire.

Dyspepsia has been the cause of many momentous crises. A leg of mutton is said to have controlled the tide of Leipsic's battle; and the consequences of the indigestion of a certain duchess are proverbial.

The great failure of the potato crop in Ireland cannot be called a slight circumstance, yet it was comparatively slight compared with the momentous changes which it brought about; for the repeal of the corn-laws was hastened by the potato famine. As Lord Beaconsfield has observed, 'This mysterious but universal sickness of a single root changed the history of the world.'

Many men have been drawn to their destiny by the most trivial occurrences. Fenimore Cooper became a novelist through his wife's challenge. One evening, while reading a novel, he threw it down, saying: 'I believe I could write a better book myself.'—'Let me see you do it,' said his wife with a smile. In a few days he had written several chapters of *Precarion*, which, when finished, he published at his own expense. The novel attracted little attention; but it gave Cooper an inkling of his capacity for story-writing, and the *Spy*, his next novel, appealed so strongly to the patriotic sympathies of his countrymen, that it became a great success. Hawthorne, too, was induced to write the *Scarlet Letter* by a remark of his wife.

If Cowley had not found the *Faery Queen* in his mother's parlour, it is just possible that he would never have been a poet. Giotto, one of the early Florentine painters, might have remained a rude shepherd boy if a sheep drawn by him upon a stone had not attracted the notice of Cimabue. Opie might have perished in obscurity if he had not looked over the shoulder of his companion, Mark Oates, while he was drawing a butterfly. Had his friend and companion escaped the thunderstorm at Erfurt, Luther might have been a lawyer.

To exhaust the list of discoveries which have been made through slight circumstances is beyond our power. A few, however, may be noted. Porcelain was discovered by an alchemist while he was trying to find a mixture of earths that would make durable crucibles. If a watchmaker's apprentice had not held up some spectacle glasses between his thumb and finger, telescope lenses might never have been known; and if the shop of a Dublin tobacconist had not been destroyed by fire, Lundyfoot snuff would certainly not have given joy to thousands of snuff-takers. If a few drops of aquafortis had not dropped upon the

spectacles of a Nuremberg glass-cutter, etching on glass might still have remained unknown. Had not the wife of an English papermaker accidentally let a blue bag fall into a vat of pulp, blue-laid paper, the invention of which brought a fortune to the papermaker, might have still to be invented. Lithography, too, was perfected through suggestions made by accident. These few instances, which are not so well known as many others, and which are not intended to be representative, we have jotted down at random. Doubtless, many of the more important inventions due to trifling circumstances will be familiar to our readers.

A well-known Paris scientist, Dr Delaunay, has made some curious discoveries which show the connection between little and great things. To ascertain the qualities of an applicant cook, he says it is sufficient to give her a plate to clean, a sauce to make, and watch how she moves her hand in either act. If she moves it from left to right, or in the direction of the hands of a watch, you may trust her; if the other way, she is certain to be stupid and incapable. The intelligence of people may also be gauged, the Doctor further says, by asking them to make a circle on paper with a pencil, and noting in which direction the hand is moved. The good students in a mathematical class draw circles from left to right. The inferiority of the softer sex, as well as the male dunces, is shown by their drawing from right to left. Asylum patients do the same. In a word, says the Doctor, centrifugal movements are characteristic of intelligence and higher development; centripetal, are a mark of incomplete evolution. A person, as his faculties are developed, may even come to draw circles in a different way from what he did in his youth.

Sir Walter Scott, when walking along the banks of the Yarrow, saw Mungo Park throwing stones into the water and anxiously watching the bubbles that succeeded. In reply to Scott's inquiry as to the object of his occupation, the great traveller said he was thinking how often he had thus tried to sound the rivers in Africa, by calculating how long a time had elapsed before the bubbles rose to the surface. This was a slight circumstance, but the traveller's safety frequently depended upon it.

Now that electricity is used for so many purposes, the slight pressure of a small button frequently effects wonders. So it is, as has been well observed, with the machinery of human life—a slight circumstance may frequently produce the most momentous results.

PAPER BOTTLES.

An attempt now being made on an extended scale to introduce bottles made of paper into this country merits some passing notice. The paper-bottle industry, which has achieved considerable success in Chicago, and is gradually extending throughout the United States, has not yet obtained any development on this side of the Atlantic. Foremost amongst the advantages accruing from this new adaptation of paper is the fact that the bottles are unbreakable; whilst the cost at which they can be placed on the market is considerably lower than that of articles of the same size in glass, stoneware, or tin. A great saving in weight is moreover effected, a desideratum of no small

moment where cost of carriage of large numbers has to be taken into consideration; whilst the cost of packing is reduced to a minimum, for breakage in transit, which is a constant source of loss with glass bottles, is obviously impossible. Special machinery is employed in the manufacture of paper bottles. A long strip of paper of requisite thickness having been formed into a tube by bending around a circular 'mandrel,' is covered externally with an outer glazed sheet, bearing any printed labels to be employed; the tube is then cut into short lengths, to the ends of which are added tops, bottoms, and necks of paper—or of wood, if special strength is desired—nothing further being necessary beyond pouring in and lining the insides with a composition, which on setting will effectively resist the action of acids, spirits, inks, dyes, &c. The utilisation of paper is constantly receiving new adaptations, a bare enumeration of which would constitute a formidable list; whilst enough has been said to demonstrate that the latest development of this material in the bottle-making industry bids fair to hold a not unimportant part in the varied uses now obtained from paper.

MY SNOW IMAGE.

I.

I RAISED an image when the snow lay white—
An image fair, with eyes that sparkled bright,
And form that shone serenely through the night.

The frost was bitter, and the tempest blew
So keen, it pierced the forest through and through;
Yet still my figure stood, and stronger grew.

At last the breeze blew mild, and sunlight shone,
When lo, I looked!—my image fair was gone—
Dead ashes for its feet, its heart a stone.

O Sorrow, was thy lesson told in vain?
Methought, that if I built from care and pain
An image bright, some glory would remain.

II.

Ere long the year to riper fullness grew:
Glad swallows through the sunny copses flew,
And where the image stood, bright daisies blew.

All gone the icy stillness and the snow;
I wandered through the dewy meads, and lo!
Like thawing streams I felt my lifeblood flow.

O snowy image, did I sigh for thee?
The May-blooms hung in garlands from the tree,
And golden kingcups dappled hill and lea.

No more of ice my handiwork shall rise,
But weaved of sunny light from earth and skies,
And gleanings gathered in by grateful eyes:

No more of cold contentment or despair,
But steadfast Hope, whose breath shall be a prayer,
And Love, whose light shall show that life is fair.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

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SUNDAY AT SEA.

Ye gentlemen of England who live at home at ease,
Ah! little do ye think upon the dangers of the seas.

So runs the well-known glee; and how true it is that not only the dangers, but the entire life of those who 'occupy their business in great waters,' are utterly unknown and unimagined by the great majority of those who live at home at ease.

Take a lookout over the gleaming waters of the Channel: see that tall ship slowly moving across the horizon, silent, dignified, conscious of her strength; the white water curling brightly off her bow; her snowy canvas swelling before the breeze with tender curves and gentle alternations of light and shade. 'How beautiful!' we say. And we stand and gaze until the ever-increasing distance makes it but a pale shadow on the dim horizon line. It has excited our admiration more, perhaps, than most objects which pass beneath our gaze; for he who can look upon a gallant ship in full sail on a sunny sea without pleasure is indeed but a dull soul. But has it never struck us how utterly beyond our knowledge is the ship itself? It is a sealed book to us; we see its exterior—we cannot scan its page. It is an utterly unknown life; few can say with certainty, as men can, and do, of the habits of those with whose lives they are familiar: 'Ah! now they will be 'doing so-and-so;' for only those who are initiated into the mysteries of the sea can follow the sailor in his daily and nightly round.

But amidst all this blank desert of ignorance there is one green spot: in the vast empty vault of darkness which shadows the lives of our sailor-loved ones from us, there shines one peculiarly bright and lovely star—the star which draws the gaze of those on land and those at sea equally heavenward—the star of the Sabbath. For afloat, as on shore, there rise from the lips of men the same prayers for pardon, help, and peace, couched in the same simple words; the same hymns of praise, with the very tunes which in many

instances we first heard from our mothers' lips; and many a heart flies back over those thousand miles of ocean to join with other hearts, which in their turn are going forth to meet them guided by the spirit of love.

I remember well the first Sunday I spent at sea. Our hearts were still aching from the strain which had broken all the ties which bound us to home; England was hardly yet out of sight; the echo of that saddest of all words, 'Good-bye,' was still ringing in our ears, and the well-known prayers brought back vividly to our minds the surroundings inseparably connected with them in our young lives: the parish church, the familiar faces, the village where our boyhood had been spent, each humble cottage, each shady tree, each barn and hovel. But a Sunday at sea in the service of Her Majesty, though affording us this one great and precious link with our loved ones at home, cannot be said under all circumstances to continue the resemblance. There are conditions under which divine worship is conducted afloat which are utterly without parallel in the house of God ashore. The wind may roar and the squalls may burst savagely upon the high-pitched roof of the church; but the congregation is unaffected by the circumstance, save for sundry fears and anxieties as to the means of getting home dry-shod. But what if the edifice itself were to begin to roll and sway itself about in such bewildering fashion as to make the locality of each individual worshipper a matter of anxious doubt and difficulty? What if the very element on which it stood were to strive its utmost to increase the disorder?

We had two separate and distinct kinds of divine worship on board, specially adapted to the exigencies of the matter. One was known among us as 'Sit-down' church; the other as 'Stand-up' church. When the wind was fair and the sea smooth, when the sky was clear and the sun bright, when the surface of the ocean was reflecting from myriads of dimpling wavelets the brilliant hue and glancing beams of the firmament above, then Sunday at sea showed no very striking contrast to the day of rest ashore.

The services of the church were prefaced by the service of the state known to us as 'divisions,' when a careful and searching inspection of ship and crew was carried on in grave and decorous silence by captain, commander, and senior lieutenant. The blue-jackets and marines, drawn up on the upper deck, stood at ease 'toeing a line' with almost mathematical accuracy, gravely bowing to each other with unmoved faces as the ship rolled slowly upon the gently heaving surface of the sea; while the officers not actually on duty grouped themselves picturesquely, but with no attempt at regularity, under or abaft the bridge, and remained silent spectators of the function, or conversed in whispers apart. The temptation to illicit skylarking was often too great for the weak minds of the midshipmen; and suppressed forms of mild practical jokes were perpetrated on any of their number whose appearance, attitude, or dress seemed to encourage such a proceeding; otherwise, the silence that prevailed was broken only by an occasional order from the officer of the watch on the bridge.

'Divisions' over, the crew would disperse for a short time while the order to 'rig church' was carried out. In a large frigate, this was always done upon the maindeck, the principal gun-carrying deck, that is, of the ship, thoroughly protected from wind and rain by the upper deck above it. Here accommodation was provided for the men, some five hundred in number, by placing capstan bars and planks across inverted 'wash-deck tubs,' affording thus a kind of rough-and-ready form on which to sit. These were placed 'athwartships,' across the breadth of the deck, while chairs were arranged farther aft for the senior and junior officers, who generally sat on opposite sides of the deck. The chaplain, who on board ship is known by a thousand more or less irreverent names—Padre, Sky-pilot, &c.—is supplied with a portable apparatus as nearly akin to the reading-desk of the shore as the wit of a ship's carpenter can devise. This is also 'rigged' in a commanding position between the officers and men.

All being reported ready to the commander, the order is given to 'toll the bell;' and forthwith the sentry begins to thump slowly and monotonously upon the ship's bell, the clapper of which is held in the hand and used as a hammer, instead of the bell itself being swung. The men are marched off to their places, the officers take their seats, the captain comes out of his cabin, the chaplain enters his desk, and the familiar and solemn words of the service fall upon the ear, accompanied in this case by the muffled groaning of the ship as she sways before the pressure of the breeze. The responses are, as a rule, not loudly or distinctly made, but merely muttered; whereas, were all that congregation of men fully imbued with the spirit of prayer, a great and emphatic stream of supplication should ascend from that compact parish

to the throne of Him who rules the raging of the sea. But when the time arrives for Praise, then, provided that the tune is well known and popular, the blue-jackets break into a burst of song, often most harmonious, always admirable from the power and richness of the volume of sound, and in which many may be noted taking, with well-trained accuracy, the tenor and even the alto parts. This is sometimes led by a small harmonium; sometimes, should the ship be large enough to possess one, by the ship's band. Then follows, as on shore, the sermon; but when at last the blessing has been given, and ere the more seriously inclined have risen from their knees, the loud imperative order comes from the lips of the commander, 'Boatswain's mate, pipe down!' the shrill trill of that petty officer's whistle is instantly raised, in obedience to the mandate, and officers and men leave the maindeck, which is speedily cleared of its Sunday paraphernalia.

This, however, was fine-weather worship, when we could all meet in prayer without hindrance. But there came Sundays when the conditions were far otherwise—when the wind was shrieking and whistling with fiendish uproar through spars and rigging; when the waves were roaring and hissing, striking with the force and thud of a steam-hammer against the bows of the labouring ship, which herself added to the din by the indescribable moans and groans and cracks by which she gave expression to her indignation at such unfair treatment. She would writhe and wallow, would plunge and roll, would tremble and stop, and then make a still more furious rush forward, until all thought of divine worship in the usual form was out of the question. These were the days of 'Stand-up' church, and now the elaborate arrangements of the fine-weather function were conspicuously absent. The maindeck ports were closed, to keep out the hissing and angry seas, and the only light came from the hatchways above, many of them closed by gratings. All stood, officers and men alike; and those who had experience of such things kept their eyes on a handy ringbolt or friendly breeching of a gun, anything, in fact, to which they might cling should the motion of the ship become too violent even for well-trained sea-legs. Then the chaplain, no longer trusting himself within the compass of his reading-desk, but clinging with all the strength of one arm to an iron stanchion supporting the deck above, lifted up his feeble voice in opposition to those of the strident elements, which seemed to unite in the effort to smother his solemn tones with their demoniac uproar, lest they should wing their way upwards and attain their goal. No sermon now, no hymns, no litany, just the simple morning prayers, and the men are dismissed to find what comfort they can on the close, musty, dark, wet decks.

But the Sundays really pregnant with disaster were those when it was impossible for the commanding officer to estimate with certainty the

superior advisability of either form of service. It would be bright and sunny, the upper deck dry and warm, the seas perhaps rather high and long, and the ship inclined to roll and wallow as she sped across them; but it was a great thing to have the men inspected on deck and to keep the maindeck ports open for ventilation and for light. 'Divisions' would certainly be upon the upper deck; but now there was a distinctly humorous element imported into the otherwise serious function. The marines from their double line no longer bowed to each other gravely and gently, but uncertainly and with exaggerated emphasis. The ship would roll heavily to starboard, and the 'Joeys' on that side of the vessel, facing 'inboard,' would assume such an acute angle with the deck as to make one think that they were rehearsing a gymnastic drill of more than usual interest; while the opposite line on the port-side were trying to touch the deck with the backs of their heads while standing at attention. But in a moment all this would be reversed; the old ship would give a staggering pitch, inclining all the line aft, and seriously compromising the steadfastness of not a few; and would then roll over to port with such unexpected suddenness that the most accomplished sea-dogs would hang fire for a moment, and the waverers fall helplessly on the deck and roll away to leeward. The efforts of the remainder, who retained their footing, to appear as if they were unaware of and did not enjoy the misfortune of their comrades, would require the pencil of a Caldecott to depict.

Even the inspecting march of the captain, commander, and attendant satellites, usually conducted with great gravity, solemnity, and sternness, had an element of uncertainty imparted to it which seriously impaired its dignity; and the 'fetching away' of one or two of the party to leeward in a direction obviously opposed to their intentions and wishes, and the sprawling lurches of others, are sure to be immensely enjoyed by the junior members of the gunroom mess. I recollect once how our commodore, a man of small stature, but unusual bulk, came up the after hatchway one stormy morning, and had hardly planted one foot upon the slippery deck, when his heel shot away from under him with the roll of the ship, and he sat down with all the weight of his sixteen stone and with terrific suddenness upon the deck, to the great detriment of his comfort and his dignity.

Divisions over, the question had to be settled, 'Stand-up' or 'Sit-down' church? 'Stand-up' was the safer, no doubt; but there were arguments in favour of 'Sit-down' as well. One such Sunday is clearly graven in my memory. We were running some ten or eleven knots almost dead before the wind, with stun'-sails set on both sides; our speed will show that the wind was strong; we were leaping from one long sea to another, and if the good old ship could do nothing else, she could roll. Her gifts in that particular were truly marvellous. She would go over with a long heavy lurch until the water was bubbling up through her lee scupper-holes; while, if you looked through a weather-port, you stared right up into the sky above; and just when everybody had made up his mind that she had reached her limit on that roll, and would go no farther, she

would hang fire for a minute, as if to consider the matter, and then, with a little kick, would go another degree farther, out of pure mischief. That last kick settled everybody. The steward would roll out of his berth, pursued by a clattering crowd of revolting plates and dishes; the cook would shoot out of the 'galley' with the boiling contents of half-a-dozen capsized mess-kettles washing over him; ship's boys and midshipmen would take frightful headers down yawning hatchways with an apparent impossibility of being ever seen again alive; the sixty-eight-pound shot would leap from their racks, and bound in wild excitement across the maindeck, carrying terror and disaster in their track; the sea-chests would start off from their apparently immovable positions on the lower deck, and indulge in a frantic bacchanalian orgie, which usually ended in one or two of them being precipitated into the hold. Nevertheless, on this particular occasion the sun was bright and the weather delicious; and in an evil moment, the order was given to 'rig church' for the more elaborate form of worship.

Our troubles commenced at once, even while the bell was a-tolling and before the service was begun. It had already been noted as an ominous circumstance that the men who were carrying the reading-desk to its proper station fell down in a heap with that structure on the top of them, and loudly broke the third commandment in consequence; but the order had been given, and must be obeyed. Our boys, a goodly row of stalwart lads, were drawn up aft, opposite the wardroom skylight, which was wide open for air and light; they were under the charge of a ship's corporal, and they 'toed a line' with admirable regularity and discipline under that strict petty-officer's eye. But even the eye of a ship's corporal is of no avail against the laws of nature. The old ship prepared for action; she gave one of her long heavy rolls—down, down, down she went; the boys were taken unawares; they started all together on a fatal slide; there was nothing to bring them up until they caught the coaming of the skylight with their toes; their pace increased, and tripping on the treacherous coaming, they went headlong down the open skylight, and fell crashing on the wardroom table below; while at the same moment, a Portuguese midshipman whom we had on board shot, head first, into the big drum, which was hanging up on the opposite side of the deck, and went rattling, booming, and banging away to leeward, with that unmanageable instrument, amidst a shout of smothered laughter from those around. Roundly did the first lieutenant rate the unfortunate corporal for not keeping the boys in order. It was nothing to him that that functionary was hanging on, nails, teeth, and eyelids, to a ringbolt, to save himself from a similar fate. He was put there to keep order, and he must do his duty, even should the skies fall. Gradually, order is restored; the boys are marched off to their places; the men take their seats on the improvised forms; the officers sit down with some misgivings on their respective chairs; and the Padre commits himself to the protection of his reading-desk with a gleam of satisfaction on his face at noticing that it was securely lashed to his friend the stanchion, and service began.

At first, all went well. The men managed to

keep pretty steady, though, if the topmost man of the row slipped, he bore down upon the next man, who leaned heavily upon the next, and so imperilled the entire row. When we stood up, too, a chair would now and again begin to slide down the incline of the deck; but it was arrested at once by the owner. We got through the Psalms and First Lesson without any serious interruption, though the tendency of some of our chairs to skate off without notice made it almost an impossibility to attend, and caused us serious anxiety, the more so as a sea had occasionally 'plopped' up through the ports and made the decks more slippery than ever. We had reached the middle of the Second Lesson, when our chief-engineer suddenly started off on his chair at the top of a terrific roll, at a hand-gallop. He was a very tall man, with unusually long legs, and his only hope of salvation would have been to rise instantly—a difficult matter, when your chair has commenced its career and the angle of the deck is increasing every moment—and, abandoning his seat, to seek security by grasping the nearest fixture. But our gallant chief lost his head. He madly tucked his long legs up on each side of his chair, and, with horror depicted on his countenance, bore straight down upon the wardroom skylight with a velocity far beyond that of a Canadian tobogganer. It seemed that nothing but a miracle could save him from the fate of the boys; but, recognising his danger, he threw himself sideways off his conveyance just as he reached the fatal coaming, and managed to cling to it with such a frenzied grasp as to arrest his own downward progress, while the chair went bounding into the wardroom, and, smashing a swinging lamp, deluged with oil the ship's log, which had been left open on the table, and utterly ruined it.

But the disaster of the chief engineer was, a second or two after, swallowed up and blotted out by the ruinous calamity which involved the whole ship's company in its malignant embrace. The roll which had well-nigh brought him to destruction was indeed terrific, and many a mess-mate had been on the verge of following him down that fatal slide; but the old ship was now on her mettle, and her counter-roll was a masterpiece. Over, over, over she went, till the terrified occupants of the remaining chairs rose hastily and clung with feverish tenacity to guns, tackles, or bolts, and so saved themselves, while their chairs went rattling down the incline without them. But the ship's company were in a far different position. Up went her port side to the very skies; down sank the starboard side till the seas bubbled and seethed through her wide open ports; then she hesitated a moment, the men hanging on to their seats like grim death, feeling well that they were on the brink of a catastrophe; and then she gave her little kick, and lay down a fathom or so farther. That settled the matter; and with one terrific rattling crash, the mass of men, blue-jackets, marines, and boys went swooping away in one indescribable and chaotic ruin, head over heels, into the lee scuppers, followed by wash-deck tubs, capstan bars, planks, round-shot, and every movable thing on board the ship; and as they lay there inextricably mixed, entangled, huddled up, piled three or four deep on top of each other, three great green seas came

roaring in through the weather-ports in tuns of water, and washed them all down just as thoroughly as if they had been overboard. After that, we piped down.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER III.—ARCADIA.

THE village of Whitestrand, on the Suffolk coast—an oasis in a stretch of treeless desert—was, and is, one of the remotest and most primitive spots to be found anywhere on the shores of England. The railways, running inland away to the west, have left it for ages far in the lurch; and even the two or three belated roads that converge upon it from surrounding villages lead nowhere. It is, so to speak, an absolute terminus. The World's End is the whimsical title of the last house at Whitestrand. The little river Char that debouches into the sea just below the church, with its scattered group of thatched cottages, cuts off the hamlet effectually with its broad estuary from the low stretch of reclaimed and sluice-drained pasture-land of wiry grass that rolls away to southward. The very name Whitestrand, as old as the days of the Danish invasion of the East Anglian plain, at once describes the one striking and noteworthy feature of the entire district. It has absolutely no salient point of its own of any sort, except the hard and firm floor of pure white sand that extends for miles and miles on either side of the village.

All Whitestrand—what there was left of it—belonged to Mr Wyville Meysey. His family had bought the manor and estate a hundred years before, when the banking firm of Meysey's in the Strand was in the first heyday of its financial glory. Unhappily for him, his particular ancestor, a collateral member of the great house, had preferred the respectable position of a country gentleman to an active share in the big concern in London. From that day forth, the sea had been steadily eating away the Meysey estate, till very little was left of it now but salt marsh and sandhills and swampy pasture-lands.

It was Tuesday when Hugh Massinger and Warren Relf set sail from the Tower on their voyage in the *Mud-Turtle* down the crowded tidal Thames; on Thursday morning, two pretty girls sat together on the roots of an old gnarled poplar that overhung the exact point where the Char empties itself into the German Ocean. The Whitestrand poplar, indeed, had formed for three centuries a famous landmark to seafaring men who coast round the inlets of the Eastern Counties.

The elder of the two girls who sat together picturesquely on this natural rustic seat was dark and handsome, and so like Hugh Massinger himself in face and feature, that no one would have had much difficulty in recognising her for the second cousin of whom he had spoken, Elsie

Challoner. Her expression was more earnest and serious, to be sure, than the London poet's; her type of beauty was more tender and true; but she had the same large melting pathetic eyes, the same melancholy and chiselled mouth, the same long black wiry hair, and the same innate grace of bearing and manner in every movement as her distinguished relative. The younger girl, her pupil, was fairer and shorter, a pretty and delicate blonde of eighteen, with clear blue eyes and wistful mouth, and a slender but dainty girlish figure. They sat hand in hand on the roots of the tree, half overarched by its hollow funnel, looking out together over the low flat sea, whose fresh breeze blew hard in their faces, with the delicious bracing coolness and airiness peculiar to the shore of the German Ocean. There is no other air in all England to equal that strong air of Suffolk; it seems to blow right through and through one, and to brush away the dust and smoke of town from all one's pores with a single whiff of its clear bright purity.

'How do you think your cousin'll come, Elsie?' the younger girl asked, twisting her big straw hat by its strings carelessly in her hands. 'I expect he'll drive over in a carriage from Daw's from the Almundham Station.'

'I'm sure I don't know, dear,' the elder and darker answered with a smile.—'But how awfully interested you seem to be, Winifred, in this celebrated cousin of mine! What a thing it is for a man to be a poet! You've talked of nothing else the whole morning.'

Winifred laughed. 'Cousins are so very rare in this part of the country, you see,' she said apologetically. 'We don't get sight of a cousin, you know—or, for the matter of that, of any other male human being, erect upon two legs, and with a beard on his face—twice in a twelve-month. A live young man in a tourist suit is quite a rarity, I declare, nowadays.—And then a poet too! I never in my life set eyes yet upon a genuine all-wool unadulterated poet.—And you say he's handsome, extremely handsome!'

'Winifred! Winifred! you naughty bad girl!' Elsie laughed out, half in jest and half in earnest, 'moderate your transports. You've got no sense of propriety in you, I do believe—and no respect for your instructress's dignity either. I oughtn't to let you talk on like that.—But as it's only Hugh, after all, I suppose it really doesn't matter. I look upon Hugh, Winnie, like my own brother.'

'What a jolly name—Hugh!' Winifred cried, enthusiastically. 'It goes so awfully well together, too, Hugh Massinger. There's a great deal in names going well together. I wouldn't marry a man called Adair, now, Elsie, or O'Dowd, either, not if you were to pay me for it (though why you should pay me, I'm sure I don't know), for Winifred Adair doesn't sound a bit nice; and yet Elsie Adair goes just beautifully.—Winifred Challoner—that's not bad, either. Three syllables, with the accent on the first. Winifred Massinger—that sounds very well too; best of all, perhaps. I shouldn't mind marrying a man named Massinger.'

'Other things equal,' Elsie put in laughing.

'Oh, of course he must have a moustache,' Winifred went on in quite a serious voice.

'Even if a man was a poet, and was called Massinger, and had lovely eyes, and could sing like a nightingale, but hadn't a moustache—a beautiful, long, wiry, black moustache, like the curate's at Snade—I wouldn't for the world so much as look at him. No close-shaven young man need apply. I insist upon a moustache as absolutely indispensable. Not red: red is quite inadmissible. If ever I marry—and I suppose I shall have to, some day, to please papa—I shall lay it down as a fixed point in the settlements, or whatever you call them, that my husband must have a black moustache, and must bind himself down by contract beforehand as long as I live never to shave it.'

Elsie shaded her eyes with her hand and looked out seaward. 'I shan't let you talk so any more, Winnie,' she said, with a vigorous effort to be sternly authoritative. 'It isn't right; and you know it isn't. The instructress of youth must exert her authority. We ought to be as grave as a couple of church owls.—What a funny small sailing-boat that is on the sea out yonder! A regular little tub! So flat and broad! She's the roundest boat I ever saw in my life. How she dances about like a walnut-shell on the top of the water!'

'Oh, that's the *Mud-Turtle*!' Winifred cried eagerly, anxious to display her nautical knowledge to the full extent before Elsie, the town-bred governess. 'She's a painter's yawl, you know. I've seen her often. She belongs to an artist, a marine artist, who comes this way every summer to sketch and paint mud-banks.'

'She's coming in here now, I think,' Elsie murmured, half aloud.—'O no; she's not; she's gone beyond it, towards the point at Walberswick.'

'That's only to tack,' Winifred answered with conscious pride in her superior knowledge. 'She's got to tack because of the wind, you know. She'll come up the creek as soon as she catches the breeze. She'll luff soon.—Look there, now; they're luffing her. Then in a minute they'll put her about a bit, and tack again for the creek's mouth.—There you are, you see: she's tacking, as I told you.—That's the artist, the shorter man in the sailor's jersey. He looks like a common A.B. when he's got up so in his seafaring clothes; but when you hear him speak, you can tell at once by his voice he's really a gentleman. I don't know who the second man is, though, the tall man in the tweed suit—he's not the one that generally comes—that's Mr Potts. But, oh, isn't he handsome! I wonder if they're going to sail close alongside. I do hope they are. The water's awfully deep right in by the poplar here. If they turn up the creek, they'll run under the roots just below us.—They seem to be making signs to us now.—Why, Elsie, the man in the tweed suit's waving his hand to you!'

Elsie's face was crimson to look upon. As the instructress of youth, she felt herself distinctly discomposed. 'It's my cousin,' she cried, jumping up in a tremor of excitement and waving back to him eagerly with her tiny handkerchief. 'It's Hugh Massinger! How very delightful! He must have come down by sea with the painter.'

'They're going to run in just close by the tree,' Winifred exclaimed, quite excited also at the sudden apparition of the real live poet. 'O Elsie,

doesn't he just look poetical! A man with a face and eyes like that couldn't help writing poetry, even if he didn't want to. He must be a friend of Mr Relf's, I suppose. What a lovely, romantic, poetical way to come down from London—tossing about at sea in a glorious breeze on a wee bit of a tub like that funny little *Mud-Turtle*!

By this time, the yawl, with the breeze in her sails, had run rapidly before the wind for the mouth of the river, and was close upon them by the roots of the poplar. As it neared the tree, Hugh stood up on the deck, bronzed and ruddy with his three days' yachting, and called out cheerily in a loud voice: 'Hillo, Elsie, this is something like a welcome! We arrive at the port, after a stormy passage on the high seas, and are met at its mouth by a deputation of the leading inhabitants. Shall we take you on board with your friend at once, and carry you up the rest of the way to Whitestrand?'

Elsie's heart came up into her mouth. She would have given the world to be able to cry out cordially: 'O Hugh, that'd be just lovely;' but propriety and a sense of the duties of her position compelled her instead to answer in a set voice: 'Well, thank you; it's ever so kind of you, Hugh; but we're here in our own grounds, you know, already.—This is Miss Meysey, Winifred Meysey: Winnie, this is my cousin Hugh, dear. Now you know one another.—Hugh, I'm so awfully glad to see you!'

Warren Relf turned the bow toward the tree, and ran the yawl close alongside till her tiny taffrail almost touched the roots of the big poplar. 'That's better,' he said.—'Now, Massinger, introduce us. You do it like a Lord Chamberlain, I know.'

'You won't come up with us, then, Miss Chal-loner?' asked Hugh.

Elsie bent her head. 'We mustn't,' she said candidly, 'though I own I should like it. It's so very long since I've seen you, Hugh. Where are you going to stop at in the village? You must come up this very afternoon to see me.'

Hugh bowed a bow of profound acquiescence. 'If you say so,' he answered with less languor than his wont, 'your will is law. We shall certainly come up.—I suppose I may bring my friend Relf with me—the owner and skipper of this magnificent and luxurious vessel?—We've had the most delightful passage down, Elsie. I never in my life felt anything like it. The blood of the old Sea-kings comes up in my veins, and I've been rhyming "viking" and "liking," and "striking" and "diking" ever since we got well clear of London Bridge, till this present moment.—I shall write a volume of Sonnets of the Sea, and dedicate them duly to you—and Miss Meysey.'

As for Winifred, with a red rose spreading over all her face, she said nothing; but twirling her hat still in her hand, she gazed and gazed open-eyed, and almost open-mouthed—except that an open mouth is so very unbecoming—upon the wonderful stranger with the big dark eyes, who had thus dropped down from the clouds upon the manor of Whitestrand.

'I'll put her in nearer,' Warren Relf said quietly, after a few minutes, glancing with mute admiration at Elsie's beautiful face and slim figure.—'We'll lie by here for half an hour,

Hugh, and if you prefer it, I'll put you ashore, and you can walk up through the grounds of the Hall, while I navigate the ship to the *Fisherman's Rest*, up yonder at Whitestrand.'

As he spoke, he put over the boom for a moment, to lay her in nearer to the roots of the tree. It was an unlucky movement. Winifred was sitting close to the water's edge, with her hat in her hand, dangling over the side. The boom, flapping suddenly in the wind with an unexpected twirl, struck her wrist a smart blow, and made her drop the hat with a cry of pain into the current of the river. Tide was on the ebb; and almost before they had time to see what had happened, the hat had floated on the swift stream far out of reach, and was careering hastily in circling eddies on its way seaward.

Hugh Massinger was too good an actor, and too good a swimmer into the bargain, to let slip such a splendid opportunity for a bit of cheap and effective theatrical display. The eyes of Europe and of Elsie were upon him—not to mention the unknown young lady, who, for aught he knew to the contrary, might perhaps turn out to be a veritable heiress to the manor of Whitestrand. In a second, he had pulled off his coat and boots—sprung lightly to the further deck of the *Mud-Turtle*, and taken a header in his knickerbockers and stockings and flannel shirt into the muddy water. In nothing does a handsome man look handsomer than in knickerbockers and flannels. The tide was setting strong in a fierce stream round the corner of the tree, and a few stout strokes, made all the stouter by the consciousness of an admiring trio of spectators, brought the eager swimmer fairly abreast of the truant hat in mid-current. He grasped it hastily in his outstretched hand, waved it with a flourish high above his head, and gave it a twist or two of playful triumph, all wet and dripping, in his graceful fingers, before he turned. An act of daring is nothing if not gracefully or masterfully performed. And then he wheeled round to swim back to the yawl again.

In that, however, he had reckoned clearly without his host. The water proved in fact a most inhospitable entertainer. Hand over hand, he battled hard against the rapid current, tying the recovered hat loosely around his neck by its ribbon strings, and striking out vigorously with his cramped and trammelled legs in the vain effort to stem and breast the rushing water. After thirty or forty strokes, he looked in front of him casually, and saw, to his surprise, not to say discomfiture, that he was farther away from the yawl than ever. This was distressing—this was even ignominious; to any other man than Hugh Massinger, it would indeed have been actually alarming. He only thought to himself how ridiculous and futile he must needs look to that pair of womankind in having attempted with so light a heart a feat that was utterly beyond his utmost powers.

Vanity is a mighty ruler of men. If Hugh Massinger had stopped there till he died, he would never have called aloud for help. Better peace with honour, on the damp bed of a muddy stream, than the shame and sin of confessing one's self openly beaten in fair fight by a mere insignificant tidal river. It was Elsie who first recognised the straits he was in—for though love is blind, yet love is

sharp-eyed—and cried out to Warren Relf in an agony of fear: 'He can't get back! The stream's too much for him!—Quick, quick! You've not a moment to lose! Put about the boat at once and save him!'

With a hasty glance, Relf saw she was right, and that Hugh was unable to battle successfully with the rapid current. He turned the yawl's head with all speed outward, and took a quick tack to get behind the baffled swimmer and intercept him, if possible, on his way toward the sea, whither he was now so quickly and helplessly drifting.

CHAPTER IV.—BURIDAN'S ASS.

For a minute the two girls stood in breathless suspense: then Warren Relf, cutting in behind with the yawl, flung out a coil of rope in a ring towards Hugh with true seafaring dexterity, so that it struck the water straight in front of his face flat like a quoit, enabling him to grasp it and haul himself in without the slightest difficulty. The help came in the nick of time, yet most inopportunist. Hugh would have given worlds just then to be able to disregard his proffered aid, and to swim ashore by the tree in lordly independence without extraneous assistance. It is grotesque to throw yourself wildly in, like a hero or a Leander, and then have to be tamely pulled out again by another fellow. But he recognised the fact that the struggle was all in vain, and that the interests of English literature and of a well-known insurance office in which he held a small life policy, imperatively demanded acquiescence on his part in the friendly rescue. He grasped the rope with a very bad grace indeed, and permitted Relf to haul him in, hand over hand, to the side of the *Mud-Turtle*.

Yet, as soon as he stood once more on the yawl's deck, dripping and unpicturesque in his clinging clothes, but with honour safe, and the lost hat now clasped tight in his triumphant right hand, it began to occur to him that, after all, the little adventure had turned out in its way quite as romantic, not to say effective, as could have been reasonably expected. He forgave himself his wet and unbecoming attire, as he handed the hat, with as graceful a bow as circumstances permitted, from the yawl's side to Winifred Meysey, who stretched out her hands, all blushes and thanks and apologetic regrets, from the roots of the poplar by the edge, to receive it.

'And now, Elsie,' Hugh cried, with such virile cheerfulness as a man can assume who stands shivering in wet clothes before a keen east wind, 'perhaps we'd better make our way at once up to Whitestrand without further delay to change our garments.—Miss Meysey, I'm afraid your hat's spoiled.—Put her about now, Relf. Let's run up quick. I don't mind how soon I get to Whitestrand.'

Warren Relf headed the yawl round with the wind, and they ran merrily before the stiff breeze up stream towards the village.

'O Elsie,' cried Winifred, 'it was so grand! Wasn't it just magnificent of him to jump in like that after my poor old straw? I never saw anything so lovely in my life. Exactly like the sort of things one reads about in novels!'

Elsie smiled a more sober smile of maturer appreciation. 'Hugh's always so,' she answered,

with proprietary pride in her manly and handsome and chivalrous cousin.

The men made their way up stream to Whitestrand, and landed at last, with an easy run, beside the little hithe. At the village inn—the *Fisherman's Rest*, by W. Stannaway—Hugh Massinger, in spite of his disreputable dampness, soon obtained comfortable board and lodging, on Warren Relf's recommendation. Relf was in the habit of coming to Whitestrand frequently, and was 'well-known,' as the landlord remarked, to the entire village, children included, so that any of his friends was immediately welcome at the quaint old public-house by the water's edge.

'I'll change my clothes in a jiffy,' the poet cried to his friend as he leapt ashore, 'and be back with you at once, a new creature.'

In ten minutes he emerged again, as he had predicted, in the front room, another man—an avatar of glory—resplendent in a light-brown velvet coat and Rembrandt cap, that served still more obviously than ever to emphasise the full nature and extent of his poetical pretensions. It was a coat that a laureate might have envied and dreamt about. The man who could carry such a coat as that could surely have written the whole of the *Divina Commedia* before breakfast, and tossed off a book or two of *Paradise Lost* in a brief interval of morning leisure.

'Awfully pretty girl that,' he said as he entered, and drummed on the table with impatient forefinger for the expected steak: 'the little one, I mean, of course—not my cousin. Fair, too. In some ways I prefer them fair. Though dark girls have more go in them, after all, I fancy; for dark and true and tender is the North, according to Tennyson. But fair or dark, North or South, like Horniman's teas, they're "all good alike," if you take them as assorted. And she's charmingly fresh and youthful and naive.'

'She's pretty, certainly,' Warren Relf replied with a certain amount of unusual stiffness apparent in his manner; 'but not anything like so pretty, to my mind, or so graceful either, as your cousin, Miss Challoner.'

'Oh, Elsie's well enough in her own way, no doubt,' Hugh went on with a smile of expansive admiration. 'I like them all in their own way. I'm nothing, indeed, if not catholic and eclectic. On the whole, one girl's much the same as another, if only she gives you the true poetic thrill. But the other—Miss Meysey, now—who's she, I wonder?—Good name, Meysey. It sounds like money, and it suggests daisy. There was a Meysey a banker in the Strand, you know—not very daisy-like, that, is it?—and another who did something big in the legal way—a judge, I fancy. He doubtless sat on the royal bench of British Themis with immense applause (which was instantly suppressed), and left his family a pot of money. Meysey—lazy—crazy—hazy. None of them'll do, you see, for a sonnet but daisy.—How many more Miss Meyseys are there, if any? I wonder. And if not, has she got a brother? So pretty a girl deserves to have tin. If I were a childless, rich old man, I think I'd inconspicuously establish and endow her, just to improve the beauty and the future of the race, on the strictest evolutionary and Darwinian principles.'

'Her father's the Squire here,' Warren Relf replied, with a somewhat uneasy glance at Hugh, shot sideways. 'He lords the manor and a great part of the parish. Wyville Meysey's his full name. He's rich, they say, tolerably rich still; though a big slice of the estate south of the river has been swallowed up by the sea, or buried in the sand, or otherwise disposed of. But north of the river, they say he's all right. That's his place, the house in the fields, just up beyond the poplar. I daresay you didn't notice it as we passed, for it's built low—Elizabethan, half-hidden in the trees. All the big houses along the East Coast are always planned rather squat and flat, to escape the wind, which runs riot here in the winter. The old gentleman's connected with the bankers in the Strand—some sort of a cousin or other, more or less distantly removed, I fancy.'

'And the sons?' Hugh asked, with evident interest, tracking the subject to its solid kernel.

'The sons? There are none. They had one once, I believe—a dragoon or hussar—but he was shot, out soldiering in Zululand or somewhere; and this daughter's now the sole living representative of the entire family.'

'So she's an heiress?' Hugh inquired, getting warmer at last, as children say at Hide-and-seek.

'Ye-es. In her way—no doubt, an heiress.—Not a very big one, I suppose, but still what one might fairly call an heiress. She'll have whatever's left to inherit.—You seem very anxious to know all about her.'

'Oh, one naturally likes to know where one stands—before committing one's self to anything foolish,' Hugh murmured placidly. 'And in this wicked world of ours, where heiresses are scarce—and actions for breach of promise painfully common—one never knows beforehand where a single false step may happen to land one. I've made mistakes before now in my life; I don't mean to make another one through insufficient knowledge, if I can help it.'

He took up a pen that lay before him upon the table of the little sitting-room, and began drawing idly with it some curious characters on the back of an envelope he pulled from his pocket. Relf sat and watched him in silence.

Presently, Massinger began again. 'You're very much shocked at my sentiments, I can see,' he said quietly, as he glanced with approval at his careless hieroglyphics.

Relf drew his hand over his beard twice. 'Not so much shocked as grieved, I think,' he replied after a moment's pause.

'Why grieved?'

'Well, because, Massinger, it was impossible for any one who saw her this morning to doubt that Miss Challoner is really in love with you.'

Hugh went on fiddling with the pen and ink and the envelope nervously. 'You think so?' he asked, with some eagerness in his voice, after another short pause. 'You think she really likes me?'

'I don't merely think so,' Relf answered with confidence; 'I'm absolutely certain of it—as sure as I ever was of anything. Remember, I'm a painter, and I have a quick eye. She was deeply moved when she saw you come.

It meant a great deal to her.—I should be sorry to think you would play fast and loose with any girl's affections.'

'It's not the girl's affections I play fast and loose with,' Massinger retorted lazily. 'I deeply regret to say it's very much more my own I trifle with. I'm not a fool; but my one weak point is a too susceptible disposition. I can't help falling in love—really in love—not merely flirting—with any nice girl I happen to be thrown in with. I write her a great many pretty verses; I send her a great many charming notes; I say a great many foolish things to her; and at the time I really mean them all. My heart is just at that precise moment the theatre of a most agreeable and unaffected flutter. I think to myself, "This time, it's serious." I look at the moon, and feel sentimental. I apostrophise the fountains, meadows, valleys, hills, and groves to forebode not any severing of our loves. And then I go away and reflect calmly, in the solitude of my own chamber, what a precious fool I've been—for, of course, the girl's always a penniless one—I've never had the luck or the art yet to captivate an heiress; and when it comes to breaking it all off, I assure you it costs me a severe wrench, a wrench that I wish I was sensible enough to foresee or adequately to guard against, on the prevention-better-than-cure principle.'

'And the girl?' Relf asked, with a growing sense of profound discomfort, for Elsie's face and manner had instantly touched him.

'The girl,' Massinger replied, putting a finishing stroke or two to the queer formless sketch he had scrawled upon the envelope, and fixing it up in the frame of a cheap lithograph that hung from a nail upon the wall opposite: 'well, the girl probably regrets it also, though not, I sincerely trust, so profoundly as I do. In this case, however, it's a comfort to think Elsie's only a cousin. Between cousins there can be no harm, you will readily admit, in a little innocent flirtation.'

'It's more than a flirtation to her, I'm sure,' Relf answered, with a dubious shake of his head. 'She takes it all *au grand sérieux*.—I hope you don't mean to give her one of these horrid wrenches you talk so lightly about?—Why, Massinger, what on earth is this? I—I didn't know you could do this sort of thing!'

He had walked across carelessly, as he paced the room, to the lithograph in whose frame the poet had slipped the back of his envelope, and he was regarding the little addition now with eyes of profound astonishment and wonder. The picture was a coarsely executed portrait of a distinguished statesman, reduced to his shirt-sleeves, and caught in the very act of felling a tree; and on the scrap of envelope, in exact imitation of the right honourable gentleman's own familiar signature, Hugh had written in bold free letters the striking inscription, 'W. E. Gladstone.'

The poet laughed. 'Yes, it's not so bad,' he said, regarding it from one side with parental fondness. 'I can imitate anybody's hand at sight.—Look here, for example; here's your own.' And taking another scrap of paper from a bundle in his pocket, he wrote, with rapid and practised mastery, 'Warren H. Relf' on a corner of the sheet in the precise likeness of the painter's own large and flowing handwriting.

Relf gazed over his shoulder in some surprise,

not wholly unmingled with a faint touch of alarm. 'I'm an artist, Massinger,' he said slowly, as he scanned it close; 'but I couldn't do that, no, not if you were to pay me for it. I could paint anything you chose to set me, in heaven above, or earth beneath, or the waters that are under the earth; but I couldn't make a decent fac-simile of another man's autograph.—And, do you know, on the whole I'm awfully glad that I could never possibly learn to do it.'

Massinger smiled a languid smile. 'In the hands of the foolish,' he said, addressing his soul to the beefsteak which had at last arrived, 'no doubt such abilities are liable to serious abuse.'

RAILWAY-TRAIN TELEGRAPHY.

TELEGRAPHING to and from trains in motion is a method of communication possessing so many evident advantages, that the efforts of men eminent in this branch of science have during recent years been perseveringly directed against the very great difficulties which up to the present time have defied all attempts to solve in a practical manner this most important application of the art of telegraphy. Such efforts richly deserve the success with which they have been rewarded; and the month of October 1887, in which the experimental trials gave such satisfactory results, will mark an epoch in the history of the progress of this wonderful science.

Like a great many others connected with the successful diversion of the electric current during recent years into channels which supply the wants and wishes of man, this problem has been worked out by American scientists, whose labours in this particular field produce a richer harvest than elsewhere. We first of all hear of a patent being issued to Mr Wiley Smith by the United States in 1881; then of the practical experiments on the New York, Newhaven, and Hartford Railroad, carried on with remarkable success by Mr Phelps in 1885; and now, in 1887, we hear of the improved Phelps's system working most satisfactorily over the Lehigh Valley Railroad in the presence of two hundred and thirty witnesses. In this system Mr Phelps is assisted by the devices of such eminent electricians as Edison, Gilliland, and Smith; and so perfect is it, that a train running at the rate of sixty miles an hour can send or receive messages without difficulty. To convey a message along a wire is no longer a surprise to ordinary minds in civilised countries; but to convey a message where, as in the case of a moving train, there can be no stationary wire, must seem little less than miraculous to minds ignorant of the power of inductive influence possessed by the electric current. This inductive power is so great, however, that, under the skilful management of the inventors whose names are given above, the message jumps, as it were, from the telegraph wires to the train, or *vice versa*, over a distance of more than twenty feet. To give a general idea of the manner in which the transmission is accomplished, we purpose to describe in simple language the method first tried by Phelps in 1885, which in principle does not differ from that now adopted.

He laid a well-insulated wire between the rails for the purpose of conveying messages to and from the train. This wire was connected by ordi-

nary telegraph wires with the instruments in the stations. In order to establish communication between these instruments and the ones in the train, it was of course necessary that a special telegraph car should be constructed. Below this car, and at a height of only seven inches above the wire between the rails, was suspended a two-inch iron pipe, containing a continuous coil or circuit of insulated copper wire about a mile and a half long. One end of this wire was carried to the roof of the car, and thence to the instruments inside. Now, suppose a message is being transmitted along the wire between the rails, the electric current flowing along this wire acts inductively on the mile-and-a-half coil attached to the telegraph car. The message is conveyed from this coil to the car in the ordinary way; but as the induced current set up in this coil is a very feeble one, it requires to be strengthened before it can be turned to any practical use.—The current in this coil as truly represents that in the wire between the rails as a reflection in the water represents an object in the atmosphere above; and as the reflection is dimmer than the object, so also, in this case, is the induced or secondary current feebler than the primary.—This strengthening process is accomplished by means of what electricians call a 'relay,' which is simply an instrument ingeniously designed for the purpose of admitting the influx of a current of electricity from a battery at the receiving station. The first current is but a tiny rivulet, the tributary current is a mighty river; but the characteristics of the former, instead of being lost in the volume of the latter, are accentuated and magnified, and so the message becomes audible. To understand more clearly the action of the relay, the reader may be reminded that messages are conveyed by means of frequent interruptions of the electric current as it passes along the wire; the relay at every interruption of the first current cuts off the current from the local battery, but admits it during the intervals between the interruptions, and thus the message is strengthened without being otherwise altered.

There are other instruments and arrangements besides those already mentioned, but we cannot describe them here. One, however, must not be omitted. It is called a 'buzzer,' from the resemblance of the sound it produces to the buzzing of a bee. It is a rapid current-breaker at regular intervals, and was specially designed for this purpose by Mr Phelps. Current-breakers are common enough in electric apparatus of various kinds. The ordinary electric bell is worked by a current-breaker; the electric machines so common in the streets possess current-breakers; the induction coil of Ruhmkorff also possesses a current-breaker. Phelps's 'buzzer' is similar in principle. The sound of the buzzer, although, strictly speaking, the very reverse of continuous, appears to be unbroken. When messages are transmitted, the sound is broken by means of the Morse key into the usual signals for letters; and the sensibly and irregularly interrupted sounds now find their way to a telephone, which, for the sake of convenience, is strapped to the head of the official who interprets the words which reach his ear under the (to him) familiar guise of the Morse alphabet.

Such, then, is the outline of the Phelps's system

of 1885. Time has effected many improvements on it, a few of which we will mention. In the first place, the wire laid between the rails is dispensed with, an ordinary telegraph line fixed on poles about sixteen feet high and eight feet from the rails having been found to answer every purpose. The latter is of course much cheaper, and is less likely from its position to suffer damage. In the second place, the mile-and-a-half of wire coiled in the two-inch pipe beneath the telegraph car is rejected, as a natural consequence of the preceding. Instead of it, the roof-sheathing of the car, which is usually of metal, is made to do duty; and when the metallic sheathing is absent, a tube or rod half an inch in diameter carried along the eaves the entire length of the train, is equally serviceable. On the whole, the improvements tend towards economy and convenience, but do not at all interfere with the principle of the Phelps's system.

Already messages are being sent by this means, the charges being only ten cents in addition to Western Union rates. Not more than fifty-five miles of the Lehigh Valley Railroad are yet fitted with the necessary appliances; but the system is being extended to the entire line as rapidly as possible; and other railway Companies are making arrangements for adopting it.

The advantages of such a system cannot be over-estimated. Not only can business men send telegrams while travelling, but the guard of the train and the traffic superintendent can be in constant communication with each other, and the guard of one train can signal to the guard of another. If only the number of serious railway accidents—which are becoming more and more disastrous as speed is increased and implicit trust reposed in instantaneous brakes—is diminished, the advent of this new invention should be welcomed; but whatever may be its future, we must agree with Colonel Gourand, who, at the dinner held subsequent to the recent trial, declared that, accustomed as he was to electrical surprises, that day's performances had been to him a 'revelation.'

THE GOLDEN INCUBUS.

CHAPTER IV.—A LITTLE SKIRMISH.

I DIDN'T believe in the people opposite, in spite of their references being said to be good. You may say that's because of what followed; but it isn't, for I didn't like the looks of the stiff elderly Miss Mimprisses; and I didn't like the two forward servants, though they seemed to keep themselves to themselves wonderfully, and no man ever allowed in the house. Worst of all, I didn't like that handsome young Miss Adela, sitting at work over coloured worsted at the dining-room or drawing-room window, for young Mr Barclay was always looking across at her; and though he grew red-faced, my poor Miss Virginia grew every day more pale.

They seemed very strange people over the way, and it was only sometimes on a Sunday that any one at our place caught a glimpse of them, and then one perhaps would come to a window for a few minutes and sit and talk to Miss Adela—one of the elder sisters, I mean; and when I caught sight of them, I used to think

that it was no wonder they had taken to dressing so primly and so plain, for they must have given up all hope of getting husbands long before.

Mr Barclay suggested to Sir John twice in my hearing that he should invite his new tenants over to dinner; and once, in a hesitating way, hinted something about Miss Virginia calling. But Sir John only grunted; while I saw my dear young lady dart such an indignant look at Mr Barclay as made him silent for the rest of the evening, and seem ashamed of what he had said.

I talked about it a good deal to Tom as I sat before my pantry fire of an evening; and he used to leap up in my lap and sit and look up at me with his big eyes, which were as full of knowingness at those times as they were stupid and slit-like at others. He was a great favourite of mine was Tom, and had been ever since I found him, a half-starved kitten in the area, and took him in and fed him till he grew up the fine cat he was.

'There's going to be trouble come of it, Tom,' I used to say; and to my mind, the best thing that could have happened for us would have been for over-the-way to have stopped empty; for, instead of things going on smoothly and pleasantly, they got worse every day. Sir John said very little, but he was a man who noticed a great deal. Mr Barclay grew restless and strange, but he never said a word now about going away. While, as for Miss Virginia, she seemed to me to be growing older and more serious in a wonderful way; but when she was spoken to, she had always a pleasant smile and a bright look, though it faded away again directly, just as the sunshine does when there are clouds. She used to pass the greater part of her time reading to Sir John, and she kept his accounts for him and wrote his letters; and one morning as I was clearing away the breakfast things, Mr Barclay being there, reading the paper, Sir John says sharply: 'Those people opposite haven't paid their first quarter's rent.'

No one spoke for a moment or two, and then in a fidgety sharp way, Mr Barclay says: 'Why,' it was only due yesterday, father.'

'Thank you, sir,' says Sir John, in a curiously polite way; 'I know that; but it was due yesterday, and it ought to have been paid.—'Ginny, write a note to the Misses Mimpriss with my compliments, and say I shall be obliged by their sending the rent.'

Miss Virginia got up and walked across to the writing-table; and I went on very slowly clearing the cloth, for Sir John always treated me as if I was a piece of furniture; but I felt uncomfortable, for it seemed to me that there was going to be a quarrel.

I was right; for as Miss Virginia began to write, Mr Barclay crushed the newspaper up in his hands and said hotly: 'Surely, father, you are not going to insult those ladies by asking them for the money the moment it is due.'

'Yes, I am, sir,' says the old gentleman sharply; 'and you mind your own business. When I'm dead, you can collect your rents as you like; while I live I shall do the same.'

Miss Virginia got up quickly and went and laid her hand upon Sir John's breast without

saying a word; but her pretty appealing act meant a deal, and the old man took the little white hand in his and kissed it tenderly. 'You go and do as I bid you, my pet,' he said; 'and you, Burdon, wait for the note, take it over, and bring an answer.'

'Yes, Sir John,' I said quietly; and I heard Miss Virginia give a little sob as she went and sat down and began writing. Then I saw that the trouble was coming, and that there was to be a big quarrel between father and son.

'Look here, father,' says Mr Barclay, getting up and walking about the room, 'I never interfere with your affairs'—

'I should think not, sir,' says the old man, very sarcastic-like.

'But I cannot sit here patiently and see you behave in so rude a way to those four ladies who honour you by being your tenants.'

'Say I feel greatly surprised that the rent was not sent over yesterday, my dear,' says Sir John, without taking any notice of his son.

'Yes, uncle,' says Miss Virginia. She always called him 'uncle,' though he wasn't any relation.

'It's shameful!' cried Mr Barclay. 'The result will be that they will give you notice and go.'

'Good job too,' said Sir John. 'I don't like them, and I wish they had not come.'

'How can you be so unreasonable, father?' cried the young man hotly.

'Look here, Bar,' says Sir John ('Fold that letter and seal it with my seal, 'Ginny')—'look here, Bar.'

I glanced at the young man, and saw him pass his hand across his forehead so roughly that the big signet ring he wore—the old-fashioned one Sir John gave him many years before, and which fitted so tightly now that it wouldn't come over the joint—made quite a red mark on his brow.

'I don't know what you are going to say, father,' cried Mr Barclay quickly; 'but, for heaven's sake, don't treat me as a boy any longer, and I implore you not to send that letter.'

There was a minute's silence, during which I could hear Mr Barclay breathing hard. Then Sir John began again. 'Look here, sir,' he said. 'Over and over again, you've wanted to go away and travel, and I've said I didn't want you to go. During the past three months you've altered your mind.'

'Altered my mind, sir?' says the young man sharply.

'Yes, sir; and I've altered mine. That's fair. Now, you don't want to go, and I want you to.'

'Uncle!'

'Have you done that letter, my pet?—Yes? That's well. Now, you stand there and take care of me, for fear Mr Barclay should fly in a passion.'

'Sir, I asked you not to treat me like a boy,' says Mr Barclay bitterly.

'I'm not going to,' says Sir John, as he sat playing with Miss Virginia's hand, while I could see that the poor darling's face was convulsed, and she was trying to hide the tears which streamed down. 'I'm going to treat you as a man. You can have what money you want. Be off for a

year's travel. Hunt, shoot, go round the world, what you like; but don't come back here for a twelvemonth.—Burdon, take that letter over to the Misses Mimpriss, and wait for an answer.'

I took the note across, wondering what would be said while I was gone, and knowing why Sir John wanted his son to go as well as he did, and Miss Virginia too, poor thing.

The knocker seemed to make the house opposite echo very strangely, as I thumped; but when the door was opened in a few minutes, everything in the hall seemed very proper and prim, while the maid who came looked as stiff and disagreeable as could be.

'For Miss Mimpriss, from Sir John Drinkwater,' I said; 'and I'll wait for an answer.'

'Very well,' says the woman shortly.

'I'll wait for an answer,' I said, for she was shutting the door.

'Yes; I heard,' she says, and the door was shut in my face.

'Hang all old maids!' I said. 'They needn't be afraid of me;' and there I waited till I heard steps again and the door was opened; and the ill-looking woman says in a snappish tone: 'Miss Adela Mimpriss's compliments, and she'll come across directly.'

'Any one would think I was a wild beast,' I said to myself, as I went back and gave my message, finding all three in the room just as I had left them when I went away.

CHAPTER V.—JAMES BURDON SMELLS FIRE.

Mr Barclay followed me out, and as soon as we were in the hall, 'Burdon,' he says, 'you have a bunch of small keys, haven't you?'

'Yes, Master Barclay, down in my pantry.'

'Lend them to me: I want to try if one of them will fit a lock of mine.'

He followed me down; and I was just handing them to him, when there was a double knock and a ring, and I saw him turn as red as a boy of sixteen found out at some trick.

I hurried up to open the door, leaving him there, and found that it was Miss Adela Mimpriss.

'Will you show me in to Sir John?' she says, smiling; and I did so, leaving them together; and going down-stairs, to see Mr Barclay standing before the fire and looking very strange and stern. He did not say anything, but walked up-stairs again; and I could hear him pacing up and down the hall for quite a quarter of an hour before the bell rang; and then I got up-stairs to find him talking very earnestly to Miss Adela Mimpriss, and she all the time shaking her head and trying to pull away her hand.

I pretended not to see, and went into the dining-room slowly, to find Miss Virginia down on her knees before Sir John, and him with his two hands lying upon her bent head, while she seemed to be sobbing.

'I did not ring, Burdon,' he said huskily.

'Beg pardon, Sir John; the bell rang.'

'Ah, yes. I forgot—only to show that lady out.'

I left the room; and as I did so, I found the front door open, and Mr Barclay on the step, looking across at Miss Adela Mimpriss, who was just tripping up the steps of the house opposite;

and I saw her use a latchkey, open the door, and look round as she was going in, to give Mr Barclay a laughing look; and then the door was closed, and my young master shut ours.

That day and the next passed quietly enough; but I could see very plainly that there was something wrong, for there was a cold way of speaking among our people in the dining-room, the dinner going off terribly quiet, and Sir John afterwards not seeming to enjoy his wine; while Miss Virginia sat alone in the drawing-room over her tea; and Mr Barclay, after giving me back my keys, went up-stairs, and I know he was looking out, for Miss Adela Mimpriss was sitting at the window opposite, and I saw her peep up twice.

This troubled me a deal, for, after all those years, I never felt like a servant, but as if I was one of them; and it made me so upset, that, as I lay in my bed in the pantry that night wondering whether Mr Barclay would go away and forget all about the young lady opposite, and come back in a year and be forgiven, and marry Miss Virginia, I suddenly thought of my keys.

'That's it,' I said. 'It was to try the lock of his portmanteau. He means to go, and it will be all right, after all.'

But somehow, I couldn't sleep, but lay there pondering, till at last I began to sniff, and then started up in bed, thinking of Edward Gunning.

'There's something wrong somewhere,' I said to myself, for quite plainly I could smell burning—the oily smell as of a lamp, a thing I knew well enough, having trimmed hundreds.

At first, I thought I must be mistaken; but no—there it was, strong; and jumping out of bed, I got a light; and to show that I was not wrong, there was my cat Tom looking excited and strange, and trotting about the pantry in a way not usual unless he had heard a rat.

I dressed as quickly as I could, and went out into the passage. All dark and silent, and the smell very faint. I went up-stairs and looked all about; but everything was as I left it; and at last I went down again to the pantry, thinking and wondering, with Tom at my heels, to find that the smell had passed away. So I sat and thought for a bit, and then went to bed again; but I didn't sleep a wink, and somehow all this seemed to me to be very strange.

CHAPTER VI.—A SUDDEN CHANGE.

If any one says I played spy, I am ready to speak up pretty strongly in my self-defence, for my aim always was to do my duty by Sir John my master; but I could not help seeing two or three things during the next fortnight, and they all had to do with a kind of telegraphing going on from our house to the one over the way, where Miss Adela generally appeared to be on the watch; and her looks always seemed to me to say: 'No; you mustn't think of such a thing,' and to be inviting him all the time. Then, all at once I thought I was wrong, for I went up as usual at half-past seven to take Mr Barclay's boots and his clothes which had been brought down the night before, after he had dressed for dinner. I tapped and went in, just as I'd always done ever since he was a boy, and went across to the window and drew the curtains. 'Nice morning, Master Barclay,' I

said. 'Half-past'— There I stopped, and stared at the bed, which all lay smooth and neat, as the housemaid had turned it down, for no one had slept in it that night. I was struck all of a heap, and didn't know what to think. To me it was just like a silver spoon or fork being missing, and setting one's head to work to think whether it was anywhere about the house.

He hadn't stopped to take his wine with Sir John after dinner; but that was nothing fresh, for they'd been very cool lately. Then I hadn't seen him in the drawing-room; but that was nothing fresh neither, for he had avoided Miss Virginia for some little time.

'It is very strange,' I thought, for I had not seen him go out; and then, all at once I gave quite a start, for I felt that he must have done what Sir John had told him to do—gone.

'That won't do,' I said directly after. 'He wouldn't have gone like that;' and I went straight to Sir John's room and told him, as in duty bound, what I had found out, for Mr Barclay was not the young man to be fast and stop out of nights and want the servants to screen him. There was something wrong, I felt sure, and so I said.

'No,' said the old gentleman, as he sat up in bed, and then began to dress; 'he wouldn't go at my wish; but that jade over the way is playing with him, and he is too proud to stand it any longer, besides being mortified at making such an ass of himself. There's nothing wrong, Burdon. He has gone, and a good job too.'

Of course, I couldn't contradict my master; but I went up and examined Mr Barclay's room, to find nothing missing, not so much as a shirt or a pair of socks, only his crush-hat, and the light overcoat from the brass peg in the front hall; and I shook my head.

Miss Virginia looked paler than ever at breakfast; but nothing more was said up-stairs. Of course, the servants gossiped; and as it was settled that Mr Barclay had done what his father had told him, a week passed away, and matters settled down with Miss Adela Mimpriss sitting at the window just as usual, doing worsted-work, and the old house looking as grim as ever, and as if a bit of paint and a man to clean the windows would have been a blessing to us all.

Every time the postman knocked, Miss Virginia would start; and her eyes used to look so wild and large, that when I'd been to the little box and found nothing from Mr Barclay, I used to give quite a gulp; and many's the time I've stood back in the dining-room and shook my fist at Miss Adela sitting so smooth and handsome at the opposite house, and wished she'd been at the world's end before she came there.

CHAPTER VII.—A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

Mr Barclay had been gone three weeks, and no news from him; and I was beginning to think that he had gone off in a huff all at once, though I often wondered how he would manage for want of money, when one night, as I sat nursing Tom, I thought I'd look through my desk, that I hadn't opened for three or four years, and have a look at a few old things I'd got there—a watch Sir John gave me, but which I never wore; six spade-ace guineas; and an old gold pin, beside a few odds

and ends that I'd had for a many years; and some cash. Tom didn't seem to like it, and he stared hard at the desk as I took it on my knees, opened it, lifted one of the flaps, and put my hand upon the old paper which contained the statement about the old gold-plate. No; I did not. I put my hand on the place where it ought to have been; but it wasn't there.

'I must have put it in the other side,' I said to myself; and I opened the other lid.

Then I turned cold, and ran my hand here and there, wild-like, to stop at last with my mouth open, staring. The paper was gone! So was the money, and every article of value that I had hoarded up.

For a few minutes I was too much stunned even to think; and when at last I could get my brain to work, I sat there, feeling a poor, broken, weak old man, and I covered my face with my hands and cried like a child.

'To think of it!' I groaned at length—'him so handsome and so young—him whom I'd always felt so proud of—proud as if he'd been my own son. Why, it would break his father's heart if he knew. It's that cursed woman's doing,' I cried savagely. 'She turned his head, or he'd never have done such a cruel, base, bad act as to rob a poor old man like me.' For I'd recollected lending Mr Barclay my keys, and I felt that sooner than ask his father for money, he had taken what he could find, and gone. 'Let him!' I said savagely at last. 'But he needn't have stolen them. I'd have given him everything I'd got. I'd have sold out the hundred pounds I've got in the bank and lent him that. But he didn't know what he was doing, poor boy. That cursed woman has turned his brain.'

'Ah, well!' I said at last bitterly, 'it's my secret. Sir John shall never know. He trusted me with one, and now his son'— I stopped short there, for I recollected the paper, and fell all of a tremble, thinking of that gold plate, and that some one else knew of its hiding-place now; and I asked myself what I ought to do. For a long time I struggled; but at last I felt that, much as I wanted to hide Mr Barclay's cruelly mean act, I must not keep this thing a secret. 'It's my duty to tell my master,' I said at last, 'and I must.' So I went up to where Sir John was sitting alone, pretending to enjoy his wine, but looking very yellow and old and sunken of face. 'He's fretting about Master Barclay,' I said to myself, and I felt that I could not tell him that the lad had taken my little treasures, but that he must know about the paper, so I up and told him only this at once; and that's why he said I was an old fool, and that it was all my fault.

'Good heavens! you old fool!' he cried excitedly, 'what made you write such a paper? It was like telling all the world.'

'I thought it would be so shocking, Sir John, if we were both to die and the things were forgotten.'

'Shocking? Be a good job,' he cried. 'A man who has a lot of gold in his care is always miserable.—Taken out of your desk, you say. When?'

'Ah, that I can't tell, Sir John. It might have been done years ago, for aught I know.'

'And the old gold plate all stolen and melted down, and spent. Good heavens! Burdon; and

here have I been thinking you a trustworthy man. There; we must see to it at once.—I shan't rest till I know it is safe.'

It seemed to me then that he snatched at the chance of finding something to do to take his attention off his trouble, for when I asked him if I should get a bricklayer to come in, he turned upon me like a lion. 'Burdon,' he said, 'we'll get this job done, and then I shall have to make arrangements for you to go into an imbecile ward.'

'Very good, Sir John,' I said patiently.

'Very good!' he cried, laughing now. 'There; be off, and get together what tools you have, and as soon as the servants have gone to bed, we'll go and open the old cellar ourselves.'

FEMALE GOVERNMENT CLERKS IN AMERICA.

EVERY country has a certain favoured few whose only employer is 'Government,' the Ministry or Administration which for the time holds dominant power; but none can count so many women among these few as the United States. In the Treasury and Interior Departments, in Washington, are many hundreds of women performing the same clerical duties as their brethren do—copying or inditing letters, examining or adjusting claims, scrutinising and correcting returns of gaugers and tobacco inspectors, and keeping sets of books—whose salaries range from twelve to twenty-three pounds per month, some even receiving twenty-seven pounds.

When women were first appointed to these positions, during the closing years of the late civil war, it was looked upon as a temporary and rather rash experiment; they then did mechanical work, such as assorting and packaging the newly issued bonds; counting, recounting, and packaging the 'fractional currency,' as the paper money was called which was issued in lieu of silver to represent fractional parts of a dollar. Later, when this perishable circulating medium began to return to the Treasury—in a sadly mutilated condition—to women's nimble fingers was delegated the task of assorting and counting this mass of ragged, dirty, odoriferous 'money'—pieces of paper about one inch by two, with some of yet smaller dimensions.

Having once got a foothold in government work, woman little by little pushed herself farther and farther in, until now there are few, if any, branches of service where she is not represented. From all parts of the United States they have come, and all ranks of life are represented, so, of course, there are some odd specimens among them. In the earlier days, all these appointments were by political favour; consequently, some quite unlearned people crept in. One or two, to my knowledge, took writing lessons after they were in office, and for many weeks they used to come and ask me to 'back' their letters for them, their chirography and spelling being so very defective that they did not dare to entrust them to the post-office clerks.

Most of these women have some dependents—their fatherless children, their aged parents, or their younger brothers and sisters—who rely on them for support; very few are free to use all their money for themselves. But where they can

do so, they usually invest a little every year in real estate, bonds, or stocks, or in perfecting themselves in some attainment, music, art, language, or even medicine. One lady recently took her degree as M.D. after a long course of evening study; meantime, she faithfully attended to the duties pertaining to a very important desk. Some graduate to the stage, the concert-room, or lecture platform, and not a few of them are connected with the press. Sometimes—alas, there are so many spinsters in the United States—one marries and leaves the office; and when, by-and-by, she comes to see her former co-labourers and show them her baby, that young person excites almost a proprietary interest in the breast of every woman there; for clerks cannot be together in the same office for seven hours per diem, three hundred days in the year, without becoming quite intimate and strongly interested in the good or ill fortune of one another. Each is interested in the last letter which the others have had from 'home;' for Washington is really home to comparatively few of those who earn their bread there; tenure of office is so uncertain, that each one feels that at any hour he or she may be obliged to return to the northern, southern, or western town whence he or she came.

Office hours are the same in all branches of government service—from nine A.M. to four P.M., with an intermission of half an hour at noon for luncheon. This repast most of the clerks carry from home, as thirty minutes is scarcely long enough for one to go to a café. The vacations allowed are thirty days per annum—with pay—and the legal holidays—Christmas, New-Year's Day, Washington's birthday (February 22), and the 4th of July, when the national independence is celebrated over the land with much ringing of bells, firing of cannon, braying of brass bands, and burning of gunpowder in every form known to juvenile hearts; also May 30th, or Decoration Day, which is the day observed in memory of those who fell during the last war, when thousands of graves are strewn with flowers, and various services, more or less devotional in character, are conducted in the national cemeteries, those large enclosures where long rows of dead soldiers lie side by side, each with a simple headstone, telling who lies there; or, as is so often the case, bearing the pathetic inscription, 'Unknown.' The President also sets apart one day—usually the last Thursday in November—as a day of general thanksgiving for the peace and prosperity of the past twelvemonth.

All clerks are politicians. Politics is a component part of life in Washington; it is in the very air one breathes. Until a few years ago, all appointments were by political favour. If you had a near kinsman high up in official favour, you were pretty sure to get or retain your office, no matter what you might do, short of actual crime, and nothing was so much dreaded as a decided change in the administration. Now, all appointments are, by law, made under competitive examination, and favour is *supposed* to have nothing to do with it.

It often takes our naturalised citizens some time to become accustomed to having women set so nearly upon the same plane with the lords of creation; and I remember one young Irishman, a graduate of a Dublin college, and a surveyor by

profession, who, when appointed to a position in the Treasury department, was set to do certain mathematical work upon which were also employed two other men—a German and a Scotchman—and a lady. The computations were, owing to the nature of the work, to be done with great rapidity; but to insure perfect accuracy, each clerk's papers were re-computed by all the other three; and it chanced that the few errors the Irishman made were detected by the feminine computer, and this so hurt his pride, that he became really angry. 'Never mind,' said he excitedly one day; 'I'll find some mistakes in your papers, Miss—just see if I don't!'

Before she could reply, the Scotchman cried: 'Well, why don't you? That's what you're hired for. *We* find errors in her papers; why don't you?'

However, he soon became accustomed to the matter, and very soon ceased to care whether it were Mr or Miss who corrected his papers.

There are many clerks who know something, by experience, about other countries than the one in which they were born. Some of them have travelled before adversities have reduced them to working for their bread and butter; and others carefully economise for three or four years, in order that they may be able to afford a visit to England and the continent. Sometimes a windfall in the shape of a small legacy is utilised in the same way. One lady whom I knew received about six hundred pounds as her share of certain moneys which the government owed her grandfather for services during the Mexican war; and as soon as she got it, she went to one of her companions and said that she had determined to use this money by taking a trip abroad; adding: 'You know that I would be as helpless as a child in travelling alone, so I want you to go with me. I will put the money in your hands right off; and you can use it as if half of it was your very own, if you'll only go with me and take care of me. You are conversant with three languages, and I have but a little familiarity with French. You are accustomed to travelling alone, too; and I would feel as secure with you as I ever did with my husband.' And so on. But her friend, thinking it only a whim, begged her to give up the scheme and save the dollars for future use—for the day when she might lose her present position, or when illness might overtake her or her little daughter; and absolutely refused to aid her in squandering this small fortune.

But Mrs — was determined, and at last secured another lady to spend half her money for her. Weeks passed; and about four months after the two ladies had sailed, we were astonished to see Mrs — appear in the office alone. In spite of our surprised inquiries, we could for some time learn nothing as to the cause of this abrupt return; but by-and-by the other one came home and told her side of the story. She said that she had in her pocket all their letters of credit, their tickets, and all the loose coin they possessed; and that one morning, when they were in Venice, she had started out to go to early mass at a church some distance from their hotel; and that the gondolier had robbed her of everything she had; and then, giving her a little money, had rowed her to the railway station, and buying her a ticket for some point at a distance—if my

memory serves me right, it was Genoa—had put her aboard the train: that she was so frightened, that she did not know what to do; but when she reached her journey's end, had gone to some one in the place—either the consul or a clergyman, I forget which—and obtaining enough of a loan to take her to London, had proceeded directly thither, where she had acquaintances, and then, for the first time, bethought her to telegraph to her friend in Venice!

Of course, no one believed this romantic tale; but the truth was never known to a certainty; only, as the lawful owner of the funds had never had any settlement with her companion from the day they left New York, it was supposed that somehow the money had slipped through the other lady's fingers, and then, alarmed, she had run away, and concocted this pretty little romance about a timid maiden—with gray hair—and a wicked gondolier. It was better than any novel to the many who knew both the ladies, and it made quite an excitement in the usually humdrum life of government clerks.

There is a vast amount of *esprit de corps* among these fellow-workers. If one has a bit of good luck, it is told all over the office, as a matter of general rejoicing. If affliction comes, hearts and purses are quickly opened, even by those who may not be personally acquainted with the one in trouble. It is not often, however, that people show their appreciation of sympathy as did one Mrs B—. The day after her mother's funeral, she brought to her office-friends some small bouquets made up of the flowers which had lain upon the coffin. But, as it is the custom in some parts of the United States to remove the silver coffin plates just before interment, one need not be surprised at seeing the flowers passed around as a keepsake. In at least one house I know, the several coffin plates are neatly arranged on the parlour wall, as a bric-à-brac fancier hangs up cracked china.

PICTURES OF THE IMAGINATION.

THERE is, and there always must be, a great difference between 'that which is' and 'that which seems'—between the real and the ideal; and if this fact were more generally borne in mind, much disappointment would be prevented. In youth, pictures of the imagination are, as a rule, very vivid and glowing, and the anguish on discovering that 'things are not what they seem' is correspondingly great. Pecksniff confessed that in the days of childhood he thought 'pickled onions grew on trees, and that every elephant was born with an impregnable castle on his back.' Is it unreasonable to say that many of the ideas of youth are not less absurd? Take, for example, the average youth's imaginary picture of the 'splendid' life of a sailor. Nowadays, as we all know, comparatively few lads run away to sea—they prefer, even at a very early age, to dabble in literature and to speculate on the brilliant future of the 'literary calling;' but at one time—owing principally to the great popularity of Marryat's novels—this was quite common, and lads very soon discovered that the life of a sailor is

by no means so full of romance as their fancy painted.

Although everybody has had experiences of this sort, yet we continue to build those castles, and to paint those vivid mental pictures, for the simple reason that it is perfectly natural to do so. In like manner, everybody is addicted to drawing imaginary portraits—of picturing how such and such a man must look, in spite of an experience which tells us that those portraits will in all probability be totally unlike the original. It ought to be known by this time that the character or the personal appearance of an author cannot be judged from his writings, any more than the subject of those writings affords any clue to the circumstances under which they were written. Hogarth's poet indited an ode to riches while his wife was being dunned for the milk-score; and it is tolerably well known that Moore wrote *Lalla Rookh* in a cottage blocked up with snow, with an English winter howling around. After this, it is not surprising to learn that Tennyson has written to an admirer of his well-known poem, commencing, 'Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O Sea,' saying that it was composed, not by the seashore, but 'made in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning.' Therefore, the old piece of advice, 'Never read the life of your literary hero,' is as full of significance now as ever it was; and it is because this injunction has been disregarded, that so many pictures of the imagination in connection with literary men have been destroyed. An author may indeed say of his 'literary executor'—as some one said of Lord Campbell—that he adds a new terror to death.

An American author, when a youth, was inexpressibly grieved to hear that the poet of whom he was then fond kept his hair very short, and wore the best fitting coat in New York. Popular imagination is apt to associate genius with an abundance of flowing locks and uncomfortable-looking cloaks; and it is doubtless owing to this reason that portraits of Tennyson never fail to give satisfaction. But, as a rule, photographs of eminent men are very disappointing—why, it would sometimes be difficult to say. Can it be, as some one has suggested, that all the bright, clever, handsome, and 'promising young men' never come to anything? Ladies are especially fond of drawing imaginary portraits of authors, actors, well-known divines, and professional beauties; and when they first see a photograph of any well-known personage, it is usually favoured with some honest though not flattering criticism. In the case of most other photographs, there is a surprising similarity of result, especially in the case of those of humorous writers and artists. It is naturally expected that there will be an air of jollity about such men; but most of them look as if they did not enjoy life, and even in the flesh many of them looked miserable.

Leech, according to an author who knew him, 'disappointed expectation in the way of comedy. He was very silent, and his air was generally one of settled gloom.' Artemus Ward always seemed unhappy; and Josh Billings, in the characteristic words of an American reporter, had the air of a man who had just seated himself on a tack. The living American humorists are equally disappointing. Mark Twain has been described as 'wearing

the injured look of a bad boy who has been pulled out of bed to see uncongenial company.' If the personal appearance of such men as these fails to realise expectation, it is no wonder that their photographs are disappointing.

Of late years, the practice of giving 'portraits' of eminent men in newspapers has enormously increased, until one can hardly pick up a copy of any provincial journal without seeing one or two specimens of this kind of illustration. Unfortunately, however, the problem of reproducing photographs to work on certain kinds of fast printing-machines has not yet been satisfactorily solved; and consequently, many well-known men have been anything but flattered by some of these crude attempts at illustration. Not long ago, a popular dramatist humorously threatened to bring an action for libel against a newspaper which had printed what he called a 'beastly caricature' of himself. Mr John Augustus O'Shea, too, once remarked of a certain newspaper 'portrait' of himself, that the 'likeness in a fog' might save him from arrest if 'wanted,' but there was a risk of his American agent billing him as a 'coloured gemman!' And now, an American authoress has implored all her acquaintances who value their reputation to refuse to lend a photograph for the purpose of newspaper illustration. After making due allowance for exaggeration, there can be no doubt that many newspaper portraits are decidedly bad, and that they do much to destroy imaginary portraits and to create false impressions.

Places, like men, are frequently very different from the imaginary pictures formed of them. Oscar Wilde confessed that he was 'disappointed in the Atlantic.' It was, he said, not nearly so grand as he had expected. If we are not mistaken, a popular journalist once expressed his indignation at the amount of 'gush' that had been written about the grandeur of Niagara. Almost every traveller, indeed, records that he was disappointed in the appearance of certain of the well-known places in the world, because they were so different from what he had expected. Who has not experienced this feeling with regard to the sights in our own land? It is a singular fact, too, that the scenes of our youth, when visited after an absence of ten or twenty years, are generally disappointing, and invariably very different from the mental pictures we retain of them, even if no alterations have been made. Streets seem shorter, fields smaller, walls turn out to be much lower than we had supposed, and, in short, everything we see strikes us as being on a more insignificant scale now than when we were young. This can be easily accounted for, owing to the fact that the mental pictures formed in our childhood—when a five-foot wall, say, would appear rather high—have not become larger as we grow older. At thirty, a five-foot wall, as a rule, appears comparatively low; hence the disparity between the mental pictures and the evidence of our senses.

Charles James Yellowplush, in describing his adventures in 'foring parts,' said he never saw a single Frenchman swallow a frog, which he had been 'led to beleave was their reglar though beastly custom.' Many ideas such as this are nothing more than popular pictures of the imagination, just as it has long since been discovered that the 'picturesque' red-man of Fenimore Cooper was a purely fictitious personage. Dick

Deadeye qualified Longfellow's well-known assertion by saying that 'things are *seldom* what they seem;' but taking all things into consideration, it may be doubted whether the qualification is necessary.

A HANDY SCRAP-BOOK.

A correspondent of an educational newspaper believes he has found a good thing in the way of a serviceable scrap-book. Instead of leaves on which to paste the scraps, it has pockets or envelopes, into which he drops his cuttings from newspapers or magazines. By this simple method he is saved the time and trouble of pasting. These cuttings are classified according to subjects; all the scraps on a given subject, or class of subjects, are put into the same envelope. The title of the subject is written on the envelope containing it, and the name is also entered in the index in front of the book. When information is wanted upon any subject, all the scraps will be found in one place, and can be easily removed, consulted, and replaced at pleasure. Besides printed scraps, notes, one's own thoughts reduced to writing, lectures, or addresses, can thus be filed, and a record of the time and place of delivery written on the outside of the envelope. Busy, practical men, literary men, teachers, or clergymen can in this way keep their scraps of information in readiness for future consultation. An ingenious student of natural history has perhaps an improvement upon this method. Instead of a scrap-book with pockets or envelopes, he utilises a row of pasteboard boxes made to resemble books, upon the backs of which the contents, 'Biography,' 'Natural History,' &c., are inscribed. Both of the foregoing methods of scrap-keeping have been tested and found practically useful, and by either of them an article, when useless or finally disposed of, can be withdrawn and destroyed.

J E T S A M.

THE warm wave feels cool evening's breath;
White foam-flakes with its blue commingle;
Soul-saddened in the hush of death,
The tide lays gently on the shingle
A burden which it cherisheth.

The living locks of brown sea-drift
With the dead locks of gold are weaving;
The clinging garments fall and lift
Responsive to the billows' heaving;
Low at my feet they stretch their gift.

O first-born love with death for bride!
O starless night with far to-morrow!
O wailings of a funeral tide
Filled with the endless Ocean's sorrow,
And by its beauty sanctified!

Dear nameless daughter of the deep,
Then seen, then loved, us nought shall sever!
Outwatch with me this life of sleep
Till death's morn join our souls for ever,
And I my plighted troth will keep.

ERIMUS.

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HUMOURS OF A GOVERNMENT OFFICE.

THE annoyances so often complained of by those whose evil genius has driven them into dealings with government departments; the formalities, the endless delays, the crooked ways which prevail in the temples dedicated to the worship of Red-tape, are commonly supposed to be part of a cunningly devised system invented by over-paid and overbearing officials, whose one object is to embarrass, humiliate, and embitter the lives of such of Her Majesty's lieges as are not fortunate enough to belong to their own haughty and exclusive caste. If this be so, it may be some consolation to the said lieges to learn that the authors of the system are also its victims—that the wielders of the red-tape scourge do not spare their own backs. Let us examine a few of the stripes it inflicts.

A clerk wants a hat-peg fixed up in his room. He puts forward a requisition, which, after being initialed by a number of officials—initialing is the one great feature in the work of a government department—finally reaches the individual who directs the workmen. After a decent interval, the executive arrive, generally in the plural number, and proceed to survey the room in which operations are to be undertaken, and to fix on a site for the hat-peg. It might be thought that the clerk who set the ball a-rolling would be a fairly good judge on this last point; but it would be very irregular to consult him. The executive, having 'earned a night's repose,' depart; and soon after—perhaps in less than a week even—another workman appears on the scene with a selection of hammers, screws, nails, planes, and—if he happens to remember them—hat-pegs. Having fixed on a site of his own—different from that chosen by his predecessors, and of course different from that desired by the clerk—he proceeds to fix up the peg, and sometimes completes the work in a day.

The position of the peg, though eminently artistic, is inconvenient; in fact, it prevents the closing of the room-door. He does not deny this

when it is pointed out to him; he merely remarks that he cannot exceed his instructions, which were to put up a hat-peg, and that to take one down requires a fresh set of instructions. In a few weeks, after the inevitable requisition, these are given; more workmen arrive, the offending peg is removed, and the door is closed once again. If the second requisition is cunningly worded, the second set of instructions may include the fixing up of the peg in a more convenient position; but to negotiate this successfully requires great tact and experience.

Does a clerk want a handle taken from an ordinary door and fixed on a baize-covered door? After the usual formalities, the horny-handed son of toil puts in an appearance, unscrews the handle, throws it in a corner of the room, and prepares to go. On being remonstrated with for leaving undone half of what is required, the nature of which is explained to him, he states that he has carried out his instructions, and expresses a mild surprise that he, a specialist in ordinary doors, should be expected to do work which appertains to the 'green-baize-door department man.'

Government servants, however, are capable of great despatch when put on their mettle. This was illustrated some years ago, when a dynamite explosion broke the glass in the windows of a public office and several neighbouring houses. The men sent to repair the damage in the government building, feeling that something more than ordinary was expected of them, displayed the most feverish activity, took out sashes, marked them with cabalistic figures, put them back, took measurements—apparently for new carpets—sawed up blocks of wood, and generally manifested their appreciation of the fact that it was an occasion on which England expected every man to do his duty. The result was that in a week all the windows were completely boarded up preparatory to being glazed. It is true that on the evening of the day following the explosion, a large private institution next door, which had been equally damaged, had regained the *status quo* as regards

its windows; but this result had probably been achieved in a most irregular and unofficial manner, very revolting to the instincts of the order-loving civil servant.

Order, which is heaven's first law, is also the first law in a government office. Nothing is ever rushed through. If a clerk thinks his rank entitles him to better candles than those served out to him—candles, the quality of which depends on the rank of the user, are much affected in the civil service, probably because they are worse and dearer than gas or oil—he gets his principal to ask the office-keeper to request the Under-secretary of State to pray the Under-secretary of the Board of Works to move the Board to grant the Secretary of State permission to authorise the Under-secretary to direct the office-keeper to issue the superior kind of candles. By the time the office-keeper gets the directions, the dark evenings are perhaps past; next winter probably another maker's candles are used, and as he adopts a different classification of his goods, all the correspondence and requisitions have not much practical result, except to make a precedent.

Precedent governs everything, especially correspondence. The addressing and wording of letters are subjects of deep interest, and are the causes of many searchings of heart. If a Secretary of State is a civilian, is the writer directed by Secretary Mr Jones or by Mr Secretary Jones? If a military man, is he General Secretary Robinson or Secretary General Robinson? Is a Board to be requested to do a thing, or only moved to consider whether it should give directions to have it done? Happy and respected is the man to whom such questions present no difficulties.

Daring spirits, scorning precedent, sometimes strike out new and highly original lines. An officer in the army having preferred a request on some subject, the official who brought it to the notice of the Commander-in-chief asked if it might be granted, and was told 'certainly not.' It is said the official drafted the following letter, which certainly had the merit of brevity: 'In reply to your letter dated —, I am directed by the Commander-in-chief to inform you that certainly not.' Such men, however, are very exceptional, and their originality is not encouraged.

Most Crown servants are great sticklers for form, though whether, in adhering strictly to system, they do not occasionally try to poke a little fun at it, is a doubtful question. This culpable tendency may perhaps be detected in the following case. When a certain tax is paid one year and not the next, the clerk who keeps the record must enter opposite the name of the taxed one the reason for the discontinuance. One of Her Majesty's subjects having one year paid his taxes and shortly afterwards the debt of nature, naturally failed to pay the former the succeeding year. The cause—'Dead'—was entered in the proper column; but as the formality of crossing through his name was overlooked, a reason had to be given for non-payment on the third year, and the clerk gave a very cogent one—'Still dead.'

The issue of pay to civil servants has exercised the ingenuity of generations of officials. All conceivable systems have been tried, except issuing one-twelfth of the annual salary at the end of each month. In one of the largest departments, a very

humorous system is in force. Suppose a clerk has a salary of two hundred and sixty pounds a year—one month he gets twenty pounds, next month the same, and the third month twenty-five pounds. This makes a quarter of two hundred and sixty pounds, and completes a quarter's pay. He begins the next quarter with twenty pounds, and goes on as before. This stoppage from his pay during two months, to be added to the third month's allowance, may be supposed to spring from a paternal solicitude for his welfare, as it gives him a larger amount when it is wanted to meet the landlord's and other claims on quarter-day; but as a large majority in the office in question are bachelors who live in lodgings, and for whom quarter-day has therefore no terrors, the wisdom of the arrangement is not very patent.

The statement that the clerk gets twenty-five pounds the third month requires modification. He would get it if, like others, he was trusted to pay his income-tax at the end of the official year; but the authorities prefer to put him out of temptation's way, and so deduct a quarter of his income-tax from each third month's pay. And, as a wholesome moral discipline, they calculate the tax on the whole of his income; but, at the end of the year, they return, if he claims it, the tax on the one hundred and twenty pounds which is exempt in the case of salaries under four hundred pounds a year. An artistic finish is given to the joke by making him give a receipt for his pay several days before he gets it.

The sharp practice displayed in the collection of this tax is sometimes returned in kind. A clerk who had exhausted his ordinary leave, took 'French' leave for a day, for which delinquency, notwithstanding his protests, he was docked of a day's pay. At the end of the year he claimed the return of the income tax, not on that amount which was exempt, but on the whole of his salary, on the ground that the stoppage of a day's pay had brought his income below the minimum chargeable with the tax. His claim was at first refused; but he appealed to the Income Duty Commissioners, by whom it was allowed. As the tax at that time was very high, he gained much more than he had lost by the docking of his pay, and his day's leave besides. The triumph over constituted authority must also have counted for something, for a civil servant, too, is human.

A colleague who stayed away without leave was less fortunate. On being called upon for an explanation, he could think of no better excuse than that he had gone to see some friends, and had forgotten that he was in business. As this forgetfulness of a not unimportant fact in his life had held sway over him for about a week, it was considered as well to make the fact correspond with the long-standing illusion, and when, as usually happens in such cases, he suddenly discovered in himself a strong desire to cast off official fetters, he was graciously permitted to do so. As the records show, he 'retired voluntarily.'

Leave beyond the ordinary term does not, however, as a rule entail these dire consequences. It is nearly always granted, within certain limits, in cases of sickness or of domestic bereavement

or other misfortune. What constitutes domestic misfortune is, however, a difficult question. A man who had just lost his mother, applied for special leave to enable him to attend her funeral and make some arrangements as to the future of his young and orphaned brothers and sisters. This was refused, and he was obliged to take leave without pay. Next year, having exhausted his ordinary leave, he applied for leave without pay, as he was about to get married and experienced a not unnatural desire for a short honeymoon. Much to his surprise, he was granted leave *with pay*. As the same Board had dealt with both cases, it seems that to the official mind the death of a mother is a less grievous domestic calamity than the taking unto one's self a wife.

Not so, however, the death of a father. A certain knight of the quill once upon a time asked for a week's leave that he might go to bury his father. This was readily granted; and so much sympathy was expressed by his chief, that he thought it a good opportunity to borrow some filthy lucre from his sympathiser. A gallant admiral who had to be consulted as to the leave was also sympathetic, and he too bled to the tune of some 'paltry pounds.' The orphan then took his departure. A day or two afterwards, there arrived a visitor, who wished to see Mr X the orphan. Mr X's chief explained that he wasn't to be seen—in fact he had gone away to bury his father. 'But,' said the stranger, 'I am his father!'—'Well,' replied the official—a man of few words—I don't know anything about Mr X's private affairs; I only know he is gone to bury you.'

At the end of the week of mourning, Mr X returned, looking very disconsolate. When asked by his chief how he fared, he pulled a very long face, and said that he had had 'the melancholy satisfaction of seeing the last rites properly and decently performed,' and so on, adding, that of course he felt very deeply on the subject, but that no doubt time would lighten the load of his affliction. 'Ah!' replied the other, 'I can sympathise with you. I lost my father when I was a young man. When you lose your father, you lose your best friend. I hadn't the pleasure of your poor father's acquaintance during his lifetime; but he called here a few days after his death, and I had a short conversation with him. Now, this was most irregular; and my object in sending for you was this—when next the poor old gentleman dies, do, if you possibly can, arrange to have him buried and to be back here to meet him in case he calls again. That's all.—Good-morning.'

Exit Mr X, not perhaps an outwardly sadder, but certainly a much wiser man.

In some departments, sick-leave counts in diminution of ordinary leave; and it is observed that in these departments the employees are much healthier than in those where it does not so count. This rule has another curious effect: it tends to make the end of the year—when the ordinary leave has been taken, and is therefore safe from deductions—much more unhealthy than the beginning.

That 'want of pence which vexes public men' appears to be chronic with a large number of servants of the Crown, and sometimes places them in awkward and ludicrous situations. A gentle-

man who did not affect the 'ready-cash' principle in his monetary transactions, having caught sight of a creditor making for his room, and finding it inconvenient to grant him an interview, gave a few hurried directions to his colleague as to how to receive the unwelcome visitor, and then took up a strategic position under his own desk. On the arrival of the enemy, the said colleague, being either a conscientious man or an unready man or perhaps wishing to have a little joke at his friend's expense, failed to carry out his instructions, and merely remarking that his friend was 'somewhere about,' and would no doubt be back presently, requested the newcomer to take a seat. He took one—that just vacated by the absconding debtor, at the very desk under which he was hiding.

Now, the unfortunate fugitive was a man of a corpulent habit, and very dignified withal; the day was very hot, the floor was very dusty, and his prison was a very tight fit. The slightest movement would betray him. His position was neither dignified nor comfortable; and he could only console himself with the reflection that time was on his side. The tradesman, he reflected, must go at last; and if he could only hold out till then, all would yet be well. But the cup of his misfortunes was not yet quite full. When he heard his faithless friend rise from his place and leave the room, leaving the enemy free to wander at will about the place inspecting the furniture and otherwise gratifying his curiosity, he gave himself up for lost. The enemy, however, did not avail himself of his opportunity. But if his bump of curiosity was imperfectly developed, he had a wonderful organ of patience. He waited nearly an hour—more nearly a fortnight, it seemed to his victim—until this quality was exhausted, and at last he left. The released prisoner, with cramp in his limbs and rage in his heart, covered with dust and humiliation, rushed through another door to find and visit with condign punishment the miserable wretch who had betrayed him. But his desire for vengeance was his undoing. Turning a corner, he ran into the arms—of his creditor! He had suffered in vain.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER V.—ELECTIVE AFFINITIES.

THE Girton governess of these latter days stands on a very different footing indeed in the family from the forty-pound-a-year-and-all-found young person who instructed youth as a final bid for life in the last generation. She ranks, in fact, in the unwritten table of precedence with the tutor who has been a university man; and, as the outward and visible sign of her superior position, she dines with the rest of the household at seven-thirty, instead of taking an early dinner in the school-room with her junior pupils off hashed mutton and rice-pudding at half-past one. Elsie Chaloner had been a Girton girl. She was an orphan, left with little in the world but her brains and her good looks to found her fortune upon; and she had wisely invested her whole small capital in getting herself an education which would enable

her to earn herself in after-life a moderate livelihood. In the family at Whitestrand, where she had lately come, she lived far more like a friend than a governess: the difference in years between herself and Winifred was not extreme; and the two girls, taking a fancy to one another from the very first, became companions at once, so intimate together that Elsie could hardly with an effort now and again bring herself to exert a little brief authority over the minor details of Winifred's conduct. And, indeed, the modern governess, though still debarred the possession of a heart, is now no longer exactly expected to prove herself in everything a moral dragon: she is permitted to recognise the existence of human instincts in the world we inhabit, and not even forbidden to concede at times the abstract possibility that either she or her pupils might conceivably get married to an eligible person, should the eligible person at the right moment chance to present himself, with the customary credentials as to position and prospects.

'I wonder, Elsie,' Winifred said after lunch, 'whether your cousin will really come up this afternoon? Perhaps he won't now, after that dreadful wetting. I daresay, as he only came down in the yawl, he hasn't got another suit of clothes with him. I shouldn't be surprised if he had to go to bed at the inn, as Mr Relf does, while they dry his things for him by the kitchen fire! Mr Relf never brings more, they say, than his one blue jersey.'

'That's not like Hugh,' Elsie answered confidently. 'Hugh wouldn't go anywhere, by sea or land, without proper clothes for every possible civilised contingency. He's not a fop, you know—he's a man all over—but he dresses nicely and appropriately always. You should just see him in evening clothes; he's simply beautiful then. They suit him splendidly.'

'So I should think, dear,' Winifred answered with warmth. 'I wonder, Elsie, whether papa and mamma will like your cousin?'

'It's awfully good of you, darling, to think so much of what sort of reception my cousin gets,' Elsie replied with a kiss, in perfect innocence. (Winifred blushed faintly.) 'But, of course, your papa and mamma are sure to like him. Everybody always does like Hugh. There's something winning about him that insures success. He's a universal favourite, wherever he goes. He's so clever and so nice, and so kind and so sympathetic. I never met anybody else so sympathetic as Hugh. He knows exactly beforehand how one feels about everything, and makes allowances so cordially for all one's little private sentiments. I suppose that's the poetic temperament in him. Poetry must mean at bottom, I should think, keen insight into the emotions of others.'

'But not always power of responding sympathetically to those emotions.—Look, for example, at such a case as Goethe's,' a clear voice said from the other side of the hedge. They were walking along, as they often walked, with arms clasped round one another's waists, just inside the grounds, close to the footpath that led across the fields; and only a high fence of privet and dog-rose separated their confidences from the ear of the fortuitous public on the adjoining footpath.

So Hugh had come up, unawares from behind, and overheard their confidential chit-chat! How far back had he overheard? Elsie wondered to herself. If he had caught it all, she would be so ashamed of herself!

'Hugh!' she cried, running on to the little wicket gate to meet him. 'I'm so glad you've come. It's delightful to see you.—But oh, you must have thought us two dreadful little sillies.—How much of our conversation did you catch, I wonder?'

'Only the last sentence,' Hugh answered lightly, taking both her hands in his and kissing her a quiet cousinly kiss on her smooth broad forehead. 'Just that about poetry meaning keen insight into the emotions of others; so, if you were saying any ill about me, my child, or bearing false witness against your neighbour, you may rest assured at any rate that I didn't hear it.—Good-morning, Miss Meysey. I'm recovered, you see; dried and clothed and in my right mind—at least, I hope so. I trust the hat is the same also?'

Winifred held out a timid small hand. 'It's all right, thank you,' she said, with a sudden flush; 'but I shall never, never wear it again, for all that. I couldn't bear to. I don't think you ought to have risked your life for so very little.'

'A life's nothing where a lady's concerned,' Hugh answered airily with a mock bow. 'But indeed you give me credit for too much gallantry. My life was not in question at all; I only risked a delightful bath, which was somewhat impeded by an unnecessarily heavy and awkward bathing-dress.—What a sweet place this is, Elsie; so flowery and bowery, when you get inside it. The little lane with the roses overhead seems created after designs by Birket Foster. From outside, I confess, to a casual observer the first glimpse of East Anglian scenery is by no means reassuring.'

They strolled up slowly together to the Hall door, where the senior branches were seated on the lawn, under the shade of the one big spreading lime-tree, enjoying the delicious coolness of the breeze as it blew in fresh from the open ocean. Elsie wondered how Hugh and the Squire would get on together; but her wonder indeed was little needed; for Hugh, as she had said, always got on admirably with everybody everywhere. He had a way of attacking people instinctively on their strong point; and in ten minutes, he and the Squire were fast friends, united by firm ties of common loves and common animosities. They were both Oxford men—at whatever yawning interval of time, that friendly link forms always a solid bond of union between youth and age; and both had been at the same college, Oriel. 'I daresay you know my old rooms,' the Squire observed with a meditative sigh. 'They looked out over Fellows' Quad, and had a rhyming Latin hexameter on a pane of stained glass in one of the bay windows.'

'I know them well,' Hugh answered, with a rising smile of genuine pleasure—for he loved Oxford with a love passing the love of her ordinary children. 'A friend of mine had them in my time. And I remember the line: "Oxoniam quare venisti præmeditari." An excellent leonine, as leonines go, though limp in its quantity.—Do

you know, I fell in love with that pane so greatly, that I had a wire framework made to put over it, for fear some fellows should smash it some night, flinging about oranges at a noisy wine-party.'

From Oxford, they soon got off upon Suffolk, and the encroachment of the sea, and the blown sands; and then the Squire insisted upon taking Hugh for a *tour du propriétaire* round the whole estate, with running comments upon the wasting of the foreshore and the abominable remissness of the Board of Admiralty in not erecting proper groynes to protect the interests of coast-wise proprietors. Hugh listened to it all with his grave face of profound sympathy and lively interest, putting in from time to time an acquiescent remark confirmatory of the wickedness of government officials in general, and of the delinquent Board of Admiralty in particular.

'Æolian sands!' he said once, with a lingering cadence, rolling the words on his tongue, as the Squire paused by the big poplar of that morning's adventure to point him out the blown dunes on the opposite shore—'Æolian sands! Is that what they call them? How very poetical! What a lovely word to put in a triolet! Æolian—just the very thing of all others to go on all-fours with an adjective like Tmolian!—So it swallowed up forty acres of prime salt-marsh pasture—did it, really? That must have been a very serious loss indeed. Forty acres of prime salt-marsh! I suppose it was the sort of land covered with tall rank reedy grasses, where you feed those magnificent rough-coated, long-horned, Highland-looking cattle we saw this morning? Splendid beasts: most picturesque and regal. "Bulls that walk the pastures in kingly-flashing coats," George Meredith would call them. We passed a lot of them as we cruised up stream to-day to Whitestrands.—And the sand has absolutely overwhelmed and wasted it all? Dear me! dear me! What a terrible calamity! It was the Admiralty's fault! Might make a capital article out of that to bully the government in the *Morning Telephone*.'

'If you did, my dear sir,' the Squire said warmly with an appreciative nod, 'you'd earn the deepest gratitude of every owner of property in the county of Suffolk, and indeed along the whole neglected East Coast.—The way we've been treated and abused, I assure you, has been just scandalous—simply scandalous. Governments, buff or blue, have all alike behaved to us with incredible levity. When the present disgraceful administration, for example, came into power'—

Hugh never heard the remainder of that impassioned harangue, long since delivered with profound gusto on a dozen distinct election platforms. He was dimly aware of the Squire's voice, pouring forth denunciation of the powers that be in strident tones and measured sentences; but he didn't listen; his soul was occupied in two other far more congenial pursuits: one of them, watching Elsie and Winifred with Mrs Meysey; the other, trying to find a practicable use for Æolian sands in connection with his latest projected heroic poem on the Burial of Alaric. Æolian; dashes: Tmolian; abashes: not a bad substratum, that, he flattered himself, for the thunderous lilt of his opening stanza.

It was not till the close of the afternoon, however, that he could snatch a few seconds alone with Elsie. They wandered off by themselves then, near the water's edge, among the thick shrubbery; and Hugh, sitting down in a retired spot under the lee of a sheltering group of guelder-roses, took his pretty cousin's hands for a moment in his own, and looking down into her great dark eyes with a fond look, cried laughingly: 'O Elsie, Elsie, this is just what I've been longing for all day long. I thought I should never manage to get away from that amiable old bore, with his encroachments and his mandamuses, and his groynes and his interlocutors. As far as I could understand him, he wants to get the Board of Admiralty, or the Court of Chancery, or somebody else high up in station, to issue instructions to the east wind not to blow Æolian sands in future over his sacred property. It's too grotesque: quite, quite too laughable. He's trying to bring an action for trespass against the German Ocean.'

Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins? will ye chasten
the high sea with rods?

Will ye take her to chain her with chains who is
older than all ye gods?

Or will you get an injunction against her in due form on stamped paper from the Lord Chief-justice of England? Canute tried it on, and found it a failure. And all the time, while the good old soul was moaning and droning about his drowned land, there was I, just sighing and groaning to get away to a convenient corner with a pretty little cousin of mine with whom I had urgent private affairs of my own to settle.—My dear Elsie, Suffolk agrees with you. You're looking this moment simply charming.'

'It's your own fault, Hugh,' Elsie answered with a blush, never heeding overtly his last strictly personal observation. 'You shouldn't make yourself so universally delightful. I'm sure I thought, by the way you talked with him, you were absolutely absorbed in the wasting of the cliff, and personally affronted by the aggressive east wind. I was just beginning to get quite jealous of the encroachments.—For you know, Hugh, it's such a real pleasure to me always to see you.'

She spoke tenderly, with the innocent openness of old acquaintance; and Hugh, still holding her hand in his own, leaned forward with admiration in his sad dark eyes, and put out his face close to hers, as he had always done since they were children together. 'One kiss, Elsie,' he said persuasively.—'Quick, my child; we may have no other chance. Those dreadful old bores will stick to us like leeches. "Gather ye roses while you may: Old Time is still a-flying."'

Elsie drew back her face half in alarm. 'No, no, Hugh,' she cried, struggling with him for a second. 'We're both growing too old for such nonsense now. Remember, we've ceased long ago to be children.'

'But as a cousin, Elsie,' Hugh said with a wistful look that belied his words.

Elsie preferred in her own heart to be kissed by Hugh on different grounds; but she did not say so. She held up her face, however, with a rather bad grace, and Hugh pressed it to his own tenderly. 'That's paradise, my dear,' he

murmured low, looking deep into her beautiful liquid eyes.

'O son of my uncle, that was paradise indeed; but that was not like a cousin,' she answered with a faint attempt to echo his playfulness, as she withdrew, blushing.

Hugh laughed, and glanced idly round him with a merry look at the dancing water. 'You may call it what you like,' he whispered with a deep gaze into her big dark pupils. 'I don't care in what capacity on earth you consider yourself kissed, so long as you still permit me to kiss you.'

For ten minutes they sat there talking—saying those thousand-and-one sweet empty things that young people say to one another under such circumstances—have not we all been young, and do not we all well know them?—and then Elsie rose with a sigh of regret. 'I think,' she said, 'we mustn't stop here alone any longer; perhaps Mrs Meysey wouldn't like it.'

'Oh, bother Mrs Meysey!' Hugh cried, with an angry sideward toss of his head. 'These old people are a terrible nuisance in the world. I wish we could get a law passed by a triumphant majority that at forty everybody was to be promptly throttled, or at least transported. There'd be some hope of a little peace and enjoyment in the world then.'

'Oh, but, Hugh, Mrs Meysey's just kindness itself, and I know she'll let you come and see me ever so often. She said at lunch I might go out on the water or anywhere I liked, whenever I chose, any time with my cousin.'

'A very sensible, reasonable, intelligent old lady,' Hugh answered approvingly, with a mollified nod. 'I wish they were all as wise in their generation. The profession of chaperon, like most others, has been overdone, and would be all the better now for a short turn of judicious thinning.—But Elsie, you've told them I was a cousin, I see. That's quite right. Have you explained to them in detail the precise remoteness of our actual relationship?'

Elsie's lip quivered visibly. 'No, Hugh,' she answered. 'But why? Does it matter?'

'Not at all—not at all. Very much the contrary. I'm glad you didn't. It's better so. If I were you, my child, I think, do you know, I'd allow them to believe, in a quiet sort of way—unless, of course, they ask you point-blank, that you and I are first-cousins. It facilitates social intercourse considerably. Cousinhood's such a jolly indefinite thing, one may as well enjoy as long as possible the full benefit of its charming vagueness.'

'But Hugh, is it right? Do you think I ought to?—I mean, oughtn't I to let them know at once, just for that very reason, how slight the relationship really is between us?'

'The relationship is *not* slight,' Hugh answered with warmth, darting an eloquent glance deep down into her eyes. 'The relationship's a great deal closer, indeed, than if it were a much nearer one.—That may be paradox, but it's none the less true, for all that.—Still, it's no use arguing a point of casuistry with a real live Girtton girl. You know as much about ethics as I do, and a great deal more into the bargain. Only, a cousin's a cousin anyhow; and I for my part wouldn't go out of my way to descend gratui-

tously into minute genealogical particulars of once, twice, thrice, or ten times removed, out of pure puritanism. These questions of pedigree are always tedious. What subsists all through is the individual fact that I'm Hugh, and you're Elsie, and that I love you dearly—of course with a purely cousinly degree of devotion.'

'Hugh, you needn't always flourish that limitation in my face, like a broomstick.'

'Caution, my dear child—mere ingrained caution—the solitary resource of poverty and wisdom. What's the good of loving you dearly on any other grounds, I should like to know, as long as poetry, divine poetry, remains a perfect drug in the publishing market? A man and a girl can't live on bread and cheese and the domestic affections, can they, Elsie? Very well, then, for the present we are both free. If ever circumstances should turn out differently'—The remainder of that sentence assumed a form inexpressible by the resources of printer's ink, even with the aid of a phonetic spelling.

When they turned aside from the guelder-roses at last with crimson faces, they strolled side by side up to the house once more, talking about the weather or some equally commonplace and uninteresting subject, and joined the Meyseys under the big tree. The Squire had disappeared, and Winifred came out to meet them on the path. 'Mamma says, Mr Massinger,' she began timidly, 'we're going a little picnic all by ourselves on the river to-morrow—up among the sandhills papa was showing you. They're a delicious place to picnic in, the sandhills; and mamma thinks perhaps you wouldn't mind coming to join us, and bringing your friend the artist with you. But I daresay you won't care to come: there'll be only ourselves—just a family party.'

'My tastes are catholic,' Hugh answered jauntily. 'I love all innocent amusements—and most wicked ones. There's nothing on earth I should enjoy as much as a picnic in the sandhills.—You'll be coming too, of course, won't you, Elsie?—Very well, then. I'll bring Relf, and the *Mud-Turtle* to boot. I know he wants to go mud-painting himself. He may as well take us all up in a body.'

'We shall do nothing, you know,' Winifred cried apologetically. 'We shall only just sit on the sandhills and talk, or pick yellow horned-poppies, and throw stones into the sea, and behave ourselves generally like a pack of idlers.'

'That'll exactly suit me,' Hugh replied with a smile. 'My most marked characteristics are indolence and the practice of the Christian virtues. I hate the idea that when people invite their friends to a feast they're bound to do something or other definite to amuse them. It's an insult to one's intelligence; it's degrading one to the level of innocent childhood, which has to be kept engaged with Blindman's Buff and an unlimited supply of Everton toffee, for fear it should bore itself with its own inanity. On that ground, I consider music and games at suburban parties the resource of incompetence. Sensible people find enough to amuse them in one another's society, without playing dumb crambo or asking riddles. Relf and I will find more than enough, I'm sure, to-morrow in yours and Elsie's.'

He shook hands with them all round and raised his hat in farewell with that inimitable grace which was Hugh Massinger's peculiar property. When he left the Hall that afternoon, he left four separate conquests behind him. The Squire thought this London newspaper fellow was a most sensible, right-minded, intelligent young man, with a head on his shoulders, and a complete comprehension of the rights and wrongs of the intricate riparian proprietors' question. Mrs Meysey thought Elsie's cousin was most polite and attentive, as well as an extremely high-principled and excellent person. (Ladies of a certain age are always strong on the matter of principles, which they discuss as though they were a definitely measurable quantity, like money or weight or degrees Fahrenheit.) Winifred thought Mr Massinger was a born poet, and oh, so nice and kind and appreciative. Elsie thought dear darling Hugh was just the same good, sweet, sympathetic old friend and ally and comforter as ever. And they all four united in thinking he was very handsome, very clever, very brilliant, and very delightful.

As for Hugh, he thought to himself, as he sauntered back by the rose-bordered lane to the village inn, that the Squire was a most portentous and heavy old nuisance; that Mrs Wyville Meysey was a comic old creature; that Elsie was really a most charming girl; and that Winifred, in spite of her bread-and-butter blushes, wasn't half bad, after all—for an heiress.

The heiress is apt to be plain and forbidding. She is not fair to outward view, as many maidens be. Her beauty has solid, not to say strictly metallic qualities, and resides principally in a safe at her banker's. To have tracked down an heiress who was also pretty was indeed, Hugh felt, a valuable discovery.

When he reached the inn, he found Warren Relf just returned from a sketching expedition up the tidal flats. 'Well, Relf,' he cried, 'you see me triumphant. I've been reconnoitring Miss Meysey's outposts, with an ultimate view to possible siege operations. To judge by the first results of my reconnaissance, she seems a very decent sort of little girl in her own way. If sonnets will carry her by storm, I don't mind discharging a few cartloads of them from a hundred-ton-gun point-blank at her outworks. Most of them can be used again, of course, in case of need, in another campaign, if occasion offers.'

'And Miss Challoner?' Relf suggested, with some reproach in his tone. 'Was she there too? Have you seen her also?'

'Yes, Elsie was there,' the poet answered languidly, as he rang the bell for a glass of soda-water. 'Elsie was there, looking as charming and as piquante and as pretty as ever; and, by Jove! she's the cleverest and brightest and most amusing girl I ever met anywhere up and down in England. Though she's my own cousin, and it's me that says it, as oughtn't to say it, she's a credit to the family. I like Elsie. At times, I've almost half a mind, upon my soul, to fling prudence to the winds, and ask her to come and accept a share of my poor crust in my humble garret.—But it won't do, you know—it won't do. *Sine Cerere et Baccho, friget Venus*. Either I must make a fortune at a stroke, or

I must marry a girl with a fortune ready made to my hand already. Love in a cottage is all very well in its way, no doubt, with roses and eglantine—whatever eglantine may be—climbing round the windows; but love in a hovel—which is the plain prose of it in these hard times—can't be considered either pretty or poetical. Unless some Columbus of a critic, cruising through reams of minor verse, discovers my priceless worth some day, and divulges me to the world, there's no chance of my ever being able to afford anything so good and sweet as Elsie.—But the other one's a nice small girl of her sort too. I think for my part I shall alter and amend those quaint little verses of Blackie's a bit—make 'em run:

I can like a hundred women;
I can love a score;
Only with a heart's devotion
Worship three or four.'

Relf laughed merrily in spite of himself.

Massinger went on musing in an undertone: 'Not that I like the first and third lines as they stand, at all: a careful versifier would have insisted upon rhyming them. I should have made "devotion" chime in with "ocean" or "lotion," or "Goshen," or "emotion," or something of that sort, to polish it up a bit. There's very good business to be got out of "emotion," if you work it properly; but "ocean" comes in handy, too, down here at Whitestrand. I'll dress it up into a bit of verse this evening, I think, for Elsie or the other girl.—Winifred's her Christian name. Hard case, Winifred. "Been afraid" is only worthy of Browning, who'd perpetrate anything in the way of a rhyme to save himself trouble. Has a false Ingoldsby gallop of verse about it that I don't quite like. Winnie's comparatively easy, of course: you've got "skinny" and "finny," and "Minnie" and "spinney." But Winifred's a very hard case indeed. "Winnie" and "guinea" are good enough rhymes; but not quite new: they've been virtually done before by Rossetti, you know. But I doubt if I could ever consent to make love to a girl whose name's so utterly and atrociously unmanageable as plain Winifred.—Now, Mary—there's a name for you, if you like: with "fairy" and "airy," and "chary" and "vagary," and all sorts of other jolly old-world rhymes to go with it. Or if you want to be rural, you can bring in "dairy"—do the pretty-milkmaid business to perfection. But "Winifred"—"bin afraid"—the thing's impossible. It compels you to murder the English language. I wouldn't demean myself—or I think it ought to be by rights bemean myself—by writing verses to her with such a name as that.—I shall send them to Elsie, who, after all, deserves them more, and will be flattered with the attention into the bargain.'

At ten o'clock, he came out once more from his own room to the little parlour, where Warren Relf was seated 'cooking' a sky in one of his hasty seaside sketches. He had an envelope in his hand, and a hat on his head. 'Where are you off?' Relf asked carelessly.

'Oh, just to the post,' Hugh Massinger answered with a gay nod. 'I've finished my new batch of verses on the ocean—emotion—potion—devotion

theme, and I'm sending them off, all hot from the oven, to my cousin Elsie.—They're not bad in their way. I like them myself. I shall print them, I think, in next week's *Athenæum*.'

WALLOON TRADITIONS.

In these days of enlightenment, when people are loth to believe anything that they cannot see with their own eyes or explain by their own reasoning, it seems almost incredible that there should be a race of Europeans living so close to us as do the Walloons on the confines of Belgium and France, whose peasants believe that good and evil spirits actually exist in their midst, and that success or failure is entirely due to the agency of mountain spirits, dwarfs, and domestic goblins.

Some of the most popular of the Walloon superstitions relate to dwarfs. These are called *Halver-mannekens* (half-men) and *Kabouter-mannekens* (little fellows) by the Flemish, and are said to live in caves and subterranean places. Many tales are told of their skill and intelligence. The villagers of Hasselt, in Limburg, asserted that whenever war raged in the neighbourhood, numbers of dwarfs would appear; that they lived in a large cave in the woods, only coming into the village to obtain what they needed, and leaving it as soon as they were satisfied, without harming anything. When the dwarf-wives became old, they allowed their husbands to shut them up underground, after providing them with a loaf of bread; and the most diligent search by the keenest eyes could not discover where the earth had been disturbed.

In another village is a hill called Kabouterberg, in which there are many caverns; these are supposed to be the dwelling-places of some dwarfs who were in the service of a local miller. Whenever his grindstone needed whetting, he had only to put overnight a slice of bread-and-butter and a glass of beer upon it, and in the morning his stone was ready for use. The same reward was sufficient to procure the washing of the family's clothes.

In a neighbouring district, another miller, being unable to finish his task of sifting flour, left its completion till the next day, and on going away, accidentally dropped a piece of bread-and-butter. When he returned the next morning, he was amazed to find his work had been finished during the night, and the food had disappeared. Determined to prove that his sight and memory had not deceived him, he repeated the experiment, with a similar result. Being anxious to know who worked so well for such small pay, he hid, on the third night, behind some sacks, and about midnight saw a naked dwarf appear, who, after eating the food placed ready for him, set to work diligently. The miller pitied the industrious little fellow, who laboured away without any clothes to protect him from the cold; and on the following night, placed a warm suit of garments with the bread, butter, and beer; after which, the manikin never appeared without his clothes.

In the Pays Liégeois, legends relate that the household duties are performed by larger spirits, who answer to the German Kobold, the Scotch Brownie, and Milton's 'Lubber Fiend.' These are called Sotays, and are said to be more active,

industrious, and disinterested than any of the goblin race. The Sotay mows the hay; reaps, thrashes, and winnows the corn; cleans the stables and cowhouses; grooms the horses—for which he has an especial liking—and at daybreak everything is finished without any one knowing by whom or how it has been accomplished. The only recompense claimed is a bowl of milk—the 'cream-bowl duly set.'

Tradition relates that the Sotays are adepts in the art of metallurgy; and the peasants of Dinant—the place so famed in bygone days for the manufacture of pots and kettles—constantly tested the practical knowledge of these amateur tinkers. When a pot or saucepan was cracked or broken, if it was placed on the doorstep and the door quickly closed, it would be found mended in two minutes.

To each of the countless ruins in the provinces of Namur and Liège, popular credulity assigns a class of evil spirits, called by the Walloons *gâttes d'or* (golden goats), from the Walloon *gât*, a goat. These gnomes are said to guard a treasure hidden far down in a precipice underneath the ruins; and the belief is, that, should any one be rash enough to try and unearth this treasure, the *gâttes d'or* use a charm which allures the searcher towards them; and they then lead him on and on, till he loses himself in the bowels of the earth, when they disappear, and leave him to perish. The peasants point out the crevices in the rock under the ruins as being the passages through which the gnomes pass to and from their dwelling-places.

The superstitions held by the Walloons are shared by all the Belgian peasantry, in common with other nations who claim a northern origin. They believe in all kinds of omens, of which the following are the most universal. To meet a priest when about to undertake anything unusual, is considered a certain sign of failure, and the performer will invariably turn back, convinced that the day is lost. The hooting of owls, the howling of dogs, the crossing of forks, the spilling of salt, thirteen at table, are here, as elsewhere, taken for evil omens. Few will throw reeds in the fire, because they are of service to oxen; and an ox being present at our Saviour's birth, it ought, therefore, to be held as sacred. The bed of a dying person must be placed in such a position that the rafters cannot run in a contrary direction to it; for, unless they are parallel, the agonies of death would inevitably be protracted. When linen is washed, the water is never said 'to boil,' but 'to play;' otherwise, the clothes would be destroyed. To catch a wren is to bring sorrow or death into the family of its captor. Precious stones are supposed to possess virtues more valuable than their intrinsic worth. The turquoise guards its wearer from falls and accidents. Diamonds, emeralds, and pearls were formerly used to detect infidelity. An *ærolite* is said to be unsurpassed as a means for discovering a thief. The metal must be ground to powder, then mixed with flour and made into bread, of which no genuine thief can swallow the smallest portion. On Easter Sunday it was the custom to breakfast off two eggs that had been laid on Good-Friday, in order to render the eater proof against fever. To abstain from meat after Lent was a cure for the toothache.

On Christmas Eve a piece of the burnt Yule-log is preserved, and put under the bed, to serve as a protection against lightning; and a willow branch that has been blest on Palm Sunday is kept in a sacred corner. Peasants mark their walls with a cross, as a preventive against fire. During the annual fair at Fosse, in Namur, the women come from all parts carrying osier wands, with which they touch the image of St Bridget, and then stroke their cattle with the same wands, either to cure their ailments or to protect them from disease.

Notwithstanding that the mountainous districts are in all countries the strongholds of superstition, the lowlands here are full of the same beliefs. A curious custom was observed at Willebroeck, Vive St Bavon, and other villages near Courtrai. When any one dies, the clergy of the parish meet to conduct the body to the churchyard; and if on their way they chance to come to four cross-roads, the bearers put down the coffin, and all kneel to repeat a short prayer. The idea is, that those who have left the world are sure to return to it; that, as there are four ways, the traveller might wander aimlessly about, not knowing in which direction his home lay; therefore, his friends pray for him at one of the roads, so that he may choose the right path and not be misled by evil spirits. But at Oostmalle, a still more extraordinary observance prevails: the wife accompanies the dead body of her husband to the grave, sitting upon his coffin. There seems to be no satisfactory reason for this custom.

One of the most singular customs was that called the Court du Coucou, which occurred annually at Polleur. This ancient village lies at the bottom of the valley between Verviers and Spa, near the famous castle of Franchimont. On the first Sunday after the 15th of August, the fête was celebrated amid an immense gathering of people. A mock-court of justice was formed with a president, and all assembled at the inn nearest to the bridge which joined the village of Polleur to that of Sart. From the inn, the court adjourned to the bridge itself; and before its tribunal were summoned all the hen-pecked husbands and those who were possessed of any peculiarity. The proceedings began with the most ridiculous pleadings, and any stranger who happened to be present was constantly appealed to, and asked the most nonsensical questions. The accused, who were always found guilty, were condemned to pay a fine, which must be spent at the inn; and to give variety to the proceedings, the culprit was compelled to get into a cart, which was backed from the bridge till it reached a heap of mud or something similar, when it was tilted up, and the unhappy one was shot out. The trials by court concluded in the arraignment of the last married man in the village; and the fact being proved against him, he was at once thrown over the bridge into the river, which insured a good ducking. The rest of the day was spent at the inn.

Another feature of these ceremonies was the display of a banner on which was painted a nondescript monster called 'La Bête de Staneux.' It represented a kind of centaur, half-horse half-woman, with a lion's tail. Long hair floated down its back, and it held a bow in the left hand, and an arrow in the right. This picture

was exhibited at the different inns till 1789, when the fête was suppressed. From time immemorial, the banner had been carefully preserved within the walls of the parish church; and it was only after the year 1786 that the priests allowed it to be seen beyond them. During the same time, a figure rudely carved in wood, which usually stood in the church porch, was also exhibited, and burnt when the fête was abolished.

According to the best authorities, this Bête de Staneux was said to be a representation of the ancient goddess of the Ardennes, where Diana was worshipped under different names. The people of Polleur had a tradition that the picture was displayed in order to commemorate a victory gained over a monster who infested the neighbouring forest of Staneux.

The custom of celebrating the opening of the month of May was held everywhere in the vicinity of the Meuse; and some fifty years ago Maypoles were placed before roadside chapels, and images of the Virgin and other saints, and in front of the curés' houses. At Aerschot and many other places in the Campine, a Maypole was set up before the doors of unmarried women. The young and pretty had one decked with buds and flowers, while the older women had nothing but a stick covered with withered leaves.

The last observance worthy of notice is one that was retained in the church of Nivelles, where there was a crypt. Between the wall and a pillar close by was a hole, through which, the people believed, no one in a state of mortal sin could pass.

The well-known story of the 'white lady' belongs to these parts, and her traditions are preserved by the families of Angewieiller, Croy, Bassompierre, and Salm, all of whom it severally affects. This fairy gave as a love-token, to one of the Counts of Angewieiller, a goblet, a ring, and a spoon, which were to be kept as heirlooms, and given to his three daughters on their marriage days, to insure them happiness and prosperity. The goblet passed into the possession of the house of Croy; and one day, as a Marquise, who was a descendant of this family, was showing it to some of her friends, it slipped from her hands, and was broken into hundreds of pieces. Picking up every bit, she locked them carefully away in a cabinet, saying: 'If I cannot have it whole again, I will at least preserve every fragment.' The next day, when she went to the cabinet to look at the pieces, she found the goblet as perfect as it had been before the accident. So goes the story.

THE GOLDEN INCUBUS.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE SIGNET RING.

It was exactly twelve o'clock by the chiming timepiece in the hall. Just the hour for such a task, I felt with a sort of shiver, as Sir John came down to the pantry, where I had candles ready, and a small crowbar used for opening packing-cases, and a screw-driver.

'Everybody seems quiet up-stairs, Burdon,' says Sir John, 'so let's get to work at once.—But, hillo! just put out a lamp?'

'No, Sir John,' I said. 'I often smell that

now; but I've never been able to make out what it is.'

'Humph! Strange,' he says; and then we went straight to the cellar, the great baize door at the top of the kitchen steps being shut; and directly after we were standing on the damp sawdust with the bins of wine all round.

'It hasn't been touched, apparently, and there seems to be no need; but I should like to see if it is all right. But we shall never get through there, Burdon,' he says, looking at the bricked-up wall, across the way to the inner cellar.

'I don't know,' I said, taking off my coat and rolling up my sleeves, to find that though the highest price had been paid for that bricklaying, the cheat of a fellow who had the job had used hardly a bit of sand and bad lime, so that, after I had loosened one brick and levered it out, all the others came away one at a time quite clear of the mortar.

'Never mind,' says Sir John. 'Out of evil comes good.—I'll try that sherry too, Burdon, and we'll put some fresh in its place. But if that's left twenty years, we shall never live to taste it, eh?'

I shook my head sadly as I worked away in that arch, easily reaching the top bricks, which were only six feet from the sawdust; and, as is often the case, what had seemed a terrible job proved to be so easy, that, two hours afterwards, when Sir John had made me open a bottle of the bricked-up sherry, and fill two of the cellar glasses for us to have a drop apiece, there were all the bricks in a rough pile on one side, and the sherry was in a bin, and the empty bottles stacked in a corner.

'Maybe a little foul air in the place,' says Sir John; 'and we'll give it a bit of time to get out.—That's a very fine glass of sherry, my man,' he says, taking a good long sip, 'well matured. Ha! It's like the old cups and salvers turned into liquid gold.'

'My service and respects to my dear old master!' I said, as I stood before him where he sat on the pile of bricks, looking all covered with mortar and sawdust on his black dress clothes, and me ten times worse, and one hand bleeding as I took a taste of the finest sherry I ever drank in my life, which is saying a deal, for Sir John would have good wine.

'Thank you, Burdon,' he says in rather a husky way. 'Master and man all these years; but it's getting near the end now, when all men will be the same.—I beg your pardon, Burdon—my good old fellow—I called you a fool. Shake hands.'

'As you have called me many a time, my dear old master,' I said, as we stood there joined in a strong grip. 'But I know you, sir,' I said, smiling with the tears standing thick in my eyes—'yes, I know you, sir, and I don't mind.'

We neither of us spoke, for it seemed as if we both felt afraid lest the other should see how weak he was. But at last he says: 'Fill up the glasses again, Burdon. Working as we have been, a good glass of wine will not hurt either you or me.'

I did as he said. We drank the delicious fine old stuff slowly and solemnly; and then, after I'd put the bottle and glasses aside, I snuffed the candles.

'There,' he says; 'the place will be sweeter

now. We'll just have a glance at the old chests, and then we must build up the empty bottles again. To-morrow, I'll order in some more wine—for my son.'

He said that last so solemnly that I looked up at him as he stood there with the light shining in his eyes.

'As'll come back some day, sorry for the past, Sir John,' I said, 'and ready to do what you wish.'

'Please God, Burdon!' he says, bowing his head for a bit. Then he looked up quite sharply, and took a candle, and I the other. 'Come along,' he says in his old quiet, stern way; and I was half afraid I had offended him, as he stepped in at the opening and stood at the mouth of the inner cellar. Then I heard him give a sharp sniff, and I smelt it too—that same odour of burnt oil. We neither of us spoke as we walked over the damp black sawdust, both thinking of the likelihood of foul air being in the place; but we found we could breathe all right; and as we held up the candles, the light shone on the black-looking old chests, every one with its padlocks and seals all right, just as we had left them all those years before.

I looked up at Sir John, and he gave me a satisfied nod as he tried one of the seals, and then we both stood as if turned to stone, for from just at my feet there came a dull knocking sound, and as I looked down, I could see the black sawdust shake.

What I wanted to do was to run, for I felt that the place was haunted; but I couldn't move, and when I looked at Sir John, he was holding up his right hand, as if to order me to be silent. Then he held his candle down, for there was another sound, but this time more of a grinding cracking in a dull sort of way, just as if some one was forcing an iron chisel in between the joints of the stones. Then there was a long pause, and I half thought it had been fancy; but soon after, as I stood there hardly able to breathe, the sawdust just in one place was heaved up about an inch.

I was terribly alarmed, not knowing what to think; but Sir John was brave as brave, and he signed to me not to speak, and stood watching till there was a dull cracking sound, the sawdust was heaved up again, and all at once I seemed to get a hot puff of that burnt oily smell right in my nose. Then I began to understand, and felt afraid in a different fashion, as I knew that we had only got there just in time.

The next minute Sir John made a movement toward me, took my candle and turned it upside down, so that it went out, and then pointed back toward the outer cellar, as he put his lips to my ear:

'Iron bar!'

I stepped back softly, and got the iron bar from where it lay on the edge of a bin, and I was about to pick up the screw-driver, when I remembered where the wooden mallet lay, and I picked up that before stepping softly back to where Sir John was watching the floor; and now I could see that the sawdust was higher in one place, as if a flagstone had been heaved up a little at one end.

There was no doubt about it, for, as I handed the crowbar, the end of the stone was wrenched up a little higher and then stuck; for it was

tightly held by those on either side; but it was up far enough to let a thin ray of dull light come up through the floor and shine on the side of one of the old chests.

It was a curious scene there, in that gloomy cellar: Sir John standing on one side, candle in his left, the iron bar in his right hand, and me on the other bending down ready with the mallet to hit over the head the first that should come up through the floor. For, though horribly alarmed, I could understand now what it all meant—an attempt to steal the gold in the chests, though how those who were working below had managed to get there was more than I could have said.

As we watched, the smell of the burnt oil came through, and I knew that it must have been going on for a long time.

All at once we could hear a low whispering, and then there was a grinding noise of iron against stone; the flag gritted and gave a little, but it held fast all along; and I could understand that the man who was trying to wrench it up had no room to work, and therefore no power to wrench up the stone. Then came the faint whispering again, and it seemed to sound hollow. Then another grinding noise, and the end of the flag was moved a trifle higher, so that the line of light on the old chest looked two or three inches broad.

I stepped softly to Sir John and put my lips to his ear as the whispering could be heard again, and I said softly: 'Shall I fetch the police?'

Sir John for answer set his candle down upon the top of one of the chests and put it out with the bar as he whispered to me in turn: 'Wait a few moments.' And then—'Look!' He pointed with the iron bar; and as I stared hard at the faint light shining up from below the edge of the stone, I could see just the tips of some one's fingers come through and sweep the sawdust away to right and left. Then they came through a little more, and were drawn back, while directly after came the low whispering again, and the hand now was thrust right through as far as the wrist.

'Yes,' said Sir John then, as he grasped my arm—'the police.' Just then he uttered a gasp, and I turned to look at him; but we were in the dark, and I could not see his face, but he gripped my arm more tightly, and I looked once more toward the broad ray, to see the hand resting now full in the light, and I turned cold with horror, for there was something shining quite brightly, and I could see that it was a signet ring, and what was more, the old ring Mr Barclay used to wear—the one he had worn since he was quite a stripling, and beyond which the joint had grown so big that he could never get the jewel off.

I should have bent down there, staring at that ring for long enough, fascinated, as you may say, until all at once I felt my arm dragged, and I was pushed softly into the outer cellar, and from there into the passage beyond, Sir John closing and locking the door softly, before tottering into the pantry and sinking into a chair, uttering a low moan.

'Oh, don't take on, sir,' I whispered; but he turned upon me roughly.

'Silence, man!' he panted, 'and give me time to think;' and then I heard him breathe softly, in a voice so full of agony that it was terrible to hear: 'Oh, my son!—my son!'

'No, no, sir,' I said—for I couldn't bear it. 'He wouldn't; there's some mistake.'

'Mistake? Then you saw it too, Burdon? No; there is no mistake.'

I couldn't speak, for I remembered about the keys, and something seemed to come up in my throat and choke me, for it seemed so terrible for my young master to have done this thing.

'What are you going to do, sir?' I said at last, and it was me now who gripped his arm.

'Do?' he said bitterly. 'All that is a heritage: mine to hold in trust for my son—his after my death to hold in trust for the generations to come. Burdon, it is an incubus—a curse; but I have my duty to do: that old gold shall not be wasted on a wanton!'

'What!' I panted. 'You think that too?'

'Yes,' he cried fiercely. 'It is that wretched Jezebel who has turned my poor boy's brain!'

CHAPTER IX.—MR BARCLAY GOES TOO FAR.

When young Mr Barclay—

Stop! How do I know all this?

Why, it was burned into my memory, and I heard every word from him.

When young Mr Barclay left the dining-room on the night he disappeared, he went up to his own room, miserable at his position with his father, and taking to himself the blame for the unhappiness that he had brought upon the girl who loved him with all her sweet true heart. 'But it's fate—it's fate,' he said, as he went up to his room; and then, unable to settle himself there, he lit a cigar, came down, and went out just as he was dressed in his evening clothes, only that he had put on a light overcoat, and began to walk up and down in front of our house and watch the windows opposite, to try and catch a glimpse of Miss Adela.

Ten o'clock, eleven, struck, but she did not show herself at the window; and feeling quite sick at heart, he was thinking of going in again, when he suddenly heard a faint cough, about twenty yards away; and turning sharply, he saw the lady he was looking for crossing the road, having evidently just come back from some visit.

'Adela—at last,' he whispered as he caught her hand.

'Mr Drinkwater!' she cried in a startled way. 'How you frightened me.'

'Frightened?' he said reproachfully. 'Is that all you have to say to one who has patiently watched for weeks, trying in vain to get a few words with you!'

'How absurd!' she said, as he held her hand and detained her. 'What can you want?'

'You!' he said excitedly.—'Don't struggle to get away. Listen to me!'

'No, no, no!' she cried in a half-frightened way. 'Let me go. My sisters are waiting.'

'Let you go? How can you be so cruel to me? Adela, dearest, you know I love you.'

'What madness—what nonsense!—Mr Drinkwater, loose my hand!'

'Never! till you give me some hope.—Adela, your looks have told me so a hundred times—have led me on to speak so plainly—you do love me—you will be my wife?'

'Impossible!' she panted as she tried to get away. 'You cannot marry me.'

'I can—I will!' he cried passionately. 'I have given her up for your sake. I will not be driven into a marriage that would end in misery. Adela, dearest, listen to me.'

'Mr Drinkwater!'

'I can bear this no longer. You are trifling with me.'

'No, no; I am perfectly serious. You must never think of me again. My sisters would'—

'Would listen to me. I'm sure they would.'

'Now, Mr Drinkwater, pray be sensible. This is absurd, out in the open street.'

'There is no one to hear us, and you refuse to grant me an interview.'

'Of course,' she cried. 'I have told you again and again that it is impossible, and that I cannot listen to you.'

'Yes,' he said; 'but with your beautiful mocking eyes laughing the while and bidding me come on.'

'It is not true,' she said, laughing.—'Mr Drinkwater, will you let me pass?'

'I will, and walk with you.'

'If you please, no.'

'Indeed, but I will,' he cried; and he kept by her till she reached the steps. 'It is not proper for a beautiful young girl to be out at eleven o'clock alone.'

'Well, there: now I am at our door, so good-night, Mr Ungallant,' she said mockingly.

'No, not yet.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that I've begged for an interview until I can beg no more, and now I am going to enforce it.'

'Are you mad?'

'Very nearly,' he said; and as she hurriedly thrust in the latchkey, he held her other hand.

'Now, will you loose my hand?' she panted excitedly. 'My sisters'—

'I'm coming in to see them in a straightforward English manner,' he said, for he was as obstinate now to persist as she evidently was to shake him off.

'Indeed, you are not,' she cried, slipping from him and through the door; but before she could close it, he had thrust it back and stood beside her in the passage, which was feebly lit by a half-turned-down oil lamp.

'Oh, this is madness. How can you be such a fool!'

'Love makes men fools,' he retorted, closing the door.—'Now take me up and introduce me to your sisters.'

'What—what shall I do?' she muttered. 'Pray, pray, go!'

'No; I have stormed the castle now,' he cried, laughingly, though he half wondered at her calling him a fool, 'and mean to stay till the lovely little garrison yields at discretion.'

'No, no; for your life, you must go,' she cried, trying to push him toward the door. 'Pray, pray, go!'

'Never! You have driven me to this by your mocking looks, so now give way and don't let's trifle any more.'

She backed from him, trembling now, till she reached the dining-room, into which she darted and tried to shut the door; but he was too quick, and followed her in, when she ran from him to

sink sobbing into an easy-chair, and in an instant he was on his knees before her.

'Adela, dearest Adela,' he whispered tenderly; 'forgive me all this, but'—

'Adela, is that you?—Here, for goodness' sake. —Why don't you answer?'

'Is she there?'

The first was a rough man's voice, the next that of a woman, and as they were heard in the passage, another voice cried hoarsely: 'It's of no use: the game's up.'

'Hist! Hide! Behind that curtain! Anywhere!' panted Adela, starting up in alarm. —'Too late!'

Barclay had sprung to his feet, and stood staring in amazement, and perfectly heedless of the girl's appeal to him to hide, as two rough bricklayer-like men came in, followed by a woman.

'It's caved in, and Ned is hurt,' cried the first man; and then: 'Who's this?'

'What?—No, no, no!' cried Adela wildly. 'Don't, don't say he's hurt.'

'Here, who's this?' said the first man again. 'Oh, it's you, is it?'

'Trapped!' muttered Barclay Drinkwater, as, without fully understanding his position, he realised the fact that there was something peculiarly wrong in the place into which he had forced himself; and his first act now was to make for the door; but it was blocked by the two men, while the oldish woman who had entered with them gazed at him viciously.

'Stand where you are!' said the first of the men.—'How comes he here, Adela?'

'I couldn't help it, Tom. He forced his way in. It's all a mistake. It's Mr'—

'Oh, I know who it is well enough,' said the man savagely. 'Forced his way in? Very well. He wouldn't come here unless he wanted to stop, and stop he shall.'

'Let me pass,' said Mr Barclay sternly.

'Not me,' said the man, with an ominous look.

'Yes, yes; let him go,' cried the girl. 'I'll explain all to Ned. And you all stand there, and don't come to his help.'

'Ten minutes more or less won't hurt, my girl,' cried the man.

'Will you let me pass?' cried Mr Barclay.—'Miss Mimpriss, I beg your pardon for this intrusion. Forgive me, and good-night.'

One man gave the other a quick look, and as Mr Barclay tried to pass, they closed with him, and, in spite of his struggles, bore him back from the door. The next moment, though, he recovered his lost ground, and would have shaken himself free, but the sour-looking woman who had entered with the two men watched her opportunity, got behind, flung her arms about the young man's neck, and he was dragged heavily to the floor, where, as he lay half stunned, he saw Adela gazing at him with her brows knit; and then, without a word of protest, she hurried from the room.

Mr Barclay heaved himself up, and tried to rise; but one of his adversaries sat upon his chest while the other bound him hand and foot, an attempt at shouting for help being met by a pocket-handkerchief thrust into his mouth.

A minute later, as Mr Barclay lay staring wildly, the rough woman, whom he recalled now as one of the servants, and who had hurried from

the room, returned, helping Adela to support a pallid-looking man, whose hands, face, and rough working clothes were daubed with clayey soil.

'Confound you! why didn't you bring down the brandy?' he said harshly.—'Gently, girls, gently. That's better. I'm half crushed.—Who's that?'

'Visitor,' said one of Mr Barclay's captors sourly. 'What's to be done?'

Mr Barclay looked wildly from one to the other, asking himself whether all this was some dream. Who were these men? Where the elderly Misses Mimpriss? And what was the meaning of Adela Mimpriss being on such terms with the injured man, who looked as if he had been working in some mine?

Their eyes met once, but she turned hers away directly, and held a glass of brandy to the injured man's lips.

'That's better,' he said. 'I can talk now. I thought I was going to be smothered once.—Well, lads, the game's up.'

'Why?' said one of the others sharply.

'Because it is. You won't catch me there again if I know it; and here's private inquiry at work from over the way.'

'Hold your tongue!' said the first man of the party. 'There; he can't help himself now. You watch him, Bell; and if he moves, give warning.'

The rough woman seated herself beside Mr Barclay and watched him fiercely. The two men crossed over to their companion; while Adela, still looking cold and angry, with brow wrinkled up, drew back to stand against the table and listen.

The men spoke in a low tone; but Mr Barclay caught a word now and then, from which he gathered that, while the man who had in some way been hurt was for giving up, the other two angrily declared that a short time would finish it now, and that they would go on with it at all hazards.

'And what will you do with him?' said the injured man grimly.

Mr Barclay could not help looking sharply at Adela, who just then met his eye, but it was with a look more of curiosity than anything else; and as she realised that he was gazing at her reproachfully, she turned away and watched the three men.

'Very well,' said the one who was hurt, 'I wash my hands of what may follow.'

'All right.'

Mr Barclay turned cold as he wondered what was to happen next. He saw plainly enough now that the house had been let to a gang of men engaged upon some nefarious practice, but what it was he could not guess. Coining seemed to be the most likely thing; but from what he had heard and read, these men did not look like coiners.

Then a curious feeling of rage filled him, and the blood rushed to his brain as he lay reproaching himself for his folly. He had been attracted by this woman, who was evidently thoroughly in league with the man who spoke to her in a way which sent a jealous shudder through him, while the sisters of whom he had once or twice caught a glimpse, seemed to be absent, unless—The thought which occurred to him seemed to be so wild that he drove it away, and lay waiting for what was to come next.

'Be off, girls!' said the first man suddenly; and without a word, the two women present left the room, Adela not so much as casting a glance in the direction of the prisoner.

The three men whispered together for a few moments, and then Mr Barclay made an effort to get up, but it was useless, for the first two seized him between them, all bound as he was, and dragged him out of the room, along the passage, and down the stone steps to the basement, where they thrust him into the wine-cellar, and half dragged him across there into the inner cellar, the houses on that side being exactly the same in construction as ours.

'Fetch a light,' said one of them; and this was done, when the speaker bent down and dragged the handkerchief from the prisoner's mouth.

'You scoundrel!' cried Mr Barclay.

'Keep a civil tongue in your head, my fine fellow,' he said.

'You shall suffer for this,' retorted Mr Barclay.

'Pr'aps so. But now, listen. If you like to shout, you can do so, only I tell you the truth: no one can hear you when you're shut in here; and if you do keep on making a noise, one of us may be tempted to come and silence you.'

'What do you want?—Money?'

'You to hold your tongue and be quiet. You behave yourself, and no harm shall come to you; but I warn you that if you attempt any games, look out, for you've desperate men to deal with. Now, then, will you take it coolly?'

'Tell me first what this means,' said Mr Barclay.

'I shall tell you nothing. I only say this—will you take it coolly, and do what we want?'

'I can't help myself,' says Mr Barclay.

'That's spoken like a sensible lad,' says the second man.—'Now, look here: you've got to stop for some days, perhaps, and you shall have enough to eat, and blankets to keep you warm.'

'But, stop here—in this empty cellar?'

'That's it, till we let you go. If you behave yourself, you shan't be hurt. If you don't behave yourself, you may get an ugly crack on the head to silence you. Now, then; will you be quiet?'

'I tell you again, that I cannot help myself.'

'Shall I undo his hands?' said one to the other.

'Yes; you can loosen them.'

This was done, and directly after Mr Barclay sat thinking in the darkness, alone with as unpleasant thoughts as a man could have for company.

A NEW THEORY REGARDING THE UNIVERSE.

It is a wonderful thought to consider, that although we human creatures can by no possible means convey ourselves outside the confines of the globe upon which our lives are passed, we have been able to learn so much about those other globes and appearances which are popularly spoken of as 'the heavenly bodies.' The knowledge has, it is true, been slowly acquired. A theory has been enunciated to last for a time, perhaps for centuries, when it is pushed out of

place by some other theory, which perhaps in its turn may soon have to give place to a newer one. How natural was it for the ancient observers to suppose that the various orbs which appear to execute so stately a march across the sky, together with those seemingly much larger bodies the sun and moon, were travelling round the earth as a centre. This, the Ptolemaic theory was so plausible, and one so evidently in accordance with common-sense, that it held its ground for eighteen centuries. Thales, Pythagoras, and others had previously taught a different lesson, and one more in accordance with modern ideas. But their followers were few, and their teachings were discredited because they seemed to be contrary to the ideas gleaned from popular observation. Seeing was believing then, as it is now; and when the stars were seen to move across the heavens, and the sun and moon to rise and set, it was only natural to assume that their movements were real, and that the earth was as still and immovable as it appeared to be. Then came Copernicus, who retaught the forgotten doctrine of the earth's movement on its own axis, and its annual journey round the sun as the centre of our system. Galileo corroborated this hypothesis by his telescopic observations; and Newton crowned all by his grand conception of gravitation. In this way, the now universally accepted theory of the solar system was founded.

But the solar system, vast though it be—its most remote member, Neptune, is 2,745,998,000 miles from the sun—really constitutes but a very small part of the great scheme of the universe. The nearest of the so-called fixed stars is so distant from us that we have no means of measuring that distance, and when astronomers endeavour to give to others some idea of their remoteness, they tell us that light—which travels at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second—would occupy so many centuries in bridging the gulf which separates us from those remote bodies. We see, therefore, that any difficulty which we may have in learning about the constitution of the planets which form members of our own system, is immensely increased when we come to ask for information concerning the far more distant stars. In the one case we are dealing with things which are, so to speak, within reach of our hands; and in the other case, with objects which are upon another continent.

The only messengers which reach this earth from space are the so-called shooting-stars, or meteorites. These are assumed to be dark bodies, which, travelling through space, become attracted by this earth, and are quickly drawn towards it by the irresistible power of gravitation. Upon entering our atmosphere—which, it will be remembered, extends about two hundred miles above the surface of the earth—the course of these meteorites is checked by the resistance which the air offers to their progress—a frictional resistance, which is accompanied by the evolution of light and fervent heat. As a result, these swiftly moving bodies are vaporised; but the vapour formed quickly condenses into solid particles—meteoric dust, which is deposited, slowly but surely,

upon the earth. Such dust has been found on the pure snow of the Arctic regions, where dust of the ordinary kind is impossible. It has also been collected on the tops of elevated buildings, and has been dredged up from the depths of the Atlantic.

Besides this celestial dust, which is slowly adding to the bulk of the earth, there are many authentic records of the fall of meteoric stones of large size, many of which have been preserved as curiosities in our public museums. These shooting-stars are familiar enough to us; perhaps some will say that they are too common to be regarded as phenomenal. But few persons are aware how plentiful these beautiful objects really are. We are indebted to Professor Newton of America for some statistics with regard to them. He made a series of careful calculations, with a view to discover as nearly as possible how many meteorites enter the atmosphere of this earth in a given time, and so become visible. As a result, he has found that the annual number is about 146,000,000,000. That is to say, in every twenty-four hours, no fewer than four hundred million meteorites are propelled towards and received by the earth. And this number, be it noted, does not include that vast number of shooting-stars which are called telescopic, for the reason that they are too small or too distant to be detected by the unaided eye. It is therefore easy to see that the earth in travelling along her orbit passes through showers of these meteoric stones, and that it is only by the protecting influence of our atmosphere that these stones do not represent deadly missiles to its inhabitants. Travelling at the enormous velocity of thirty miles a second, they would, were it not for that protection, be far more effective projectiles than the swiftest of cannon-balls.

Upon a close investigation of the nature and composition of these meteoric stones, Mr Norman Lockyer has founded a new theory with regard to the constitution of the heavenly bodies. Like all theories, it will have to bear the test of time, either to be preserved, or to be discarded for something better. Still, until that something better makes its appearance, we must admit, upon considering this new hypothesis, that it contains nothing but what seems to be consistent with truth. Let us endeavour to explain in a very brief manner the salient points of this new doctrine.

We know that meteors have a tendency to collect in swarms, and that these form closed rings, which travel in elliptical orbits round the sun. On two nights in the year—one in August, and one in November—the earth's orbit intersects these meteor-paths, and on those nights shooting-stars are plentiful. In 1866, Schiaparelli showed that one of these swarms of meteors had an orbit which was identical with the path of a certain comet, an observation which led to the inference that a comet consists of a mass of meteors rendered luminous or incandescent by frequent and innumerable collisions among themselves. This theory of the genesis of a comet is now widely accepted among astronomers. Mr Lockyer not only accepts this view, but he holds that all the heavenly bodies owe their origin to meteorites. He tells us that all self-luminous bodies in the heavens are composed of meteorites, or

masses of 'vapour produced by heat brought about by condensation of meteor-swarms due to gravity,' and that 'the existing distinction between stars, comets, and nebulae rests upon no physical basis.' But how, it will be asked, does Mr Lockyer seek to prove the truth of this new hypothesis? The answer to this reasonable inquiry is, that he depends upon the evidence of the spectroscope.

Let us, for the benefit of those who have not had an opportunity of following up the more recently trodden paths of scientific research, give a few words to this marvellous instrument. The spectroscope is the outcome of the labours of many minds. Two hundred years ago, the great Newton made the first contribution towards it by admitting a beam of sunlight through a round hole in the shutter of a darkened room and causing that beam to pierce a prism of glass. The prism split up the white light into its constituent coloured rays. Many years afterwards, Professor Wollaston substituted a slit for the round hole in the shutter, and found that this alteration led to a strange result. The coloured ribbon of light was no longer continuous, as with Newton, but was cut across by many dark lines. Fraunhofer, a German optician, mapped these lines to the number of several hundred, and they have since been called by his name. No one knew what they meant until the year 1835, when Bunsen and Kirchhoff discovered the secret. These two investigators were examining the light given by different metals when volatilised in the intense heat of the electric arc. They made this examination by means of the spectroscope, an instrument consisting of a prism placed in a tube, with an adjustable slit at one end, and a magnifying-glass at the other end. (This instrument, it will be seen, is simply a convenient modification of the darkened room with a slit in its shutter.) They noticed that each metal gave certain distinctive bright lines, and that these bright lines were identical in position with certain dark lines on the solar spectrum. They next found that the dark lines were due to the vapours of the burning metals, and that the corresponding bright lines were only seen when the glowing metals themselves were examined.

Such is, briefly, the history of the spectroscope, an instrument which has added enormously to our knowledge during the past forty years. The dark lines in the solar spectrum tell us that a large number of the metals known to us on this earth are in a state of active combustion in the sun. We are also able, with the spectroscope, to examine the light given by stars, comets, and nebulae, and to gain by the nature of their spectra some idea as to their composition. The spectroscope, in short, offers us a means of analysing the light given by a body so remote from us that that light takes centuries of time before it can reach this earth. And it should be noted that by this wonderful method of spectrum analysis we cannot only identify the nature of the glowing matter in these far-off regions of space, but we can also get an approximate idea of the temperature at which it glows. Some of these distant bodies—nebulae, for instance—represent a heat which can be compared with that of the familiar Bunsen burner; other bodies are associated with the heat given by the oxyhydrogen flame; others, again, with the far higher temperature of the

electric arc; while the brightest stars of heaven—Sirius, for example—glow with a heat unattainable by any means at the disposal of man.

We have already pointed out that the only substance which reaches this earth from outside space is the meteorite. It is something ponderable, which cannot only be handled, but can be subjected to chemical analysis, and to the still more searching eye of the spectroscope. Mr Lockyer founds his new theory upon the constitution of the meteoric stone. Volatilising these meteorites at various temperatures, and examining their spectra, he finds that there is a wonderful agreement in character between the spectra so obtained and the spectra of the various classes of heavenly bodies just mentioned. We will quote his own words with reference to the application of this method to solar observation. He says: 'The solar spectrum can be very fairly reproduced—in some parts of the spectrum, almost line for line—by taking a composite photograph of the arc spectrum of several stony meteorites, chosen at random, between iron meteoric poles.' It is impossible to describe fully in a popular manner the innumerable and patient experiments, extending over a period of fourteen years, which have guided Mr Lockyer to the conclusions at which he has arrived. To understand the force of his arguments, one must have something more than a casual knowledge of the wonderful instrument which has assisted him in his labours. To summarise the matter: He seeks to prove that the whole of the heavenly bodies are due to the ubiquitous meteorite—sparsely clustered—their luminosity being due to glowing gases let loose by their collisions among themselves—and we have the nebulae. Drawn within the attractive influence of the sun, such clusters become comets. A further development is seen in a certain class of stars, where gravity has caused a nearer approach of the constituent meteorites. And at length we reach the highest stage of all, where the meteorites are volatilised, and the star is a mass of incandescent vapour at a temperature beyond our ken. The spectroscope therefore teaches us of what stuff the stars are made, and the physical reason for the fact that 'one star differeth from another in glory.'

THE LONDON POLICE.

THE London police force, like all the institutions of that vast metropolis, is arranged upon a gigantic plan. The superintendents, inspectors, sergeants, and constables make up an army thirteen thousand eight hundred strong—a truly formidable force, but none too large, when it is considered that the Metropolitan Police District extends over a radius of fifteen miles from Charing Cross, exclusive of the City of London and its liberties, and embraces an area of six hundred and eighty-eight square miles, of a rateable value of thirty-three million eight hundred thousand pounds per year. Over such an area as this, including as it does a population of some five million three hundred and sixty thousand persons, there is of course a vast amount of work to be done; and it must be borne in mind that the duties of the London police are not

limited to the taking into custody of criminals and disorderly persons, and the watching of property, but include such duties as the carrying out of the Smoke Abatement Acts, the inspection of common lodging-houses, regulation of street traffic, and at certain times the onerous duty of taking up stray dogs—all of which duties are anything but light in a town like London; nor are they likely to become less arduous, seeing that during the year 1886 twelve thousand two hundred and fifty-two new houses were built within the police district, making twenty-nine miles of new streets.

The number of persons apprehended by the police during the year 1886 was seventy-two thousand one hundred and thirty. The value of property stolen during the same period was one hundred and eighteen thousand three hundred and forty pounds, of which eighteen thousand one hundred and twenty-nine pounds was recovered, leaving a net loss of one hundred thousand two hundred and eleven pounds; but the latter sum, it is to be presumed, would be set down by certain parties as a net gain. Notwithstanding the vast size of London, it is somewhat astonishing to notice that no fewer than seventeen thousand eight hundred and two persons were reported to the police as missing, and eight thousand nine hundred and forty-three were found and restored to their friends. During the twelve months, there occurred one thousand and fifty fires, fifty-eight of which were extinguished by the police. The truth of the saying, that it is safer to travel by railway than to walk the streets of London, would seem to be quite verified by the fact that the number of persons known by the police to have been run over and killed in the streets was one hundred and fourteen, the number maimed or injured from the same cause being three thousand nine hundred and forty-nine.

During the year, licenses were issued to hackney drivers, stage-drivers, and conductors to the number of twenty-six thousand three hundred and twenty; and it is very interesting to observe that amongst these men there are nine hundred and eighty-seven over sixty and under seventy years of age; one hundred and thirty over seventy and under eighty; and four over eighty years old. Occasionally, a London driver may have the chance of a windfall in the shape of property left in his conveyance, for it seems that last year the number of articles left in public carriages, &c., and deposited in the hands of the police, was twenty-two thousand three hundred and sixty-one, out of which twelve thousand one hundred and eleven were restored to the owners, who paid as rewards to the finders sums amounting to one thousand nine hundred and ninety-three pounds, representing a value of between fifteen and sixteen thousand pounds. Among the 'finds' the following are some of the most remarkable: Bag with two hundred and sixteen pounds in notes and gold; another bag containing one hundred pounds in notes; a third bag with bonds to the amount of three hundred pounds; and several lots of cash varying from ten to fifty pounds. After the articles have been deposited for three months, they are, in the absence of being claimed by the owners, returned to the parties depositing them.

THE SLEEPERS.

A CONTRAST.

BEHOLD them slumbering side by side,
Fair smiling youth and hoary age :
One dreams of worldly pomp and pride,
Where men a godless warfare wage ;
The other dreams of summer bowers,
Bright sunshine, warbling birds, and flowers.

One brow is marked with lines of care,
Which shows the world-worn spirit grieves ;
The other gleams 'neath clustering hair,
Like a fair star through quivering leaves.
One heart is grasping, proud, and cold ;
The other, generous, warm, and bold.

One breathes a long, a weary sigh,
And dreams of earthly gain or loss,
As with a keen, suspicious eye,
He counts once more his glittering dross ;
The other bounds with joyous tread
O'er fields of clover white and red.

A groan escapes the old man's lips,
A groan of mingled rage and pain,
For, lo ! his schemes, like phantom ships,
Have vanished 'neath the treacherous main.
He stretches forth one wrinkled hand,
To find his treasured hoard but sand.

From parted lips of tender bloom
A trill of merry laughter steals,
Whose fairy music fills the room—
The happy boy in dreamland kneels
Above a little crystal stream,
Where rushes wave and pebbles gleam ;

And he beholds with sparkling eyes
His ship—a water-lily—glide
Beneath the rosy-tinted skies,
Right bravely down the dimpling tide.
His bark no sordid hopes doth bear,
But dances on, he cares not where.

Hark ! now the dreaming worldling speaks :
'The path to wealth, how drear, how long !'
'Ah !' cries the boy, with glowing cheeks,
'How lovely is the skylark's song,
High soaring 'mid the blue above,
For ever singing, God is love !'

And when the morning sun shall rise
To charm away the mists of night,
The boy will greet with gladdened eyes
A world of beauty bathed in light,
For a fond mother's morning kiss
Will ope its golden gates of bliss.

But the poor worldling, what of him ?
Will he not seek the busy mart,
Like some gaunt spectre, stern and grim,
No joy within his withered heart ?
For life is empty, vain, and cold
To him who only seeketh gold !

FANNY FORRESTER.

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DARWIN.

It is always interesting to have from men of real eminence some record of their own lives, of the thoughts and feelings which animated them in certain critical periods of their career, and of the steps which led them to the execution of the work that made for them a name. In the autobiographical chapter prefixed to this life of Darwin,* we feel sure that a great many readers will be deeply interested, even should a limited knowledge of the scientific questions with which his name is associated lead them to regard the rest of the volumes with more or less of indifference. In the record which Darwin left for his family of the events of his own life, he writes with a simplicity and candour altogether removed from affectation on the one hand or ostentation on the other; revealing to us a man who was always more astonished at his success than conscious of the splendid abilities which rendered that success possible. It is not necessary to enter into the scientific considerations upon which his fame rests: that may be regarded as established whether we agree with his opinions or not; but it never can be a matter of indifference to any one to know the circumstances by which he was led, step by step, in the direction of the theories which go by his name, and to hear from his own lips the story of his achievements. 'A German editor,' he says, 'having written to me for an account of the development of my mind and character, with some sketch of my autobiography, I have thought that the attempt would amuse me, and might possibly interest my children or their children. I know that it would have interested me greatly to have read even so short and dull a sketch of the mind of my grandfather [Erasmus Darwin] written by himself, and what he thought and did, and how he worked. I have attempted to write the following account of

myself, as if I were a dead man in another world looking back at my own life. Nor have I found this difficult, for life is nearly over with me.' This was written in August 1876, when he was in his sixty-eighth year.

Charles Darwin was born at Shrewsbury, on the 12th of February 1809. His father, who practised in that town as a physician, was a man noted for his good sense, his sterling qualities of mind and character, and the remarkable power of sympathy by which he won the confidence of his patients. But he does not appear to have laid any claim to special scientific knowledge or abilities. If there was any play of heredity in the peculiar development of Charles Darwin's scientific powers, that must be traced back, not to his father, but to his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, who wrote a semi-scientific book in verse on *The Loves of the Plants*, as well as other works in prose, and who really did anticipate, in a way that could not be understood by his contemporaries, some of the conclusions which his gifted grandson was afterwards to make the common property of the scientific world. But if Darwin's father was not the immediate transmitter of the scientific genius, he did for his son what was of an importance not to be overlooked in its bearing on his son's career: he left him a handsome fortune, which enabled the investigator into the Origin of Species to carry on his lifelong researches undisturbed by the distractions of narrowed circumstances or the pressure of family wants. It is true that we know of many who have done great things in spite of their poverty; but who can tell how many other great things the presence of this poverty has effectually crushed?

Charles Darwin was sent to school in his eighth year. 'I must,' he says, 'have been a very simple little fellow when I first went to school. A boy of the name of Garnett took me into a cake-shop one day and bought some cakes, for which he did not pay, as the shopman trusted him. When he came out, I asked him why he did not pay for them, and he instantly answered: "Why, do you not know that my uncle left a great sum of money

* *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, including an Autobiographical Chapter.* Edited by his son, Francis Darwin. 3 vols. London: Murray. 1887.

to the town on condition that every tradesman should give whatever was wanted without payment to any one who wore his old hat and moved it in a particular manner?" And he then showed me how it was moved. He then went into another shop where he was trusted, and asked for some small article, moving his hat in the proper manner, and of course obtained it without payment. When he came out, he said: "Now, if you like to go by yourself into that cake-shop (how well I remember its exact position), I will lend you my hat, and you can get whatever you like if you move the hat on your head properly." I gladly accepted the generous offer, and went in and asked for some cakes, moved the old hat, and was walking out of the shop, when the shopman made a rush at me; so I dropped the cakes and ran for dear life, and was astonished by being greeted with shouts of laughter by my false friend Garnett.' But Darwin was not without some spice of trickery himself. He mentions one incident by which his conscience was afterwards 'sorely troubled,' and which, he adds, was 'curious, as showing that apparently I was interested at this early age in the variability of plants. I told another little boy that I could produce variously coloured polyanthus and primroses by watering them with certain coloured fluids; which was of course a monstrous fable, and had never been tried by me. I may here also confess that as a little boy I was much given to inventing deliberate falsehoods, and this was always done for the sake of causing excitement. For instance, I once gathered much valuable fruit from my father's trees and hid it in the shrubbery, and then ran in breathless haste to spread the news that I had discovered a hoard of stolen fruit.' It is clear that Darwin can never be included among the remarkable specimens of immaculate boyhood 'who never told a lie.'

As a pupil he was considered dull, and he admits himself that he was slow in learning. But, on the other hand, the system of education under which he was trained was, as it should seem, singularly unfitted to develop his peculiar mental faculties, it being strictly classical. Nothing else indeed was taught in the school which he attended except a little ancient geography and history. 'I was considered,' he says, 'by all my masters and by my father as a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect. To my deep mortification, my father once said to me: "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family." But my father, who was the kindest man I ever knew, and whose memory I revere with all my heart, must have been angry and somewhat unjust when he used such words.' But while he did not benefit by the classical training to which he was subjected, the boy learned Euclid—taught him by a private tutor—with avidity, and he afterwards distinctly remembered 'the intense satisfaction which the clear geometrical proofs' afforded him.

During the latter part of his school career, he became passionately fond of shooting, and to this is perhaps to be attributed his first experience of the sights and sounds of Nature—the first drawing-out of those remarkable powers of close and accurate observation as applied to animal and

vegetable life which afterwards so distinguished him. In addition to Euclid, also, he had been studying a little chemistry in a private way; but this becoming noised abroad in the school, and being an unprecedented fact there, it procured him the nickname of 'Gas.' For 'thus wasting his time on such useless subjects,' he was publicly rebuked by the head-master, the good man no doubt thinking that for every one alike the ability to produce an accurate Latin hexameter was the best possible equipment for the battle of life. As the boy was doing no good at school, his father took him away, and sent him, in 1825, to Edinburgh University, where his elder brother was completing his medical studies. Here Darwin stayed for two years or sessions, but made little progress, as he could not stand seeing operations performed in those old ante-chloroform days, and was obliged to rush out of the operating-room. The account he has left of the lectures in the Edinburgh University of that period is not flattering. He had one pleasant reminiscence, however, of his residence in the northern capital. He was once taken to a meeting of the Royal Society, where, he says, 'I saw Sir Walter Scott in the chair as President, and he apologised to the meeting as not feeling fitted for such a position. I looked at him and at the whole scene with some awe and reverence; and I think it was owing to this visit during my youth, and to my having attended the Royal Medical Society, that I felt the honour of being elected, a few years ago, an honorary member of both these Societies, more than any other similar honour.'

Darwin's father perceiving, or hearing from the boy's sisters, that he did not like the thought of being a physician, proposed that he should prepare to enter the Church. 'Considering how fiercely I have been attacked by the orthodox,' he himself remarks, 'it seems ludicrous that I once intended to be a clergyman. Nor was this intention and my father's wish ever formally given up, but died a natural death when, on leaving Cambridge, I joined the *Beagle* as naturalist.' But it was at Cambridge that his scientific instincts entered upon their development. As far as the academical studies were concerned, his time, he tells us, was as completely wasted during the three years he spent there, as it had been at Edinburgh and at school. But he took to field-science. He had been 'so sickened' by the kind of geological lectures he had heard at Edinburgh, that he did not attend the geological lectures at Cambridge; he, however, attended Professor Henslow's lectures on botany, and liked them much for their extreme clearness and the admirable illustrations. But that Professor's field-excursions were what interested our young naturalist most; and no pursuit at Cambridge was followed by him with so much eagerness, or gave him so much pleasure, as collecting beetles. 'It was,' he says, 'the mere passion for collecting, for I did not dissect them, and rarely compared their external characters with published descriptions, but got them named anyhow. I will give a proof of my zeal. One day, on tearing off some old bark, I saw two rare beetles, and seized one in each hand; then I saw a third and new kind, which I could not bear to lose, so that I popped the one which I had in my right hand into my mouth. Alas! it ejected some intensely acrid fluid, which burned my tongue, so

that I was forced to spit the beetle out, which was lost, as was the third one.*

It is here, at Cambridge, that we first find a distinct indication of the existence in Darwin of that special genius for which he was afterwards noted. Other naturalists have been as diligent as he, and as patient in observation and analysis; but what specially distinguished Darwin as an observer was the singularly original methods and experiments which he devised for obtaining fresh specimens or bringing out some new phenomenon of animal or vegetable life. All readers of his books must have been struck by this. Well, at Cambridge he 'invented two new methods.' 'I employed,' he says, 'a labourer to scrape, during the winter, moss off old trees, and place it in a large bag, and likewise to collect the rubbish at the bottom of the barges in which reeds are brought from the fens, and thus I got some very rare species. No poet ever felt more delighted at seeing his first poem published than I did at seeing, in Stephens' *Illustrations of British Insects*, the magic words, "captured by C. Darwin, Esq."'

The circumstance which at this time influenced his career more than any other was the friendship which now sprung up between him and Professor Henslow. During the last year and a half of his stay at Cambridge, he constantly accompanied the Professor on his walks, and in this way gained a great amount of scientific knowledge. Afterwards, at the solicitation of Professor Henslow, he was allowed to accompany Sedgwick, the geological Professor, in a private excursion to North Wales; and it was on his return home from this expedition that he found a letter awaiting him from Professor Henslow offering him the post of naturalist on board the *Beagle*, then about to start, under Captain Fitz-Roy, on a voyage for the survey of South America, and thence round the world. His father consented that he should go, and so the project of becoming a clergyman was finally broken off. 'I had been rather extravagant,' he tells us, 'at Cambridge, and to console my father, said "that I should be deuced clever to spend more than my allowance whilst on board the *Beagle*;" but he answered with a smile, "But they tell me you are very clever."' The old physician's view of his son's future was evidently improving since the time when he prophesied he should only be a good-for-nothing.

A little anecdote of this appointment cannot be omitted. 'Next day,' says Darwin, 'I started for Cambridge to see Henslow, and thence to London to see Fitz-Roy, and all was soon arranged. Afterwards, on becoming very intimate with Fitz-Roy, I heard that I had run a very narrow risk of being rejected on account of the shape of my nose. He was an ardent disciple of Lavater, and was convinced that he could judge of a man's character by the outline of his features; and he doubted whether any one with my nose could possess sufficient energy and determination for the voyage. But I think he was afterwards well satisfied that my nose had spoken falsely.'

The voyage with the *Beagle* extended from December 1831 to October 1836. The account which Darwin published of it after his return is too well known to require any characterisation

here. No one who has read this charming book will readily forget the happy mingling of observation and reflection which has rendered it so long one of the author's most popular books. Darwin himself says: 'The success of this my first literary child always tickles my vanity more than that of any of my other books. Even to this day it sells steadily in England and the United States, and has been translated for the second time into German, and into French and other languages. Ten thousand copies have been sold in England of the second edition.'

We cannot notice in detail the various scientific papers, as well as longer treatises, which appeared subsequently from the same pen, but must hasten on to the publication of his great work, *The Origin of Species*, which was issued in November 1859. Those of our readers who are old enough to recollect the public events of 1860, will remember the extraordinary excitement which prevailed in intellectual circles over the views put forward in that work. The book was assailed by men of science, and by men who knew nothing of science; it was the object of angry denunciation from a hundred platforms and in the pages of a hundred reviews; and its theories were alternately made matter of laughter and of scorn. Scarcely a voice was raised in its defence; and if raised, could not be heard amid the wild clamour of contending assailants. The state of feeling then exhibited resembled that which had been witnessed twenty-five years before, when first *The Vestiges of Creation* was published. Both books had a certain relation to the same subject. *The Vestiges*—published anonymously, but since acknowledged to be the work of the late Dr Robert Chambers—was in some respects the forerunner of the *Origin*. It is, we daresay, frequently supposed that the question of Evolution began with the publication of Darwin's book in 1859; but this was not so. Lamarck, in the beginning of the century, had thrown doubts upon the immutability of species; but his book excited little notice. In the *Vestiges*, however, a stronger note was struck in the doctrine of Progressive Development therein advocated, and enforced with many facts and much close reasoning. Darwin, referring to this book in his introduction to the *Origin*, spoke of its 'brilliant and powerful style,' and expressed his belief that, in its later editions, it 'did excellent service in this country in calling attention to the subject, in removing prejudice, and in thus preparing the ground for the reception of analogous views.' Darwin differed from his predecessors in that he put forward a hypothetical reason for the transmutation of species, namely, his doctrine of Natural Selection, or, as Mr Herbert Spencer prefers to call it, the 'survival of the fittest.' It is around this—Darwin's great theory—that the battle of the species has since 1859 been fought.*

Darwin says of his book, *The Origin of Species*: 'It is no doubt the chief work of my life. It

* It would be out of place to enlarge here on the particular points regarding which Darwin and his predecessors agreed and disagreed; but readers who wish to understand the subject will find it clearly set forth in Professor Nicholson's *Natural History: Its Rise and Progress in Britain, as developed in the Life and Labours of Leading Naturalists*. (W. & R. Chambers, 1886.)

was from the first highly successful. The first small edition of twelve hundred and fifty copies was sold on the day of publication, and a second edition of three thousand copies soon afterwards. Sixteen thousand copies have now (1876) been sold in England; and considering how stiff a book it is, this is a large sale. It has been translated into every European tongue, even into such languages as Spanish, Bohemian, Polish, and Russian. Up to the time of his death, which took place in April 1882, Darwin's name was kept continually before the scientific world, not only by discussions regarding his central theory, but by his further published works on the Descent of Man, on Insectivorous Plants, on Earthworms, and other subjects, all of which were treated with his accustomed fullness of observation and sagacity of deduction. All this work, it must not be forgotten, was accomplished by a man who was almost constantly in a state of health little removed from that of an invalid.

We could have wished, had space permitted, to give some description of certain other aspects of Darwin's life—his extreme difficulty in composition; his deficient linguistic faculty; his disregard of literature and of books, as such; his extraordinary self-absorption in his work; his great respect for the opinion of the scientific few, and his indifference to that of the unlearned many; as well as the more pleasant subject of his character and habits in private life. But space forbids. We can only refer our readers for themselves to the three delightful volumes in which Mr Francis Darwin has allowed his father mainly to tell his own life by means of his autobiography and his letters.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER VI.—WHICH LADY?

HUGH found the day among the sandhills simply delightful. He had said with truth he loved all innocent pleasures, for his was one of those sunny, many-sided, æsthetic natures, in spite of its underlying tinge of pessimism and sadness, that throw themselves with ardour into every simple country delight, and find deep enjoyment in trees and flowers and waves and scenery, in the scent of new-mown hay and the song of birds, and in social intercourse with beautiful women. Warren Relf had readily enough fallen in with Hugh's plan for their day's outing; for Warren Relf in his turn was human too, and at a first glance he had been greatly taken with Hugh's pretty cousin, the dark-eyed Girtton girl. His possession of the *Mud-Turtle* gave him for the moment a title to respect, for a yacht's a yacht, however tiny. So he took them all up together in the yawl to the foot of the sandhills; and while Mrs Meysey and the girls were unpacking the hamper and getting lunch ready on the white slopes of the drifted dunes, he sat down by the shore and sketched a little bit of the river foreground that exactly suited his own peculiar style—an islet of mud, rising low from the bed of the sluggish stream, crowned with purple sea-aster and white-flowered scurvy-grass, and backed by a slimy bed of tidal ooze, that shone with glancing rays of gold and crimson in the broad flood of the reflected sunlight.

Elsie was very happy, too, in her way; for had she not Hugh all the time by her side, and was she not wearing the ardent verses she had received from him by post that very morning, inside her dress, pressed close against her heart, and rising and falling with every pulse and flutter of her bosom? To him, the handicraftsman, they were a mere matter of ocean and potion, and lotion and devotion, strung together on a slender thread of pretty conceit; but to her, in the innocent ecstasy of a first great love, they meant more than words could possibly utter.

She could not thank him for them; her pride and delight went too deep for that; and even were it otherwise, she had no opportunity. But once, while they stood together by the sounding sea, with Winifred by their side, looking critically at the picture Warren Relf had sketched in hasty outline, and begun to colour, she found an occasion to let the poet know, by a graceful allusion, she had received his little tribute of verse in safety. As the painter with a few dainty strokes filled in the floating iridescent tints upon the sunlit ooze, she murmured aloud, as if quoting from some well-known poem:

Red strands that faintly fleck and spot
The tawny flood thy banks enfold;
A web of Tyrian purple, shot
Through cloth of gold.

Hugh looked up at her appreciatively with a smile of recognition. They were his own verses, out of the *Ballade of the Char* he had written and posted to her the night before. 'Mere faint Swinburnian echoes, nothing worth,' he murmured low in a deprecating aside; but he was none the less flattered at the delicate attention, for all that. 'And how clever of her, too,' he thought to himself with a faint thrill, 'to have pieced them in so deftly with the subject of the picture! After all, she's a very intelligent girl, Elsie! A man might go farther and fare worse—if it were not for that negative quantity in doits and stivers.'

Warren Relf looked up also with a quick glance at the dark-eyed girl. 'You're right, Miss Challoner,' he said, stealing a lover's side-look at the iridescent peacock hues upon the gleaming mud. 'It shines like opal. No precious stone on earth could be lovelier than that. Few people have the eye to see beauty in a flat of tidal mud like the one I'm painting; but cloth of gold and Tyrian purple are the only words one could possibly find to express in fit language the glow and glory of its exquisite colouring. If only I could put it on canvas now, as you've put it in words, even the Hanging Committee of the Academy, I believe—hard-hearted monsters—would scarcely be stony enough to dream of rejecting it.'

Elsie smiled. How every man reads things his own way, by the light of his own personal interests! Hugh had seen she was trying to thank him unobtrusively for his copy of verses; Warren Relf had only found in her apt quotation a passing criticism on his own little water-colour.

After lunch, the two seniors, the Squire and Mrs Meysey, manifested the distinct desire of middle age for a quiet digestion in the shade of the sandhills; and the four younger folks, nothing

loth to be free, wandered off in pairs at their own sweet will along the bank of the river. Hugh took Elsie for his companion at first, while Warren Relf had to put himself off for the time being with the blue-eyed Winifred. Now, Relf hated blue eyes. 'But we must arrange it like a set of Lancers,' Hugh cried with a languid wave of his graceful hand; 'at the end of the figure, set to corners and change partners.' Elsie might have felt half jealous for a moment at this equitable suggestion, if Hugh hadn't added to her in a lower tone and with his sweetest smile: 'I mustn't monopolise you all the afternoon, you know, Elsie; Relf must have his innings too; I can see by his face he's just dying to talk to you.'

'I'd rather, a great deal, talk with you, Hugh,' Elsie murmured gently, looking down at the sands with an apparently sudden geological interest in their minute composition.

'I'm proud to hear it; so would I,' Hugh answered gallantly. 'But we mustn't be selfish. I hate selfishness. I'll sacrifice myself by-and-by on the altar of fraternity to give Relf a turn in due season. Meanwhile, Elsie, let's be happy together while we can. Moments like these don't come to one often in the course of a lifetime. They're as rare as rubies and as all good things. When they do come, I prize them far too much to think of wasting them in petty altercation.'

They strolled about among the undulating dunes for an hour or more, talking in that vague emotional way that young men and maidens naturally fall into when they walk together by the shore of the great deep, and each very much pleased with the other's society, as usually happens under similar circumstances. The dunes were indeed a lovely place for flirting in, as if made for the purpose—high billowy hillocks of blown sand, all white and firm, and rolling like chalk downs, but matted together under foot with a tussocky network of spurs and campsions and soldanella convolvulus. In the tiny combs, and valleys in between, where tall reed-like grasses made a sort of petty imitation jungle, you could sit down unobserved under the lee of some mimic range of mountains, and take your ease in an enchanted garden, like sultans and sultanats of the *Arabian Nights*, without risk of intrusion. The sea tumbled in gently on one side upon the long white beach; the river ran on the other just within the belt of blown sandhills; and wedged between the two, in a long line, the barrier ridge of miniature wolds stretched away for miles and miles in long perspective towards the southern horizon. It was a lotus-eating place to lie and dream and make love in for ever. As Hugh sat there idly with Elsie by his side under the lee of the dunes, he wondered the Squire could ever have had the bad taste to object to the generous east wind which had overwhelmed his miserable utilitarian salt-marsh pastures with this quaint little fairyland of tiny knolls and Lilliputian valleys. For his own part, Hugh was duly grateful to that unconscious atmospheric landscape gardener for his admirable additions to the flat Suffolk scenery; he wanted nothing better or sweeter in life than to lie here for ever stretched at his ease in the sun, and talk of poetry and love with Elsie.

At the end of an hour, however, he roused himself sturdily. Life, says the philosopher, is not all beer and skittles; nor is it all poetry and dalliance either. 'Stern duty sways our lives against our will,' say the *Echoes from Callimachus*. It's all very well, at odd moments, to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neera's hair—for a reasonable period. But if Amaryllis has no money of her own, or if Neera is a penniless governess in a country-house, the wise man must sacrifice sentiment at last to solid advantages; he must quit Amaryllis in search of Phyllis, or reject Neera in favour of Vera, that opulent virgin, who has lands and houses, messuages and tenements, stocks and shares, and is a ward in Chancery. Face to face with such a sad necessity, Hugh now found himself. He was really grieved that the circumstances of the case compelled him to tear himself unwillingly away from Elsie, he was so thoroughly enjoying himself in his own pet way; but duty, duty—duty before everything! The slave of duty jumped up with a start.

'My dear child,' he exclaimed, glancing hastily at his watch, 'Relf will really never forgive me. I'm sure it's time for us to set to corners and change partners. Not, of course, that I want to do it myself. For two people who are not engaged, I think we've had a very snug little time of it here together, Elsie. But a bargain's a bargain, and Relf must be inwardly grinding his teeth at me.—Let's go and meet them.'

Elsie rose more slowly and wistfully. 'I'm never so happy anywhere, Hugh,' she said with a lingering cadence, 'as when you're with me.'

'And yet we are not engaged,' Hugh went on in a meditative murmur—'we're not engaged. We're only cousins! For mere cousins, our cousinly solicitude for one another's welfare is truly touching. If all families were only as united as ours, now! interpreters of prophecy would not have far to seek for the date of the millennium. Well, well, instructress of youth, we must look out for these other young people; and if I were you, experience would suggest to me the desirability of not coming upon them from behind too unexpectedly or abruptly. A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind. Relf is young, and the pretty pupil is by no means unattractive.'

'I'd trust Winifred as implicitly'—Elsie began, and broke off suddenly.

'As you'd trust yourself,' Hugh put in, with a little quiet irony, completing her sentence. 'No doubt, no doubt; I can readily believe it. But even you and I—who are staid and older, and merely cousins—wouldn't have cared to be disturbed too abruptly just now, you know, when we were pulling soldanellas to pieces in concert in the hollow down yonder. I shall climb to the top of the big sandhill there, and from that specular mount—as Satan remarks in *Paradise Regained*—I shall spy from afar where Relf has wandered off to with the immaculate Winifred.—Ah, there they are, over yonder by the beach, looking for pebbles or something—I suppose amber. Let's go over to them, Elsie, and change partners. Common politeness compels one, of course, to pay some attention to one's host's daughter.'

As they strolled away again, with a change of partners, back towards the spot where Mrs Meysey was somewhat anxiously awaiting them, Hugh

and Winifred turned their talk casually on Elsie's manifold charms and excellences. 'She's a sweet, isn't she?' Winifred cried to her new acquaintance in enthusiastic appreciation. 'Did you ever in your life meet anybody like her?'

'No, never,' Hugh answered with candid praise. Candour was always Hugh's special cue. 'She's a dear, good girl, and I like her immensely. I'm proud of her too. The only inheritance I ever received from my family is my cousinship to Elsie; and I duly prize it as my sole heirloom from fifty generations of penniless Massingers.'

'Then you're very fond of her, Mr Massinger?'

'Yes, very fond of her. When a man's only got one relative in the world, he naturally values that unique possession far more than those who have a couple of dozen or so of all sexes and ages, assorted. Some people suffer from too much family; my misfortune is that, being a naturally affectionate man, I suffer from too little. It's the old case of the one ewe lamb; Elsie is to me my brothers and my sisters, and my cousins and my aunts, all rolled into one, like the supers at the theatre.'

'And are you and she'—Winifred began timidly. All girls are naturally inquisitive on that important question.

Hugh broke her off with a quick little laugh. 'Oh, dear no, nothing of the sort,' he answered hastily, in his jaunty way. 'We're not engaged, if that's what you mean, Miss Meysey; nor at all likely to be. Our affection, though profound, is of the brotherly and sisterly order only. It's much nicer so, of course. When people are engaged, they're always looking forward with yearning and longing and other unpleasant internal feelings, much enlarged upon in Miss Virginia Gabriel's songs, to a delusive future. When they're simply friends, or brothers and sisters, they can enjoy their friendship or their fraternity in the present tense, without for ever gazing ahead with wistful eyes towards a distant and ever receding horizon.'

'But why need it recede?' Winifred asked innocently.

'Why need it recede? Ah, there you pose me. Well, it needn't, of course, among the rich and the mighty. If people are swells, and amply provided for by their godfathers and godmothers at their baptism, or otherwise, they can marry at once; but the poor and the struggling—that's Elsie and me, you know, Miss Meysey—the poor and the struggling get engaged foolishly, and hope and hope for a humble cottage—the poetical cottage, all draped with roses and wild honeysuckle, and the well-attired woodbine—and toil and moil and labour exceedingly, and find the cottage receding, receding, receding still, away off in the distance, while they plough their way through the hopeless years, just as the horizon recedes for ever before you when you steer straight out for it in a boat at sea. The moral is—poor folk should not indulge in the luxury of hearts, and should wrap themselves up severely in their own interests, till they're wholly and utterly and irretrievably selfish.'

'And are you selfish, I wonder, Mr Massinger?'

'I try to be, of course, from a sense of duty; though I'm afraid I make a very poor hand at it.

I was born with a heart, and do what I will, I can't quite stifle that irrepressible natural organ.—But I take it all out, I believe, in the end, in writing verses.'

'You sent Elsie some verses this morning,' Winifred broke out in an artless way, as if she were merely stating a common fact of every-day experience.

Hugh had some difficulty in suppressing a start, and in recovering his composure so as to answer unconcernedly: 'Oh, she showed them to you, then, did she?' (How thoughtless of him to have posted those poor rhymes to Elsie, when he might have known beforehand she would confide them at once to Miss Meysey's sympathetic ear!)

'No, she didn't show them to me,' Winifred replied, in the same careless, easy way as before. 'I saw them drop out of the envelope, that's all; and Elsie put them away as soon as she saw they were verses; but I was sure they were yours, because I know your handwriting—Elsie's shown me bits of your letters sometimes.'

'I often send copies of my little pieces to Elsie before I print them,' Hugh went on casually, in his most candid manner. 'It may be vain of me, but I like her to see them. She's a capital critic, Elsie; women often are: she sometimes suggests to me most valuable alterations and modifications in some of my verses.'

'Tell me these ones,' Winifred asked abruptly, with a little blush.

It was a trying moment. What was Hugh to do? The verses he had actually sent to Elsie were all emotion and devotion, and hearts and darts, and fairest and thou wearest, and charms and arms; amorous and clamorous chimed together like old friends in one stanza, and sorrow dispelled itself to-morrow with its usual cheerful punctuality in the next. To recite them to Winifred as they stood would be to retire at once from his half-projected siege of the pretty little heiress's heart and hand. For that decisive step Hugh was not at present entirely prepared. He mustn't allow himself to be beaten by such a scholar's mate as this. He cleared his throat, and began boldly on another piece, ringing out his lines with a sonorous lilt—a set of silly, garrulous, childish verses he had written long since, but never published, about some merry sea-elves in an enchanted submarine fairy country:

A tiny fay
At the bottom lay
Of a purple bay
Unruffled,
On whose crystal floor
The distant roar
From the surf-bound shore
Was muffled.

With his fairy wife
He passed his life
Undimmed by strife
Or quarrel;
And the livelong day
They would merrily play
Through a labyrinth gay
With coral.

They loved to dwell
In a pearly shell,
And to deck their cell
With amber;

Or amid the caves
That the ripple laves
And the beryl paves
To clamber.

He went on so, with his jiggling versicles, line after line, as they walked along the firm white sand together, through several foolish sing-song stanzas; till at last, when he was more than half way through the meaningless little piece, a sudden thought pulled him up abruptly. He had chosen, as he thought, the most innocent and non-committing bit of utter trash in all his private poetical repertory; but now, as he repeated it over to Winifred with easy intonation, swinging his stick to keep time as he went, he recollected all at once that the last rhymes flew off at a tangent to a very personal conclusion—and what was worse, were addressed, too, not to Elsie, but very obviously to another lady! The end was somewhat after this wise:

On a darting shrimp,
Our quaint little imp
With bridle of gimp
Would gambol;
Or across the back
Of a sea-horse black,
As a gentleman's hack
He'd amble.

Of emerald green
And sapphire's sheen
He made his queen
A tiar;
And the merry two
Their whole life through
Were as happy as you
And I are.

And then came the seriously compromising bit:

But if you say
You think this lay
Of the tiny fay
Too silly,
Let it have the praise
My eye betrays
To your own sweet gaze,
My Lily.

For a man he tries,
And he toils and sighs
To be very wise
And witty;
But a dear little dame
Has enough of fame
If she wins the name
Of pretty.

Lily! Lily! Oh, that discomposing, unfortunate, compromising Lily! He had met her down in Warwickshire two seasons since, at a country-house where they were both staying, and had fallen over head and ears in love with her—then. Now, he only wished with all his heart and soul she and her fays were at the bottom of the sea in a body together. For of course she was penniless. If not, by this time she would no doubt have been Mrs Massinger.

Hugh Massinger was a capital actor; but even he could hardly have ventured to pretend, with a grave face, that those Lily verses had ever been addressed to Elsie Challoner. Everything depended upon his presence of mind and a bold resolve. He hesitated for a moment at the 'emerald green and sapphire's sheen,' and seemed as though he couldn't recall the next line. After

a minute or two's pretended searching he recovered it feebly, and then he stumbled again over the end of the stanza.

'It's no use,' he cried at last, as if angry with himself. 'I should only murder them if I were to go on now. I've forgotten the rest. The words escape me. And they're really not worth your seriously listening to.'

'I like them,' Winifred said in her simple way. 'They're so easy to understand: so melodious and meaningless. I love verse that you don't have to puzzle over. I can't bear Browning for that—he's so impossible to make anything sensible out of. But I adore silly little things like these, that go in at one ear and out of the other, and really sound as if they meant something.—I shall ask Elsie to tell me the end of them.'

Here was indeed a dilemma! Suppose she did, and suppose Elsie showed her the real verses! At all hazards, he must extricate himself somehow from this impossible situation.

'I wish you wouldn't,' he said gently, in his softest and most persuasive voice. 'Elsie mightn't like you to know I sent her my verses—though there's nothing in it—girls are so sensitive sometimes about these matters.—But I'll tell you what I'll do, if you'll kindly allow me: I'll write you out the end of them when I get home to the inn, and bring them written out in full, a nice clear copy, the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you.' ('I can alter the end somehow,' he thought to himself with a sudden inspiration, 'and dress them up innocently one way or another with fresh rhymes, so as to have no special applicability of any sort to anybody or anything anywhere in particular.')

'Thank you,' Winifred replied, with evident pleasure. 'I should like that ever so much better. It'll be so nice to have a poet's verses written out for one's self in his own handwriting.'

'You do me too much honour,' Hugh answered with his mock little bow. 'I don't pretend to be a poet at all; I'm only a versifier.'

They joined the old folks in time by the yawl. The Squire was getting anxious to go back to his garden now—he foresaw rain in the sky to westward.

Hugh glanced hastily at his watch with a sigh. 'I must be going back too,' he cried. 'It's nearly five now; we can't be up at the village till six. Post goes out at nine, they say, and I have a book to review before post-time. It must positively reach town not later than to-morrow morning. And what's worse, I haven't yet so much as begun to dip into it.'

'But you can never read it and review it too in three hours!' Winifred exclaimed, aghast.

'Precisely so,' Hugh answered, in his jaunty way, with a stifled yawn; 'and therefore I propose to omit the reading as a very unnecessary and wasteful preliminary. It often prejudices one against a book to know what's in it. You approach a work you haven't read with a mind unbiassed by preconceived impressions. Besides, this is only a three-volume novel: they're all alike; it doesn't matter. You can say the plot is crude and ill-constructed, the dialogue feeble, the descriptions vile, the situations borrowed, and the characters all mere conventional puppets. The same review will do equally well for the whole stupid lot of them. I usually follow

Sydney Smith's method in that matter: I cut a few pages at random, here and there, and then smell the paper-knife.'

'But is that just?' Elsie asked quietly, a slight shade coming over her earnest face.

'My dear Miss Challoner,' Warren Relf put in hastily, 'have you known Massinger so many years without finding out that he's always a great deal better than he himself pretends to be? I know him well enough to feel quite confident he'll read every word of that novel through to-night, if he sits up till four o'clock in the morning to do it; and he'll let the London people have their review in time, if he telegraphs up every blessed word of it by special wire to-morrow morning. His wickedness is always only his brag; his goodness he hides carefully under his own extremely capacious bushel.'

Hugh laughed. 'As you know me so much better than I know myself, my dear boy,' he replied easily, 'there's nothing more to be said about it. I'm glad to receive so good a character from a connoisseur in human nature. I really never knew before what an amiable and estimable member of society hid himself under my rugged and unprepossessing exterior.' And as he said it, he drew himself up, and darting a laugh from the corner of those sad black eyes, looked at the moment the handsomest and most utterly killing man in the county of Suffolk.

When Elsie and Winifred went up to their own rooms that evening, the younger girl slipping into Elsie's bedroom for a moment, took her friend's hands tenderly in her own, and looking long and eagerly into the other's eyes, said at last in a quick tone of unexpected discovery: 'Elsie, he's awfully nice-looking and awfully clever, this Oxford cousin of yours. I like him immensely.'

Elsie brought back her eyes from infinity with a sudden start. 'I'm glad you do, dear,' she said, looking down at her kindly. 'I wanted you to like him. I should be dreadfully disappointed, in fact, if you didn't. I'm exceedingly fond of Hugh, Winnie.'

Winifred paused for a second significantly; then she asked point-blank: 'Elsie, are you engaged to him?'

'Engaged to him! My darling, what ever made you dream of such a thing?—Engaged to Hugh!—engaged to Hugh Massinger!—Why, Winnie, you know he's my own cousin.'

'But you don't answer my question plainly,' Winifred persisted with girlish determination. 'Are you engaged to him or are you not?'

Elsie, mindful of Hugh's frequent declarations, answered boldly (and not quite untruthfully): 'No, I'm not, Winifred.'

The heiress of Whitestrand stroked her friend's hair with a sigh of relief. That sigh was blind. Girl though she was, she might clearly have seen with a woman's instinct that Elsie's flushed cheek and downcast eyes belied to the utmost her spoken word. But she did not see it. All preoccupied as she was with her own thoughts and her own wishes, she never observed at all those mute witnesses to Elsie's love for her handsome cousin. She was satisfied in her heart with Hugh's and Elsie's double verbal denial. She said to herself with a thrill in her own soul, as a girl will do

in the first full flush of her earliest passion: 'Then I may love him if I like! I may make him love me! It won't be wrong to Elsie for me to love him!'

(To be continued.)

IS DEATH FROM INTENSE COLD PAINLESS?

WHAT strange vicissitudes are represented in the history of some men's lives! Who would have thought, after such an unusually active and public life as that of the late Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, that his last hours would be spent in a lonely Scotch glen, with no human eye to watch him—only guarded by the faithful dogs that stood by him to the last, and until long after he, overcome by fatigue and cold, had calmly yielded his much-tried soul into the hands of the Father of spirits? A thrill of pity passed through many a heart as the eye read the first meagre account of the placid face, the shoeless foot, and the pure-white covering of snow. Did the weary one suffer much or any pain during the last few hours of his life? Did he endure the same agony which Thomson created for his victim in the justly celebrated storm-scene in *Winter*? Or did the calm face reflect a deeper quiet of soul, a foretaste of bliss? Is it possible to set at rest any disturbing doubts on the question? The present writer, having had a providential escape from death amidst Alpine snows, can give an answer which will probably allay any fears on the point.

Like other hard-working people, I enjoy a holiday; but a real holiday to me must have two excellent qualities: one, a total absence of responsibility; the other, it must be amongst mountains; and whether these be Scotch mountains, the Alps, the Pyrenees, or any others, I do not mind very much, so that I can get up somewhere as far as possible out of that world of encumbrances which pertain to a literary man's life—to wit, pens, papers, ink, pamphlets, books of all kinds, letters, and worse than all, these obtrusive barbarously brown telegram envelopes and all their contents. But these form what I may call still-life. There is something worse, if the oppressive cares which are in reality the graver part of life, must be handed over to a deputy who has possessed himself of your probable route. To be in a perpetual state of uncertainty as to what a day may bring forth, when you really want nothing, is only a mild alternative to doing the thing one's self. But if you want to gain tone and elasticity of body, of mind, and of feelings too, and really enjoy perfect freedom, get away out of the ruts of life, as far as you can from all beaten tracks, and as high up as you can, and every day will make a difference.

Again, tastes vary considerably in another direction. The last travelling companion I had was on the continent nearly twenty years ago. He thought, after some weeks of travel, that mountains were made for mountain maniacs, and that he had had his fill. Moreover, he could not walk more than a score of miles per day; nor did he care much about the ten thousand beauties of nature which enchant a lover of botany,

geology, entomology, and the like. Ever since then, I have gone alone; besides, there are times when even the most desirable companion is a little too much; I mean, during those supreme moments of life such as are so wondrously expressed in many of Wordsworth's poems.

I was enjoying something of such a holiday in the Pennine Alps, a few years ago. Of course, I was alone. If any contrast were needed, there was one offered in the abominations of the Rhone Valley, where any one with a sensitive epidermis understood very soon the qualities of the gnats, mosquitoes, and the rest of the flying plagues. After this, to go to a quiet place outside Chamouni for a week or two, avoiding the noisy hotels, and enjoy the charms of the Monarch of the Alps and his environs, is a different matter altogether.

On the particular occasion referred to, I started from Martigny at six A.M., and intended to traverse the thirty miles to the Hospice of the Great St Bernard before night. As I was following one of my holiday pursuits of butterfly-catching, it need hardly be said that, as those 'winged flying flowers' had a considerable choice of route, my journey was correspondingly lengthened. Frequently, some beauty tempted me to run a few hundred yards exactly in the wrong direction, then dodging over some inaccessible spot, was lost to me. The day was a scorching one; even the rocks reflected the intense heat, and combining with the white dust of the roads, made the first twenty miles unpleasant travelling. Time being of consequence, I thought it prudent, so as to get to the summit of the pass before dark, not to stop for a meal to be cooked at Orsières or Liddes, but pressed forward to the last place before the snow-tramp commenced, the *Cantine de Proz*. There I met with a young nobleman and his guide. After an interchange of inquiries, and an offer on my part of some chocolate and biscuits to the other travellers, as the *Cantine* was hard up that day in eatables, we set out together, and had crossed the Plan de Marengo without any presentiment of what was going to happen. The first indication of something wrong was the peculiar appearance which my surroundings seemed to assume. Everything looked hazy to my vision—even the snow and the rocks lying about looked as if enveloped in a fog, although the afternoon was beautifully clear. Then I felt that I must sit down and enjoy it; but the guide's flask of *Kirschwasser* set me going again. Very soon, however, the former feeling returned; but the same treatment temporarily recovered me. At last I took to stumbling along, fell down several times, and at length could not help myself. My companions urged me in vain to arouse to one more effort; but it was useless.

The guide's experience was now of the utmost service. Divining the exact state of the case, and what might happen, he took a very sensible course. Leaving the marquis to see to me, he hurried forward to meet the two monks who always came down from the Hospice at a particular hour each day, so as to obtain their efficient help. On their arrival, the marquis either went on, on his own account, or was requested to go forward with the news. Anyhow, I was informed the next day that his report was, that 'Monsieur le — had perished in the snows.' In the meantime the two monks and guide took me in

hand, and shaking me up, made my hands clasp a belt round the guide's waist, and each of the monks took an arm. The former acted as a substitute for horse-power, and the two latter as wheels. As for myself, I was fast becoming a dead-weight. Between the *Cantine* and the Hospice there is a space of seven and a half miles of very rough walking, uphill of course, and with a depth of several feet of snow where the *cantonniers* had not cleared a path. I suspect that my deliverers had a very difficult task, over at least five miles, to keep me from getting into that sleep from which there is no waking. The sensations of that journey during occasional gleams of consciousness will never be erased from my mind. Is there such an essence of ecstatic delight as *élixir mortis*? If there is, it must have been something like it, or the very thing itself, which I enjoyed that day. No words can possibly express the surpassing desire which I felt to sit down and enjoy my felicity—and sleep. But my inexorable friends knew that sleep meant death; and though my repeated appeals of 'Doucement, doucement' were plaintive enough, they were met by redoubled efforts to force me onwards, even when my own legs would not move any longer. The collapse was complete. After the long hot day, the additional distances which the butterflies had added to the thirty miles, and the abstention from a good meal since five A.M., it can readily be understood how the intense cold, which immediately follows after the sun is lost to view on the other side of the giant mountains, seized hold of every vital, muscle, and nerve, and very nearly claimed the victim beyond recall. I may add that, though the month was July, the frost at night was so great as to send the thermometer down nearly to zero.

During the sustained efforts of the three men, I had but momentary glimpses of consciousness. I remember seeing two somethings, black, one on each side, but very indistinct. These of course were the friendly monks. The one overwhelming idea that filled my mind then was how to get to that sleep, that blissful euthanasia which poets have sung about, but which my companions were doing their best to rob me of, just when I had got it within my grasp.

Another lucid interval occurred just as we approached the door of the Hospice, for I saw two or three of the dogs; and then I was lost again, till I found myself in the large room, surrounded by several of the canons. One administered some Extract of Orange Flowers, and that was followed by some warm broth. Then another tugged off my boots, socks, &c.; and between them, somehow or other, they got me into bed. (This particular room would not have been mine, if I had gone as an ordinary traveller usually does. I am under the impression that it was looked upon as the best bedroom, being the one used by Napoleon Bonaparte when he stopped at the Hospice *en route* to the Italian campaign.) In the night, I woke, breathing very quickly and very hard. The room itself had the appearance of being one mass of cotton-wool. Congestion of the lungs had got hold of me now, and I felt very ill indeed. But, however, the next morning I did what the monks had ineffectually tried to impress upon

me the night before, and I made an effort. My first duty to others was to see the excellent guide and make him a due acknowledgment; and as the noble and heroic monks, who live only for others, would not hear of anything but thanks, I had recourse to the *tronc* of the church. To the three men, I am, humanly speaking, indebted for my life. A grateful heart never need be ashamed of its precious burden.

Then, curiosity drew my steps outside the Hospice to visit the Morgue. I expect that very few have had such weighty cause for looking at that very strange building with such peculiar feelings as I did on that occasion; for there, in all probability, I should have been consigned to keep company with the many other members of that unburied guild of death. It is not essential for me to describe what has been so frequently written about; everybody knows about the weird sights of that remarkable habitation of the dead. But when I saw it, those standing figures, men stricken with death as if in the act of listening to a possible sound of voices, or straining to get another glint of an approaching light, had only been put there a few months before—they, and the sight of others huddled up with their heads on their knees, and any quantity of remains, bones, and clothes, are engraved on my mind most vividly. It is all realistic enough to the very last degree. At all times, the touch of a hand that is still in death is like nothing else; and though I have seen other Morgues and other awful sights, the one on the Great St Bernard Pass has fitted itself to my memory as distinctly as scenes only of yesterday. Even the trivial incidents are here at hand again—Turco with a bone; what bone? and Pluton growling at him; the pretty little Soldanella trying to push its little lavender-coloured parachute through the snow, to keep company with the cushioned Gentian and the graceful Arabis. And can I forget the old *cantonnier*, who, when strength had returned to my limbs, and I had wielded his pick and shovel removing snow, thankfully received my coin as I paid for my invasion of his duty, on purpose to teach him some other and higher truth? Or that half-witted kineherd who had not a shred of intelligence about him till I gave him a few *centesimi*, and for the same purpose? But chiefly, yes, above all, the transcendent kindness of the *clavandier* of the monastery deserves record? His personal attention was unremitting—in fact, it was from him that I learnt more than I knew before what an unusual case mine had been, and that recovery had but seldom rewarded their efforts under similar circumstances. Hence the day in my holiday notes is rightly headed, ‘an eventful day.’

When I commenced this paper, my idea was to compare that intense longing for sleep with another incident of a far more appalling nature, when, with intense vividness of sight, I was hurling down the snow-slopes of a mountain near Monte Rosa right into the jaws of death. But I must hark back to the title—‘Is death from intense cold painless?’ I have stated the circumstances which led up as causes to my discomfiture—what my delighted feelings were—how I longed to be let alone, so as to enjoy that delicious euthanasia. And I have told my story

in order to help others to hope that, in the case of Mr Mackonochie and of many a one besides who may have perished like him, death from intense cold may be at all events *painless*.

THE GOLDEN INCUBUS.

CHAPTER X.—A PECULIAR POSITION.

THE prisoner had been sitting upon the sawdust about an hour, when the door opened again, and the two men entered, one bearing a bundle of blankets and a couple of pillows, the other a tray with a large cup of hot coffee and a plate of bread and butter.

‘There, you see we shan’t starve you,’ said the first man; ‘and you can make yourself a bed with these when you’ve done.’

‘Will you leave me a light?’

‘No,’ says the man with a laugh. ‘Wild sort of lads like you are not fit to trust with lights. Good-night.’

The door of the inner cellar was closed and bolted, for it was not like ours, a simple arch; and then the outer cellar door was shut as well; and Mr Barclay sat for hours reproaching himself for his infatuation, before, wearied out, he lay down and fell asleep. How the time had gone, he could not tell, but he woke up suddenly, to find that there was a light in the cellar, and the two men were looking down at him.

‘That’s right—wake up,’ says the principal speaker, ‘and put on those.’

‘But’—began Mr Barclay, as the man pointed to some rough clothes.

‘Put on those togs, confound you!’ cried the fellow fiercely, ‘or’—

He tapped the butt of a pistol; and there was that in the man’s manner which showed that he was ready to use it.

There was nothing for it but to obey; and in a few minutes the prisoner stood up unbound and in regular workman’s dress.

‘That’s right,’ said his jailer. ‘Now, come along; and I warn you once for all, that if you break faith and attempt to call out, you die, as sure as your name’s Barclay Drinkwater!’

Mr Barclay felt as if he was stunned; and, half led, half pushed, he was taken into what had once been the pantry, but was now a curious-looking place, with a bricked round well in the middle, while on one side was fixed a large pair of blacksmith’s forge bellows, connected with a zinc pipe which went right down into the well.

‘What does all this mean?’ he said. ‘What are you going to do?’

‘Wait, and you’ll see,’ was all the reply he could get; and he stared round in amazement at the heaps of new clay that had been dug out, the piles of old bricks which had evidently been obtained by pulling down partition walls somewhere in the house, the lower part of which seemed, as it were, being transformed by workmen. Lastly, there were oil-lamps and a pile of cement, the material for which was obtained from a barrel marked ‘Flour.’

The man called Ned was better, and joined them there, the three being evidently prepared for work, in which Mr Barclay soon found that he was to participate, and at this point he made a stand.

'Look here,' he said; 'I demand an explanation. What does all this mean?'

'Are you ready for work?' cried the leader of the little gang, seizing him by the collar menacingly.

'You people have obtained possession of this house under false pretences, and you have made the place an utter wreck. I insist on knowing what it means.'

'You do—do you?' said the man, thrusting him back, and holding him with his shoulders against a pile of bricks. 'Then, once for all, I tell you this: you've got to work here along with us in silence, and hard too, or else be shut up in that cellar in darkness, and half-starved till we set you free.'

'The police shall'—

'O yes—all right. Tell the police. How are you going to do it?'

'Easily enough. I'll call for help, and'—

'Do,' said the man, taking a small revolver from his breast. 'Now, look here, Mr Drink-water; men like us don't enter upon such an enterprise as this without being prepared for consequences. They would be very serious for us if they were found out. Nobody saw you come in where you were not asked, and when you came to insult my friend's wife.'

'Wife?' exclaimed Mr Barclay, for the word almost took his breath away.

'Yes, sir, wife; and it might happen that the gallant husband had an accident with you. We can dig holes, you see. Perhaps we might put somebody in one and cover him up.—Now, you understand. Behave yourself, and you shall come to no harm; but play any tricks, and— Look here, my lads; show our new labourer what you have in your pockets.'

'Not now,' they said, tapping their breasts. 'He's going to work.'

Mr Barclay, as he used to say afterwards, felt as if he was in a dream, and without another word went down the ladder into the well, which was about ten feet deep, and found himself facing the opening of a regular egg-shaped drain, carefully bricked round, and seemingly securely though roughly made.

'Way to Tom Tiddler's ground,' said the man who had followed him.—'Now, then, take that light and this spade. I'll follow with a basket; and you've got to clear out the bricks and earth that broke loose yesterday.'

Mr Barclay looked in at the drain-like passage, which was just high enough for a man to crawl along easily, and saw that at one side a zinc pipe was carried, being evidently formed in lengths of about four feet, joined one to the other, but for what purpose, in his confused state, he could not make out.

What followed seemed like a part of a dream, in which, after crawling a long way, at first downwards, and then, with the passage sloping upwards, he found his farther progress stopped by a quantity of loose stones and crumbled down earth, upon which, by the direction of the man who followed close behind, he set down a strong-smelling oil lamp, filled the basket pushed to him, and realised for the first time in his life what must be the life of a miner toiling in the bowels of the earth.

At first it was intensely hot, and the lamp

burned dimly; but soon after he could hear a low hissing noise, and a pleasant cool stream of air began to fill the place; the heat grew less, the light burned more brightly, and he understood what was the meaning of the bellows and the long zinc tube.

For a full hour he laboured on, wondering at times, but for the most part, feeling completely stunned by the novelty of his position. He filled baskets with the clay and bricks, and by degrees cleared away the heap before him, after which he had to give place to the man who had been injured, but who now crept by both the occupants of the passage, a feat only to be accomplished after they had both lain down upon their faces.

Then the prisoner's task was changed to that of passing bricks and pails of cement, sometimes being forced to hold the light while the man deftly fitted in bricks, and made up what had been a fall, and beyond which the passage seemed to continue ten or a dozen feet.

At intervals the gang broke off work to crawl backwards out of the passage to partake of meals which were spread for them in the library. These meals were good, and washed down with plenty of spirits and water, the two servant-like women and the so-called Adela waiting on the party, everything being a matter of wonder to the prisoner, who stared wildly at the well-dressed, lady-like, girlish creature who busied herself in supplying the wants of the gang of four brick-layer-like men.

At the first meal, Mr Barclay refused food. He said that he could not eat; but he drank heartily from the glass placed at his side—water which seemed to him to be flavoured with peculiar coarse brandy. But he was troubled with a devouring thirst, consequent upon his exertions, and that of which he had partaken seemed to increase the peculiar dreamy nature of the scene. Whether it was laudanum or some other drug, we could none of us ever say for certain; but Mr Barclay was convinced that, nearly all the time, he was kept under the influence of some narcotic, and that, in a confused dreamy way, he toiled on in that narrow culvert.

He could keep no account of time, for he never once saw the light of day, and though there were intervals for food and rest, they seemed to be at various times; and from the rarity with which he heard the faint rattle of some passing vehicle, he often thought that the greater part of the work must be done by night.

At first he felt a keen sense of trouble connected with what he looked upon as his disgrace and the way he had lowered himself; but at last he worked on like some machine, obedient as a slave, but hour by hour growing more stupefied, even to the extent of stopping short at times and kneeling before his half-filled basket motionless, till a rude thrust or a blow from a brickbat pitched at him roused him to continue his task.

The drug worked well for his taskmasters, and the making of the mine progressed rapidly, for every one connected therewith seemed in a state of feverish anxiety now to get it done.

And so day succeeded day, and night gave place to night. The two servant-like women went busily on with their work, and fetched provisions for the household consumption, no tradespeople

save milkman and baker being allowed to call, and they remarked that they never once found the area gate unlocked. And while these two women, prim and self-contained, went on with the cooking and housework and kept the doorstep clean, the so-called Miss Adela Mimpriss went on with the woolwork flowers at the dining-room window, where she could get most light, and the world outside had no suspicion of anything being wrong in the staid, old-fashioned house opposite Sir John Drinkwater's. Even the neighbours on either side heard no sound.

'What does it all mean?' Mr Barclay used to ask himself, and at other times, 'When shall I wake?' for he often persuaded himself that this was the troubled dream of a bad attack of fever, from which he would awaken some day quite in his right mind. Meanwhile, growing every hour more machine-like, he worked on and on always as if in a dream.

CHAPTER XL.—CONCLUSION.

I stood watching Sir John, who seemed nearly mad with grief and rage, and a dozen times over my lips opened to speak, but without a sound being heard. At last he looked up at me and saw what I wanted to do, but which respect kept back.

'Well,' he said, 'what do you propose doing?'

I remained silent for a moment, and then, feeling that even if he was offended, I was doing right, I said to him what was in my heart.

'Sir John, I never married, and I never had a son. It's all a mystery to me.'

'Man, you are saved from a curse!' he cried fiercely.

'No, dear master, no,' I said, as I laid my hand upon his arm. 'You don't believe that. I only wanted to say that if I had had a boy—a fine, handsome, brave lad like Mr Barclay'—

'Fine!—brave!' he says contemptuously.

'Who had never done a thing wrong, or been disobedient in any way till he fell into temptation that was too strong for him'—

'Bah! I could have forgiven that. But for him to have turned thief!'

I was silent, for his words seemed to take away my breath.

'Man, man!' he cried, 'how could you be such an idiot as to write that document and leave it where it could be found?'

'I did it for the best, sir,' I said humbly.

'Best? The worst,' he cried. 'No, no; I cannot forgive. Disgrace or no disgrace, I must have in the police.'

'No, no, no!' I cried piteously. 'He is your own son, Sir John, your own son; and it is that wretched woman who has driven him mad.'

'Mad? Burdon, mad? No; it is something worse.'

'But it is not too late,' I said humbly.

'Yes, too late—too late. I disown him. He is no longer son of mine.'

'And you sit there in that dining-room every night, Sir John,' I said, 'with all us servants gathered round, and read that half a chapter and then say, "As we forgive them that trespass against us." Sir John—master—he is your own son, and I love him as if he was my own.'

There wasn't a sound in that place for a minute,

and then he drew his breath in a catching way that startled me, for it was as if he was going to have a fit. But his face was very calm and stern now, as he says to me gently: 'You are right, old friend'—and my heart gave quite a bound—'old friend.'

'Let's go to him and save him, master, from his sin.'

'Two weak old men, Burdon, and him strong, desperate, and taken by surprise. My good fellow, what would follow then?'

'I don't know, Sir John. I can only see one thing, and that is, that we should have done our duty by the lad. Let's leave the rest to Him.'

He drew a long deep breath.

'Yes,' he says. 'Come along.'

We went back in the darkness to the cellar door and listened; but all seemed very still, and I turned the key in the patent Bramah lock without a sound. We went in, and stood there on the sawdust, with that hot smell of burnt oil seeming to get stronger, and there was a faint light in the inner cellar now, and a curious rustling panting sound. We crept forward, one on each side of the opening; and as we looked in, my hand went down on one of the sherry bottles in the bin by my arm, and it made a faint click, which sounded quite loud.

I forgot all about Sir John; I didn't even know that he was there, as I stared in from the darkness at the scene before me. They—I say they, for the whispering had taught me that there was more than one—had got the stone up while we had been away. It had been pushed aside on to the sawdust, and a soft yellow light shone up now out of the hole, showing me my young master, looking so strange and staring-eyed and ghastly, that I could hardly believe it was he. But it was, sure enough, though dressed in rough workman's clothes, and stained and daubed with clay.

It wasn't that, though, which took my attention, but his face; and as I looked, I thought of what had been said a little while ago in my place, and I felt it was true, and that he was mad. He had just crept up out of the hole, when he uttered a low groan and sank down on his knees, and then fell sidewise across the hole in the floor. He was not there many moments before there was a low angry whispering; he seemed to be heaved up, and a big workman-looking fellow came struggling up till he sat on the sawdust with his legs in the hole, and spoke down to some one.

'It's all right,' he said. 'The chests are here; but the fool has fainted away. Quick! the lamp, and then the tools.'

He bent down and took a smoky oil lamp that was handed to him, and I drew a deep breath, for the sound of his voice had seemed familiar; but the light which shone on his face made me sure in spite of his rough clothes and the beard he had grown. It was Edward Gunning, our old servant, who was discharged for being too fond of drink, turned bricklayer once again.

As he took the lamp, he got up, held it above his head, looked round, and then, with a grin of satisfaction at the sight of the chests, stepped softly toward the opening into the outer cellar, where Sir John and I were watching.

It didn't take many moments, and I hardly

know now how it happened, but I just saw young Mr Barclay lying helpless on the sawdust, another head appearing at the hole, and then, with the light full upon it, Edward Gunning's face being thrust out of the opening into the cellar where we were, and his eyes gleaming curiously before they seemed to shut with a snap. For, all at once—perhaps it was me being a butler and so used to wine—my hand closed upon the neck of one of those bottles, which rose up sudden-like above my head, and came down with a crash upon that of this wretched man.

There was a crash; the splash of wine; the splintering of glass; the smell of sherry—fine old sherry, yellow seal—and I stood for a moment with the bottle neck and some sawdust in my hand, startled by the yell the man gave, by the heavy fall, and the sudden darkness which had come upon us.

Then—I suppose it was all like a flash—I had rushed to the inner cellar and was dragging the slab over the hole, listening the while to a hollow rustling noise which ended as I got the slab across and sat on it to keep it down.

'Where are you, Burdon?' says Sir John.

'Here, sir!—Quick! A light.'

I heard him hurry off; and it seemed an hour before he came back, while I sat listening to a terrible moaning, and smelling the spilt sherry and the oily knocked-out lamp. Then Sir John came in, quite pale, but looking full of fight, and the first thing he did was to stoop down over Edward Gunning and take a pistol from his breast. 'You take that, Burdon,' he said, 'and use it if we are attacked.'

'Which we shan't be, Sir John, if you help me to get this stone back in its place.'

He set the lamp on one of the chests and lent a hand, when the stone dropped tightly into its place; and we dragged a couple of chests across, side by side, before turning to young Mr Barclay, who lay there on his side as if asleep.

'Now,' says Sir John, as he laid his hand upon the young man's collar and dragged him over on to his back, 'I think we had better hand this fellow over to the police.'

'The doctor, you mean, sir. Look at him.'

I needn't have bade him look, for Sir John was already doing that.

It was a doctor that I fetched and not the police, for Mr Barclay lay there quite insensible, and smelling as if he had taken to eating opium, while Ned Gunning had so awful a cut across his temple that he would soon have bled to death.

The doctor came and dressed the rascal's wounds as he was laid in my pantry; but he shook his head over Mr Barclay, and with reason; for two months had passed away before we got him down to Dorking, and saw his pale face beginning to get something like what it was, with Miss Virginia, forgiving and gentle, always by his side.

But I'm taking a very big jump, and saying nothing about our going across to the house opposite as soon as it was daylight, to find the door open and no one there; while the state of that basement and what we saw there, and the artfulness of the people, and the labour they had given in driving that passage right under the road as true as a die, filled me with horror, and cost Sir John five hundred pounds.

Why, their measurements and calculations were

as true as true; and if it hadn't been for me missing that paper—which, of course, it was Edward Gunning who stole it—those scoundrels would have carried off that golden incubus as sure as we were alive. But they didn't get it; and they had gone off scot-free, all but our late footman, who had concussion of the brain in the hospital where he was took, Sir John saying that he would let the poor wretch get well before he handed him over to the police.

But, bless you, he never meant to. He was too pleased to get Mr Barclay back, and to find that he hadn't the least idea about the golden incubus being in the cellar; while as to the poor lad's sorrow about his madness and that wretched woman, who was Ned Gunning's wife, it was pitiful to see.

The other scoundrels had got away; and all at once we found that Gunning had discharged himself from the hospital; and by that time the house over the way was put straight, the builder telling me in confidence that he thought Sir John must have been mad to attempt to make such a passage as that to connect his property without consulting a regular business man. That was the morning when he got his cheque for the repairs, and the passage—which he called 'Drinkwater's Folly'—had disappeared.

Time went on, and the golden incubus went on too—that is, to a big bank in the Strand, for we were at Dorking now, where those young people spent a deal of time in the open air; and Mr Barclay used to say he could never forgive himself; but his father did, and so did some one else.

Who did?

Why, you don't want telling that. Heaven bless her sweet face! And bless him, too, for a fine young fellow! as strong—ay, and as weak, too, of course—as any man.

Dear, dear, dear! I'm pretty handy to eighty now, and Sir John just one year ahead; and I often say to myself, as I think of what men will do for the sake of a pretty face—likewise for the sake of gold: 'This is a very curious world.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE Bureau of Statistics in Berlin has recently issued some curious information with regard to the number of steam-engines in use in the chief countries of the world, and the amount of motive-force which they represent. The United States stand first with a total horse-power of seven and a half millions; next comes Britain with half a million less; Germany has four and a half millions; France, three millions; and Austria, a million and a half. In these figures, the motive-power of the locomotives, which number one hundred and five thousand throughout the world, is not included. They represent collectively a total of three million horse-power. Summarising these figures, and remembering that a steam horse-power is equal to the power of three actual horses, and that the strength of a living horse is equal to that of seven men, we arrive at the following result: the steam-engines of the world do the work of double its working population.

A large number of ornithologists assembled the

other day in a London saleroom to bid for the possession of an egg of the great auk; and it was finally knocked down for the sum of one hundred and sixty guineas. The reason why this sea-bird's egg commanded such a high price is found in the circumstance that there are only sixty-six eggs known to exist, and the certainty that no more will be produced. For the great auk, plentiful enough in past times, has, through its own helplessness and the greed of man, become extinct. It was, unfortunately, without the power of flight, and this not because of any structural peculiarity of its wings, but simply on account of the diminutive size of those wings relatively to the bulk and weight of the body. With a total length of about three feet, this curious biped had wings which measured but six inches in extent. The usual means of escape from its enemies were denied it, and it has ceased to exist. The last specimen of this bird seen alive was taken in the sea off St Kilda in 1821.

Like many other industries, the work of bottle-making has of late years suffered so much from foreign competition that it has almost been driven from this country, Germany and Belgium being the largest producers. It is hoped, however, that the lost industry may be again revived here, these hopes being founded upon a lately invented machine, which will turn out bottles far more expeditiously than they can be made by hand, and at a tithe of the cost. This machine is the invention of Mr Howard M. Ashley, and is being worked at the glass manufactory of Messrs Sykes, Macvay, & Co. of Castleford. In this machine the molten glass is poured into a mould, and the application of air under pressure distends the glass and causes it to fill the interior of that mould. It is believed that when this machine is complete with six or eight moulds, it will be possible by it to make twenty-four bottles per minute.

Rear-admiral Colomb, writing to the *Times* in allusion to a recent disastrous collision in the Channel, calls attention to the present very defective methods of signalling at sea, and points out how impossible it often is for one ship to ascertain the intentions of another. He mentions one thing which is not generally known—namely, that the Board of Trade forbid the mercantile marine to use that system of speech by signal which has been for a long time common to every navy in the world. He also pleads for some signal which will not only attract attention to 'distress,' but will also indicate to some extent the nature of that distress.

The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers some time back appointed a Committee to inquire into the suspected connection between earth-tremors and the issue of gas in mines. This Committee have recently given in their Report upon the subject. Earthquake disturbances in distant parts of the world were found to correspond in date with irregular and perturbent movements at Marsden, where the observations were made. The seismograph used in the experiments was of a somewhat imperfect kind, and it is to be replaced by a better one which has been devised by Professor Ewing of the University College, Dundee. In continuing the experiments, the return-air from the mines will be examined, with a view to note the percentage of gas which it

contains at different times. It has already been noted that on the occasion of certain earth-disturbances at the beginning of December last, there was a marked increase in the issue of gas at many collieries.

In February last, it was reported that Dr Klein had established the fact that milch cows suffered sometimes from an eruptive complaint identical with scarlet fever, and that milk from such cows would prove a source of infection for that disease. The Agricultural Department, recognising the serious import of this alleged discovery, and its probable injury to dairy-farming, instructed Professor Crookshank, of the Bacteriological Laboratory at King's College, to make an independent inquiry into the matter. This gentleman now reports that there is no connection whatever between the disease of the cow and scarlet fever: But he has made the curious discovery, that the eruptive disease of the udder of the animal which was thus suspected is in reality true cowpox, an ailment common enough in this country in the time of Jenner, but which has since entirely disappeared. The recurrence of this disease is not only interesting, but important, as furnishing once more a source of true vaccine lymph.

The old plan of using an endless railway to embrace the wheels of vehicles which have to traverse soft soil or swampy situations, has lately been revived by Mr William Fender of Buenos Ayres. The method, as before tried, did not prove satisfactory; but Mr Fender has made several improvements in the system, by which difficulties have been made to disappear. The railway consists of a chain of flat slabs of hardwood, which are riveted between thin steel plates, and are linked together. The chain embraces the wheels, so that, as they turn, the blocks form themselves into a railway in front of them. The system has been used with great success in carting beetroot over swampy grounds in the neighbourhood of Berlin; and it is thought that it may be profitably employed in ordinary ploughing operations with a single engine, superseding the double system which is now common in this country.

The recent discovery of gold in North Wales has excited a great deal of attention. It seems that Mr Morgan, who owns land in the Mawddach Valley, Dolgelly, was long ago impressed with the opinion that gold existed at this spot in large quantities; but he was determined that he would publish no report of the circumstance until he could actually produce ingots of the precious metal. But rumours of the works which he caused to be carried out quickly got abroad, and as contradictory statements were promulgated, he has taken the wise course of publishing the real facts. We now learn that Mr Morgan has had about one hundred men at work for several months, and that by their aid many thousands of tons of stone richly laden with gold are ready for treatment. A great part of this earth is estimated to yield six ounces of gold to the ton, and it is believed that the mine now in operation is one of the richest in the world. Mr Morgan believes that there are fifty other sites in Wales alone where gold will be found in paying quantities. It is worth while to remember that gold has been found in former times in Wales, in England, and in Scotland; but the works

have been abandoned because the metal could not be recovered in paying quantities. But now that improved methods of amalgamation have been discovered, it may be worth the while of speculators to reopen some of these abandoned works.

A curious method of preventing railway collisions has been invented by an Austrian engineer. The apparatus consists of a pilot-vehicle worked by electricity, and running at some distance in front of the train, its movements being under the control of the engine-driver. The advanced lorry is fitted with glass vessels containing mercury contacts, so that if these should be broken by collision with anything on the line, the interruption of the current thus caused is made to act on the vacuum brake, and so bring the train behind to a standstill. The plan seems to be an ingenious one, but rather too complicated for adoption on our busy lines of railway.

M. Pasteur has made a curious suggestion with regard to eradicating the rabbit plague in Australia, a suggestion which has been prompted by the offer of a handsome reward by the government to the discoverer of some means of stamping out the pest. His remedy seems on the face of it to be rather a cruel one, but perhaps not more cruel really than many other methods which have been suggested. He believes that an attempt should be made to introduce a disease among rabbits, which would, he thinks, quickly exterminate them. There is a malady known as hen-cholera, and poultry-yards have sometimes been devastated by an epidemic of this kind. He believes that the same fate would befall the rabbits if the disease could be carried into their burrows. He suggests that a movable fence should be placed round a certain space frequented by the animals, and food tainted with germs of hen-cholera should be put within the enclosure. By this means the poor rabbits would catch the disease and infect all their neighbours. The disease in question is innocuous to domestic quadrupeds, and we suppose the fowls must take their chance.

Mr C. F. Henwood recently read an interesting paper at the Royal United Service Institution on the Fouling of Ships. As a method of prevention of this fouling, which, as we all know, causes so much loss of speed and expense in dry docking for removal of deposits, he advocates the use of a zinc sheathing for steel and iron ships. The combined metals, by setting up a galvanic action, would prevent the barnacles and other marine creatures attaching themselves to the submerged part of the ship, for the zinc would be constantly dissolving away in the form of oxide, leaving a fresh and clean surface.

A large building of novel construction has recently been erected in Lincoln's Inn Fields. It has a frontage of forty feet, and consists of eight floors, an unusual height for a London building, which at once attracts attention. But its novel feature is in its general construction. Its foundation consists of a solid block of concrete three feet in thickness, which may be supposed to shut out all dangers from imperfect drainage, and upon this solid foundation the building has been reared in moulded concrete. The walls of the floors are of the same construction, being tied together by iron bars embedded in the material, so that they represent no source of danger in case of fire. But in reality the building is fireproof, and it is

intended that no insurance shall be effected on it, as being quite unnecessary. The only woodwork used in the building is for the doors, window-frames, the lift, and the handrail of the staircase. The building is faced with Doulton stone, and it has a number of strong-rooms fitted with iron doors. The cost of this method of construction is said to be not much in excess of that ordinarily employed.

So many reputed methods of curing consumption have at different times been published, raising false hopes in the minds of the victims of that distressing malady, that we feel some hesitation in giving publication to another. But, according to an American scientific paper, the method of M. Garcin has been proved to be of real benefit to sufferers. Observations had previously been made at certain glassworks that the use of hydrofluoric acid—which we may remind our readers is used for etching glass—had a very favourable effect upon those workmen who were suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. From this circumstance M. Garcin was induced to try the experiment of submitting his patients to an atmosphere containing this acid. His method is to enclose the sufferers for an hour every day in a small chamber charged with air mixed with the vapour from the acid, the strength of the charge being regulated according to whether they are but slightly attacked, or whether they are seriously affected with the disease. The effect of this treatment is said to be most satisfactory, the attacks of coughing diminishing in frequency, the appetite improving, and the terrible night-sweats disappearing altogether. It is to be hoped that further experiments will demonstrate the value of this new remedy.

Great interest has been aroused lately by the report that a periodic star called the 'Star of Bethlehem' has been visible in the heavens; and the star is said to have a period of three hundred and fifteen years. This report rests upon the most shadowy foundation. It is true that some three hundred years back such a star was asserted to have appeared in Cassiopeia with the period named, but the observation has not been endorsed by any modern astronomer. But at this time the name 'Star of Bethlehem' has been curiously assigned to Venus, which planet, during the past December, has been placed so favourably for observation, that in the early morning sky it has formed a very beautiful object. The mistake has been widespread, and it is impossible to trace its origin.

We have often in these columns advocated the use of oil at sea as a means of calming the waves; and of late years, as our readers know, a great many experiments on different parts of our coasts have proved the value of the method. We are interested to see that a patent wave-subduer has been constructed and placed upon the market, by which the process of administering oil to the water is greatly simplified. Larsen's Wave-Subduer consists of a very strong canvas bag of conical form, furnished at the top with a cover of galvanised iron, and provided with a brass cap through which the oil can be introduced. At its lower end is a special form of valve, which allows the oil to trickle through gradually, its slow exit being further provided for by partly filling

the canvas bag with oakum. The apparatus is strongly made, and is very cheap; and from letters which we have seen testifying as to the benefits which accrue from its use, it is evident that it is a piece of apparatus which every ship should carry. Further particulars can be obtained from Mr Gerson Trier, 35 Eastcheap, London, E.C.

We may also mention that the Board of Trade have recently issued a circular memorandum on the use of oil at sea for modifying the effect of breaking waves. This circular mentions the various successful experiments which have been made, and gives detailed directions as to the best method of applying the oil under varied circumstances. The heaviest and thickest oils are recommended as being the most effectual; but their action is much retarded in cold weather, when of course they congeal to some extent. Refined kerosene is all but useless for the purpose; crude petroleum should only be used when nothing else is available; 'but all animal and vegetable oils, such as waste oil from the engines, have great effect.'

An interesting calculation has been lately made by Professor Rogers of Washington. He tells us that the dynamic power of a single pound of good steam-coal is equivalent to the work of a man for one day; three tons of the same coal will represent a man's labour for twenty years; and one square mile of a seam of coal having a depth of four feet only will represent as much work as a million men can perform in twenty years. Such calculations as these may serve to remind us how very wasteful our methods of burning fuel must be, in spite of all that has been done by engineers in the way of economy.

KITCHEN BOILERS AND FROST.

THE return of winter and its attendant discomforts forms an apology for dwelling briefly on that source of anxiety in many households when frost sets in—the water-supply, and the possible risk of accident from derangement of the domestic hot-water system. The careful housekeeper, though cheered by the advent of seasonable weather, with clean roads and clear, crisp atmosphere, yet regards the kitchen boiler with anxiety, and not without reason, for, as a writer on this subject has pointed out, in ten days of a recent January, 'no fewer than forty explosions of household boilers were recorded in the public papers, killing twelve persons, and seriously injuring more than a score of others.' In some instances, explosion is so dreaded, that, we believe, the kitchen fire is put out until the frost is over, an inconvenience and discomfort needing no comment. When, however, we consider the disastrous effects of explosion on the one hand, and the exceedingly simple means by which safety can be insured, it seems marvellous that persons should run, year by year, the risks they do, when, at trifling cost, immunity from danger can be secured.

There is no mystery about these boiler explosions; they simply occur from over-pressure of steam, arising from the outlets becoming choked and the steam having no escape. Cases do occur of such stoppages arising from rust and the 'furring' of the pipes; but most frequently from the pipes becoming frozen.

The immediate cause of disaster is that, during the night, the pipes leading into the boiler become frozen; and on the fire being relighted in the morning, steam is generated, which, being unable to escape, increases in pressure until explosion results. It cannot be too emphatically pointed out, or too repeatedly insisted on, that the remedy for all such disaster is to provide every boiler with a reliable safety-valve, which shall relieve the pressure of steam before the ultimate strength of the boiler is approached. No locomotive, marine, or other class of engineering boiler is constructed without one, if not two thoroughly efficient safety-valves. It is difficult to understand why a similar custom should not hold in the manufacture of household boilers.

Into the question of the particular make of safety-valve most suitable for the purpose now under discussion, we do not propose to enter; many excellent patterns now hold the market, leaving nothing to be desired both as regards efficiency and cost, the outlay for which, including fixing, &c., is about one pound—a small sum compared with the discomfort, to say nothing of possible injury to life, limb, and property, arising from explosion.

The main points in a safety-valve are, that it should be simple in construction, with as few wasting parts as possible; should not easily get out of order; should act readily at all times; and should be so placed that it can be inspected without difficulty from time to time.

'MY HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO ME DESOLATE.'

A LITTLE while, you tell me, but a little while,
And I shall be where my beloved are;
And with your eyes all large with faith, you say,
'Thy dear ones have not journeyed very far.'

'Not very far.' I say it o'er and o'er,
Till on mine ear mine own voice strangely falls,
Like some mechanic utterance that repeats
A meaningless refrain to empty walls.

'Not very far;' but measured by my grief,
A distance measureless as my despair,
When, from the dreams that give them back to me,
I wake to find that they have journeyed there!

'Not very far.' Ah me! the spirit has
Had its conjectures since the first man slept;
But, O the heart, it knoweth its own loss,
And death is death, as 'twas when Rachel wept!

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EARLY BLOSSOMS.

THE 'firstling of the infant year' is undoubtedly the snowdrop. There is, or used to be, a popular belief that it ought to be in bloom by the 2d of February; but, in an ordinary year, this can seldom be the case, and then only under exceptional circumstances of culture or of situation. The idea itself is traceable to the times before the Reformation. The inhabitants of the conventual establishments of those days had, among the employments of their leisure hours, amused themselves in constructing a sort of floral calendar. According to this, some special flower was considered appropriate, and assigned to each day in the year; while many were looked upon as sacred to certain personages. The snowdrop was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and the day which was ascribed to it in the calendar was the Feast of Candlemas or Purification—otherwise, the 2d of February. It was consequently much cultivated in the gardens attached to convents and monasteries, whence, in the natural order of things, it would pass to those of the rich, and thence to those of the peasants and cottagers. It is in this way that the snowdrop has established itself in one or two places in England and Scotland, and given rise to the impression that it is really indigenous to the British Isles. This would seem, however, not to be the case. The places where it is found are nearly always in the neighbourhood of villages or country-houses; while, in a great many cases, the former vicinity of an abbey or other religious institution is either a fact well known or probable. It is doubtful if the snowdrop was ever really wild here, although there is no record, as in the case of many flowers, of when it was imported, or from what country the roots were first brought to England.

There would seem to be only two parts of Europe where the snowdrop is truly indigenous—Switzerland and the Rhine provinces. The statement in some French botanical works that it is found in France, must be received with caution. The localities assigned to it are those which appear to

be the most unlikely—namely, the west and the south. The flora, however, of Southern France is so entirely unlike that of our more northern latitudes, and so thoroughly characteristic of a warmer region, that it seems improbable that a plant like the snowdrop could find a place in it. The explanation here is probably the same as in the case of England: the plant has strayed from cultivation, and, possibly, in one or two localities, become perfectly naturalised. There is only one other snowdrop known to botanists besides our garden friend, and that is a kind which is found in the Asiatic provinces of Russia and Turkey. It does not greatly differ in shape or size from its European cousin, but having six outer leaves where our species has only three, it could not well be the progenitor of those known to us. The original habitat, then, of our snowdrop must be sought for in Europe, and it is very probable that Switzerland was the land of its birth. Professor Dalla Torre's *Flora of the Alps* gives it as 'locally abundant' on some of the meadows and slopes of that mighty chain; and in those spots it is very evident that it could be no waif from cultivation.

It must not, however, be supposed that the snowdrop is an Alpine plant, in the strict sense of the term. The impression that it is the hardiest of flowers, and, on the first approach of spring, rears its tiny head from under the snow and close up to the snow-line, is erroneous. Although it is never found in a wild state in flat or damp situations, it is far from being a native of very high regions. Dalla Torre certainly gives it a range up to four thousand or more feet; but it would seem to be very doubtful whether it ever actually occurs at such an elevation. It would perhaps be more correct to describe it as essentially a *sub-Alpine* plant, and in no way capable of supporting a very extreme degree of cold, or of flourishing under conditions greatly different from those it meets with in our gardens. The localities where it is most at home are woods or coppices which have a gentle slope to the south or west. It likes a certain amount of shade, but not too

cold a shade—just sufficient to afford shelter from the cutting winds of spring—and must have as much warmth as can be derived from the direct rays of the sun during some hours of the day, as well as from a protected position. If left to itself under these conditions, it will not only increase and multiply at a rapid rate, but the flowers will also be larger and more fragrant than any which can be produced by the most careful cultivation in a garden.

The snowdrop being essentially a northern flower, was unknown to the ancients. Linæus, consequently, when he came to arrange his 'Systema,' found no classical name ready to his hand, but had to invent one for himself. He took the two Greek words signifying 'milk' and 'flower,' and out of them made the compound *galanthus*, while to this he added the Latin epithet *nivalis*, 'snowy,' or 'belonging to the snow.' As a plant, then, of entirely modern lineage, and, so to say, a parvenu among flowers, it was impossible for the snowdrop to have attached to it any of those poetical legends with which the Greeks were accustomed to associate some of the best known flowers. There is, it is true, a legend connected with it, but it evidently belongs to the middle ages, and is, apparently, of monastic origin. It states that 'one day after the Fall, Eve stood in paradise lamenting the barrenness of the earth, which no longer produced vegetation, and where no flowers grew. An angel, pitying her sad condition, exposed as she was to the blinding snow which was falling at the time, came down to the earth to try to console her. He listened to her complaints; and being moved with pity for so much grief, took in his hand a flake of the snow, and, breathing upon it, bade it take the form of a flower and bud and blow. He at the same time added that the little blossom should be a sign and a symbol to her that the winter was over, and that the sun and the summer would soon return. Eve prized her new treasure greatly, and praised it more than all the flowers which formerly bloomed in paradise. On raising her eyes to express her gratitude to the angel, he was nowhere to be seen; but on the place where he had stood was a snow-white ring, which she had no difficulty in recognising as composed of snowdrops.' This legend sufficiently betrays its northern origin. Independently of the snowdrop being unknown in southern or oriental countries, the idea of snow falling in those localities where the garden of Eden was commonly supposed to have been placed, is evidence enough that the story was composed by some dweller in higher latitudes.

But if the snowdrop is not gifted with an ancient pedigree, its immediate successor, the crocus, can, on the contrary, trace its descent to the very dawn of history itself. The Greeks, and after them the Romans, had an intense liking for the taste and scent of saffron, and consequently for the flower which produced it. Classical literature is full of affectionate allusions to the crocus. Homer makes the couch of Juno 'soft and close with dewy lotus, crocus, and hyacinth,' a passage which is imitated by Milton in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. Sophocles says that on the hill of Colonus 'there burst into bloom, by the dew of heaven, the narcissus with its beauteous clusters, and the crocus with its golden ray.' Horace

tells us that the stages of theatres were strewed with crocuses and other flowers; while Juvenal hopes that round the tombs of those guardians who have done their duty to their wards there may ever bloom 'the fragrant crocus and a perpetual spring.'

None of our yellow crocuses are of European origin; they come to us from the East, and appear to be comparatively recent importations. 'Cloth-of-Gold,' for instance, is a native of Turkey and the Crimea, while the original home of the large yellow crocus is Asia Minor. Many other kinds have no doubt been produced by the ingenuity of the Dutch gardeners, always skilful in their treatment of bulbs. The chief interest of the crocus lies, however, in the fact of its connection with the saffron of commerce. Twice in the course of history this latter drug has enjoyed a popularity which seems strange to us—once under the Greeks and Romans, and again in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Saffron itself is nothing more than the dried stigmas of a certain purple crocus which blossoms in the autumn. It seems originally to have been brought from the East. Its name in any case is Eastern, being, it is said, merely a change of the Arabic word *zahfarân*. The Greeks and the Romans, it is true, knew nothing of this name, but always used the term crocus for saffron. The undoubted fact, however, of its having, on its reappearance in Europe, been imported from the East, confirms the tradition or notion of its oriental origin. It was, strangely enough, the scent which formed its chief attraction for the ancients. They regarded it as the most delicious of perfumes, and endeavoured to introduce it on every possible occasion. The floors of their halls and mansions, as also of their theatres, were strewed with it; and Pliny in one place recommends that the saffron should be bruised, in order the better to diffuse its fragrance. Its flavour was also greatly appreciated; and Beckmann says that 'in the oldest work on Cookery which has been handed down to us, and which is ascribed to Apicius, it appears that saffron was as much employed in seasoning dishes as for a perfume.'

With the overthrow, however, of the Roman empire, the taste for saffron, and even the plant itself, became lost. As to the precise period of its re-introduction into Europe, there is some little obscurity. Beckmann is of opinion that it was brought by the Moors into Spain, founding his conjecture on the Arabic derivation of the name. Earlier writers, however, all agree that it was brought back by the crusaders from the East. The first mention of it is, probably, in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, 1589. He says that 'a pilgrim, proposing to do good to his country, stole a head of saffron, and hid the same in his palmer's staff, which he had made hollow before on purpose, and so he brought this root into the realm with venture of his life; for, if he had been taken, by the law of the country whence it came, he had died for the fact.' Unfortunately, we have the same story, or legend, with regard to the introduction of silkworms' eggs, and the probability in each case is that the account is untrue. At all events, by the beginning of the fifteenth century we find it firmly established both in France and England. It was so largely cultivated at Walden,

in Essex, that the place came to be called, and has ever since been known as Saffron-Walden. Saffron Hill, in London, also owes its name to the fact of large quantities of the plant having been grown on the ground which formerly belonged to Ely House. It was popular as a perfume, and as a seasoning for various dishes; also as a dye. Above all, it was popular for medicinal purposes. The physicians of the time seem to have looked upon it as a veritable *elixir vite*. They ascribed to it every possible virtue under the sun, and applied to it such grand names as *Panacea vegetabilis* and *Aurum philosophorum*. Christopher Cattan (*Geomancie*, 1591) says that 'saffron hath power to quicken the spirits, and the virtue thereof pierceth by-and-by to the heart, provoking laughter and merriness; and they say that these properties come by the influence of the sun, unto whom it is subject, from whence she is ayded by his subtil nature, bright and sweet smelling.' As an accompaniment to cookery, it was much used during Lent, its medicinal properties being supposed to counteract the effects of the spare diet of the season.

By the sixteenth century, saffron had become a highly important article of commerce, while its high price rendered it a favourite article of adulteration. An edict of Henry II. of France, issued in the year 1550, says that 'for some time past a certain quantity of the said saffron has been found altered, disguised, and sophisticated by being mixed with oil, honey, and other mixtures, in order that the said saffron, which is sold by weight, may be rendered heavier; and some add to it other herbs, similar in colour and substance to beef over-boiled and reduced to threads; which saffron, thus mixed and adulterated, cannot be long kept, and is highly prejudicial to the human body; which, besides the said injury, may prevent the above said foreign merchants from purchasing it, to the great diminution of our revenues, and to the great detriment of foreign nations, against which we ought to provide.' It would appear, however, from an account of the adulteration of saffron written in the beginning of the present century, that what was described in the royal edict as herbs 'similar to beef over-boiled,' was in reality the article itself. The list of ingredients employed includes 'fibres of smoked beef;' but by what process these could be rendered similar to the bright yellow stigmas of the saffron crocus is not very clear. The other substances used for the purpose were mostly of vegetable origin, and include the stigmas of nearly all plants which were naturally of a similar colour. Besides these, the chopped flowers of the pomegranate and the petals of the marigold were also brought into requisition. To obtain, however, a really good imitation of saffron, reliance was chiefly placed on the yellow blossoms of the safflower (*Carthamus*), a native of Egypt, which, when dried, although of a deeper colour, were supposed to be near enough for all practical purposes. The safflower itself is still valuable as furnishing a brilliant red dye, and it is to this that that once fashionable article, ladies' rouge, owes, or ought to owe, its fascinating bloom.

The taste for saffron has only entirely died out within the limits of the present century. It is scarcely more than a generation ago that its pun-

gent and peculiar flavour could still be detected in certain articles of confectionery. Up to a very short time since, a few acres were cultivated, and still may be, in Cambridgeshire and Essex. The bulbs were planted about midsummer, in a rich light soil, and in rows some six inches apart. The flowers were gathered in the morning as soon as they were quite open, and the stigmas carefully picked out by hand. They were then placed between sheets of paper and dried in a kiln. The saffron was at one time pressed into small cakes and sent into the market in that form. This was, however, so persistently imitated by those engaged in adulteration, that cake-saffron, as it was called, got a bad name, and of late years the stigmas have always been sold loose. The French and Spanish saffron, however, was supposed to be better than that grown in England, and whatever comes into the market now is said to be imported from those countries.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

BY GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

THAT same night, as the Squire and Mrs Meysey sat by themselves towards the small-hours—after the girls had unanimously evacuated the drawing-room—discussing the affairs of the universe generally, as then and there envisaged, over a glass of claret-cup, the mother looked up at last with a sudden glance into the father's face and said, in a tone half-anxious, half-timid: 'Tom, did it happen to strike you this afternoon that that handsome cousin of Elsie Challoner's seemed to take a great fancy to our Winifred?'

The Squire stirred his claret-cup idly with his spoon. 'I suppose the fellow has eyes in his head,' he answered bluntly. 'No man in his senses could ever look at our little Winnie, I should think, Emily, and not fall over his ears in love with her.'

Mrs Meysey waited a minute or two more in silent suspense before she spoke again; then she said once more, very tentatively: 'He seems a tolerably nice young man, I think, Tom.'

'Oh, he's well enough, I daresay,' the Squire admitted grudgingly.

'A barrister, he says. That's a very good profession,' Mrs Meysey went on, still feeling her way by gradual stages.

'Never heard so in my life before,' the Squire grunted out. 'There are barristers and barristers. He gets no briefs. Lives on literature, by what he tells me: next door to living upon your wits, I call it.'

'But I mean, it's a gentleman's profession, anyhow, Tom, the bar.'

'Oh, the man's a gentleman, of course, if it comes to that—a perfect gentleman; and an Oxford man, and a person of culture, and all that sort of thing—I don't deny it. He's a very presentable fellow, too, in his own way; and most intelligent: understands the riparian proprietors' question as easy as anything.—You can ask him to dinner whenever you choose, if that's what you're driving at.'

Mrs Meysey called another halt for a few seconds before she reopened fire, still more timidly than ever. 'Tom, do you know I rather fancy

he really likes our Winifred?' she murmured, gasping.

'Of course he likes our Winifred,' the Squire repeated, with profound conviction in every tone of his voice. 'I should like to know who on earth there is that doesn't like our Winifred! Nothing new in that. I could have told you so myself. Go ahead with it, then.—What next, now, Emily?'

'Well, I think, Tom, if I'm not mistaken, Winifred seemed rather inclined to take a fancy to him too, somehow.'

Thomas Wyville Meysey laid down his glass incredulously on the small side-table. He didn't explode, but he hung fire for a moment. 'You women are always fancying things,' he said at last, with a slight frown. 'You think you're so precious quick, you do, at reading other people's faces. I don't deny you often succeed in reading them right. You read mine precious often, I know, when I don't want you to—that I can swear to. But sometimes, Emily, you know you read what isn't in them. That's the way with all decipherers of hieroglyphics. They see a great deal more in things than ever was put there. You remember that time when I met old Hillier down by the copse yonder?—'

'Yes, yes, I remember,' Mrs Meysey admitted, checking him at the outset with an astute concession. She had cause to remember the facts, indeed, for the Squire reminded her of that one obvious and palpable mistake about the young fox-cubs at least three times a week, the year round, on an average. 'I was wrong that time; I know I was, of course. You weren't in the least annoyed with Mr Hillier. But I think—I don't say I'm sure, observe, dear—but I think Winifred's likely to take a fancy in time to this young Mr Massinger. Now, the question is, if she does take a fancy to him—a serious fancy—and he to her—what are you and I to do about it?'

As she spoke, Mrs Meysey looked hard at the lamp, and then at her husband, wondering with what sort of grace he would receive this very revolutionary and upsetting suggestion. For herself—though mothers are hard to please—it may as well be admitted off-hand, she had fallen a ready victim at once to Hugh Massinger's charms and brilliancy and blandishments. Such a nice young man, so handsome and gentlemanly, so adroit in his talk, so admirable in his principles, and though far from rich, yet, in his way, distinguished! A better young man, darling Winifred was hardly likely to meet with. But what would dear Tom think about him? she wondered. Dear Tom had such very expansive not to say utopian ideas for Winifred—thought nobody but a Duke or a Prince of the blood half good enough for her: though, to be sure, experience would seem to suggest that Dukes and Princes, after all, are only human, and not originally very much better than other people. Whatever superior moral excellence we usually detect in the finished product may no doubt be safely set down in ultimate analysis to the exceptional pains bestowed by society upon their ethical education.

The Squire looked into his claret-cup profoundly for a few seconds before answering, as if he expected to find it a perfect Dr Dee's divining crystal, big with hints as to his daughter's future;

and then he burst out abruptly with a grunt: 'I suppose we must leave the answering of that question entirely to Winnie.'

Mrs Meysey did not dare to let her internal sigh of relief escape her throat; that would have been too compromising, and would have alarmed dear Tom. So she stifled it quietly. Then dear Tom was not wholly averse, after all, to this young Mr Massinger. *He*, too, had fallen a victim to the poet's wiles. That was well; for Mrs Meysey, with a mother's eye, had read Winifred's heart through and through. But we must not seem to give in too soon. A show of resistance runs in the grain with women. 'He's got no money,' she murmured suggestively.

The Squire flared up. 'Money!' he cried, with infinite contempt, 'money! money! Who the dickens says anything to me about money? I believe that's all on earth you women think about.—Money indeed! Much I care about money, Emily. I daresay the young fellow hasn't got money. What then? Who cares for that? He's got money's worth. He's got brains; he's got principles; he's got the will to work and to get on. He'll be a Judge in time, I don't doubt. If a man like that were to marry our Winifred, with the aid we could give him and the friends we could find him, he ought to rise by quick stages to be—anything you like—Lord Chancellor, or Postmaster-general, or Archbishop of Canterbury, for the matter of that, if your tastes happen to run in that direction.'

'He hasn't done much at the bar yet,' Mrs Meysey continued, playing her fish dexterously before landing it.

'Hasn't done much! Of course he hasn't done much! How the dickens could he? Can a man make briefs for himself, do you suppose? He's given himself up, he tells me, to earning a livelihood by writing for the papers. Penny-a-lining; writing for the papers. He had to do it. It's a pity, upon my word, a clever young fellow like that—he understands the riparian proprietors' question down to the very ground—should be compelled to turn aside from his proper work at the bar to serve tables, so to speak—to gain his daily bread by penny-a-lining. If Winifred were to take a fancy to a young man like that, now'—The Squire paused, and eyed the light through his glass reflectively.

'He's very presentable,' Mrs Meysey went on, re-arranging her workbox, and still angling cleverly for dear Tom's indignation.

'He's a man any woman might be perfectly proud of,' the Squire retorted in a thunderous voice with firm conviction.

Mrs Meysey followed up her advantage persistently for twenty minutes, insinuating every possible hint against Hugh, and leading the Squire deeper and deeper into a hopeless slough of unqualified commendation. At the end of that time she said quietly: 'Then I understand, Tom, that if Winifred and this young Massinger take a fancy to one another, you don't put an absolute veto on the idea of their getting engaged, do you?'

'I only want Winnie to choose for herself,' the Squire answered with prompt decision. 'Not that I suppose for a moment there's anything in this young fellow's talking a bit to her. Men *will* flirt, and girls *will* let 'em. Getting engaged

indeed! You count your chickens before the eggs are laid. A man can't look at a girl nowadays, but you women must take it into your precious heads at once he wants to go straight off to church and marry her. However, for my part, I'm not going to interfere in the matter one way or the other. I'd rather she'd marry the man she loves, and the man who loves her, whenever he turns up, than marry fifty thousand pounds and the best estate in all Suffolk.'

Mrs Meysey had carried her point with honours. 'Perhaps you're right, dear,' she said diplomatically, as who should yield to superior wisdom. It was her policy not to appear too eager.

'Perhaps I'm right!' the Squire echoed, half in complacency and half in anger. 'Of course I'm right. I know I'm right, Emily. Why, I was reading in a book the other day a most splendid appeal from some philosophic writer or other about making fewer marriages in future to please Mamma, and more to suit the tastes of the parties concerned, and subserve the good of coming generations. I think it was an article in one of the magazines. It's the right way, I'm sure of that; and in Winifred's case I mean to stick to it.'

So, from that day forth, if it was Hugh Massinger's intention or desire to prosecute his projected military operations against Winifred Meysey's hand and heart, he found at least a benevolent neutral in the old Squire, and a secret, silent, but none the less powerful domestic ally in Mrs Meysey. It is not often that a penniless suitor thus enlists the sympathies of the parental authorities, who ought by precedent to form the central portion of the defensive forces, on his own side in such an aggressive enterprise. But with Hugh Massinger, nobody ever even noticed it as a singular exception. He was so clever, so handsome, so full of promise, so courteous and courtly in his demeanour to young and old, so rich in future hopes and ambitions, that not the Squire alone, but everybody else who came in contact with his easy smile, accepted him beforehand as almost already a Lord Chancellor, or a Poet Laureate, or an Archbishop of Canterbury, according as he might choose to direct his talents into this channel or that; and failed to be surprised that the Meyseys or anybody else on earth should accept him with effusion as a favoured postulant for the hand of their only daughter and heiress. There are a few such universal favourites here and there in the world: whenever you meet one, smile with the rest, but remember that his recipe is a simple one—Humbug.

Hugh stopped for two months or more at Whitestrand, and during all that time he saw much both of Elsie and of Winifred. The Meyseys introduced him with cordial pleasure to all the melancholy gaieties of the sleepy little peninsula. He duly attended with them the somnolent garden-parties on the smooth lawns of neighbouring Squires: the monotonous picnics up the tidal stream of the meandering Char; the heavy dinners at every local rector's and vicar's and resident baronet's; with all the other dead-alive entertainments of the dulllest and most stick-in-the-mud corner of all England. The London poet enlivened them all, however, with his never-failing flow of languid humour, and his slow,

drawled-out readiness of Pall-Mall repartee. It was a comfort to him, indeed, to get among these unspoiled and unsophisticated children of nature; he could palm off upon them as original the last good thing of that fellow Hatherley's from the smoking-room of the Cheyne Row Club, or fire back upon them, undetected, dim reminiscences of pungent chaff overheard in brilliant West-end drawing-rooms. And then, there were Elsie and Winifred to amuse him; and Hugh, luxurious, easy-going epicurean philosopher that he was, took no trouble to decide in his own mind even what might be his ultimate intentions towards either fair lady, satisfied only, as he phrased it to his inner self, to take the goods the gods provided him for the passing moment, and to keep them both well in hand together. 'How happy could I be with either,' sings Captain Macheath in the oft-quoted couplet, 'were t'other dear charmer away.' Hugh took a still more lenient view of his personal responsibilities than the happy-go-lucky knight of the highway: he was quite content to be blest, while he could, with both at once, asking no questions, for conscience' sake, of his own final disposition, marital or otherwise, towards one or the other, but leaving the problem of his matrimonial arrangements for fate, or chance, to settle in its own good fashion.

It was just a week after his arrival at Whitestrand that he went up one morning early to the Hall. Elsie and Winifred were seated together on a rug under the big tree, engaged in reading one novel between them.

'You must wish Winifred many happy returns of the day,' Elsie called out gaily, looking up from her book as Hugh approached them. 'It's her birthday, Hugh; and just see what a lovely, delightful present Mr Meysey's given her!'

Winifred held out the present at arm's length for his admiration. It was a pretty little watch, in gold and enamel, with her initials engraved on the back on a broad shield. 'It's just a beauty! I should love one like it myself!' Elsie cried enthusiastically. 'Did you ever see such a dear little thing? It's keyless too, and so exquisitely finished. It really makes me feel quite ashamed of my own poor old battered silver one.'

Hugh took the watch and examined it carefully. He noted the maker's name upon the dial, and opening the back, made a rapid mental memorandum of the number. A sudden thought had flashed across him at the moment. He waited only a few minutes at the Hall, and then asked the two girls if they could walk down into the village with him. He had a telegram to send off, he said, which he had only just that moment remembered. Would they mind stepping over with him as far as the post-office?

They strolled together into the sleepy High Street. At the office, Hugh wrote and sent off his telegram. It was addressed to a well-known firm of watchmakers in Ludgate Hill. 'Could you send me by to-morrow evening's post, to address as below, a lady's gold and enamel watch, with initials "E. C., from H. M." engraved on shield on back, but in every other respect precisely similar to No. 2479 just supplied to Mr Meysey, of Whitestrand Hall? If so, telegraph back cash-price at once, and cheque for

amount shall be sent immediately. Reply paid.—Hugh Massinger, *Fisherman's Rest*, Whitestrand, Suffolk.'

Before lunch-time, the reply had duly arrived: 'Watch shall be sent on receipt of cheque. Price twenty-five guineas.' So far, good. It was a fair amount for a journeyman journalist to pay for a present; but, as Hugh shrewdly reflected, it would kill two birds with one stone. Day after to-morrow was Elsie's birthday. The watch would give Elsie pleasure; and Hugh, to do him justice, thoroughly loved giving pleasure to anybody, especially a pretty girl, and above all Elsie. But it could also do him no harm in the Meyseys' eyes to see that, journeyman journalist as he was, he was earning enough to afford to throw away twenty-five guineas on a mere present to a governess-cousin. There is a time for economy, and there is a time for lavishness. The present moment clearly came under the latter category.

THE PEOPLES OF FUR-LAND.

It used to be an article of faith among ethnologists that Alaska had been peopled from Japan, this belief being founded upon the reports of old Russian travellers, who fancied they saw some physical resemblance between the Aleuts and the Japanese. But the Aleuts only inhabit one of the divisions of Alaska, and that the smallest, and there are several other races inhabiting this enormous and little explored territory, whose distinctive features and racial characteristics form an interesting subject of examination. From what is now known, the natives of Alaska can be broadly classified in four great divisions—namely, the Eskimo or Innuít, the Aleut or Oonágan, the Athabaskan or Tinneh, and the Thlinket tribes.

The Eskimos are called Innuits by some writers because the name is derived from a native word signifying 'man,' and is supposed to be their own designation of themselves. In Alaska the Eskimos number altogether about eighteen thousand, inhabiting most of the coast-line, as well as the interior portions of the Arctic division. Where they came from is of course pure matter of conjecture, but one theory is, that they originated in the centre of the American continent, and that their settlement on the Alaskan coasts was coincident with the general migration which led a portion of the same race to Greenland. The theory of a common origin finds some support in the fact that the *kaiak* or skin-canoe of the Alaskans is identical in construction with that of the Greenlanders. This *kaiak*, which is a covered boat, is found only among pure Eskimos, and is lost wherever there has been intermixture with other races. This is a curious fact, as it forms a distinct mark of identity.

There are several subdivisions or tribes of the Eskimos, some of them possessing marked distinctive traits; but certain features and habits they possess in common. They live in winter in underground, sod-covered houses, and in skin-

covered tents in summer. They use implements of stone, of ivory, and of bone; they live upon fish, including seal and walrus and raw blubber; and they clothe themselves generally in skins, although in parts where there is constant intercourse with the traders and whalers, they have sometimes adopted cloth garments for summer wear. And yet one can scarcely call their subdivisions 'tribes,' seeing that there is no evidence of an essential feature of tribal existence—chieftainship. A headman there is in each village, called the oomalik; but his function seems more that of a commission agent in negotiating with other tribes and foreigners, than that of governor. In fact, he appears to possess no real influence over the people, and far less attention is paid to him than to the 'medicine-man' or shaman. These shamans—otherwise sorcerers—are the masters-of-ceremonies at all the village festivals, which are frequent during the long dark winters, as well as the representatives of all the supernatural or religious belief which the Eskimos possess. When joint action is necessary, the plans are arranged by a council of the elders, and by such decisions all the inhabitants of a village are held bound.

The coast tribes are noted for more intelligence and shrewdness, which is probably more the result of longer and larger intercourse with white races than of natural superiority. They are also superior physically, the Kaialigumute of Norton Sound, for instance, being well built, of medium stature, round-faced, white-teethed, with bronze complexions, and of quick movements. The hair is straight, glossy, and black, but coarse, and the men usually have both beards and moustaches. Polygamy is not common, although not unknown; and, on the other hand, separations of married couples are rare; and although a man may marry again if his wife dies, the line is drawn at the third. The marriage ceremony of the Eskimos is extremely simple. After obtaining the consent of the parents, the bridegroom just goes and takes his bride away to his own people, and the knot is tied. The families are not large, a woman's offspring rarely exceeding two—a family of four being quite phenomenal. Marriages take place at a very early age, and at twenty-five a wife is an old woman.

A pleasing feature in the Eskimos is their kindness to their children. These are treated with the greatest indulgence, and allowed to do and to have pretty much what they please until of an age to support themselves. But they are taught the use of the arms and the tools possessed by their tribe, and miniature implements are constructed for their education. The standard of manhood is neither twenty-one years nor the passing of 'exams,' but the killing of a wolf, a reindeer, or a beluga-whale. After such an enterprise, a youth becomes a man. Meanwhile, the various stages of his adolescence are marked by curious ceremonies; that is to say, feasts are held when his hair is trimmed for the first time (the men wear the hair trimmed all round the head, while the women wear it loose or plaited); when he first goes to sea alone in a *kaiak*; when he makes his first expedition in snow-shoes; or when his lip is cut to receive the *labrets* or ornaments of

stone and bone which are worn on the under lip on both sides of the mouth. Thus it will be seen that the rising generation is regarded with a full share of reverence, and parents will sometimes even go to great expense to procure amulets or charms from the shamans to preserve the young ones from danger and from the malice of evil spirits.

All the Eskimos are superstitious about death, and although they hold festivals in memory of departed friends, they will generally carry a dying person to some abandoned hut to drag out his days in hunger and neglect. After the death of a husband or wife, the survivor—among the coast tribes, at anyrate—cuts the front hair short and fasts for twenty-five days.

The festivals—which, as we have said, are numerous—are often held in a sort of common hall called the *kashga*, which is built of the same pattern as the semi-subterranean winter-houses, but is often as large as sixty feet square, and twenty or thirty feet high. This *kashga* also serves for various other purposes. It is used for the public bath; for the deliberations of the council of elders in communal questions; for the preparation of skins and the manufacture of sleds; for the reception of visitors; and for the sleeping-place of males who have not huts of their own. The festivals consist of singing and dancing of a primitive character, and then gorging with fish and blubber, with the additional luxury of melted reindeer fat, when it can be procured. All the food, both fish and flesh, goes through some process of cooking before being eaten, although the 'higher' it is, the more it is appreciated.

The tribes of Norton Sound hold a festival every year in October or November in memory of deceased kinsmen, and Petroff thus describes the performances: 'At sunset the men assemble in the *kashga*, and, after a hurried bath, ornament each other by tracing various figures on the naked back with a mixture of oil and charcoal. Two boys, who for this occasion are respectively named the Raven and the Hawk, are in attendance, mixing the paint, &c. Finally, the faces also are thickly smeared; and then the females are summoned into the *kashga*. After a brief lapse of time a noise is heard, shrieks and yells, snorting and roaring; and the disguised men, emerging from the firehole, show their heads above the floor, blowing and puffing like seals. It is impossible to distinguish any complete human figure, as some are crawling with their feet foremost, others running on their hands and feet, while the head of another is seen protruding between the legs of a companion. They all cling together and move in concert like one immense snake. A number of men wear masks representing the heads of animals, and the unsightly beings advance upon the spectators, but chiefly endeavouring to frighten the women, who have no means of escaping molestation except by buying off the actors with presents. Knowing what was before them, they have brought the *kantags* or wooden bowls full of delicious morsels—beluga blubber, walrus-meat, whale-oiled berries, and other dainties. When each of the maskers has eaten and filled a bowl or two with delicacies to take home, they indulge in a pantomime and gesture-play of a highly grotesque character. After completing the ceremony in

the *kashga*, the maskers frequently visit some of the dwellings, and receive gifts in each, the whole performance ending with singing, dancing, and feasting in the *kashga*.'

It is difficult to formulate the religious beliefs of the Eskimos. They regard the shamans as mediators between them and the world of spirits; but it is doubtful whether they believe that the sorcerers can actually control the spirits. Some of these sorcerers are very cunning in tricks of sleight-of-hand; and indeed, unless they are considerably accomplished in such performances, they are little regarded.

Our description is general, because it is impossible to sketch the differences of all the subdivisions of the race. It may be mentioned, however, that the Kaniaks, who people the island of Kadiak and neighbourhood, are of superior physique, although not of *morale*, and were erroneously supposed by the Russians to be the same as the Aleuts, to be presently mentioned. Among the Kaniaks, again, there is a definite tribal authority, and the chiefs are important personages. Then as to superstitions, there is a large tribe on the Kuskokvim river where is found a curious blending of pagan ideas with Christian traditions filtered from the Russian mission further north, for the missionaries themselves never reached the Kuskokvim.

The Aleuts—an interesting people who inhabit a considerable portion of the coasts of the Alaska peninsula, and the adjacent islands called the Aleutian Islands—are the people whom the Russians believed to be of Japanese origin. While the theory seems unfounded, their origin seems yet unsettled, and their own traditions throw little light on the subject. They are quite distinct from the Eskimos, but have evidently had intimate relations with the Eskimos for many generations, if not for centuries. A Russian priest called Veniaminof spent some years on the Aleutian Islands, and carefully collected all the traditions he could from the mouths of the people. These point clearly to a migration at some time from 'a great land' or continent, from which they were driven by wars; but opinions are divided as to whether the continent was Asia or America. The most recent United States explorers are confident that the Aleuts are an American race. Be that as it may, their traditions point to a previous occupation of the islands by some other people, for they say that their grandfathers were told by their grandfathers that they found deserted dwellings on the shores. To what remote period this may point it is impossible to tell, for these primitive races are hopelessly indefinite in matters of chronology.

The Aleuts at one time had certainly some belief in a Creator, but they did not worship him nor 'connect him with the management of the world.' They believed in two classes of spirits, evil and good, and they worshipped what seemed to affect the influence of these spirits. Hence shamanism prevailed, but the shamans themselves were not held in high respect. A belief in the immortality of the soul is argued from the practice which the old Aleuts had of killing a slave on the death of any important member of the tribe, so as to provide attendance for the departed brother in the other world. They also believed in the actual though invisible presence of the

spirits of their departed friends, who help the living in times of danger.

The Aleuts lived in patriarchal tribes, and the head of the family was the chief of the village. These chiefs had distinct authority, but it was not supreme, and did not entitle them to any special honours. When the Russians came, they distinguished some of these chiefs, and tried to give them a political importance. Their present function seems to be to act as overseers in the seal and otter fishing for the American Companies. The Aleuts are not a numerous people, however, and probably do not now exceed two thousand all told.

But while the Aleuts are tending towards civilisation, if they are not actually 'Christianised,' the reverse is the case with the tribes of Athabaskan Indians, who people the Yukon Valley, and are found also in some numbers in both the Kuskokvim and Kadiak divisions. They are distinctly a branch of the great race of North American Indians which extend from the Mackenzie River in the north of the continent to Mexico in the south. At what period they migrated from the interior to the inclement regions of Alaska, it is impossible to say, and their traditions do not help us to guess. They have certainly kept themselves very much to themselves, and have neither intermixed to any great extent with the Eskimos and Aleuts, nor have, until quite recently, held much intercourse with the Russian and American representatives of the white races. As they are now, they probably have been for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years—nomadic, reserved, self-contained, active, hardy, keen-sighted, and fearless—skilful in the chase, and cruel and treacherous in war. They are divided into clans, and are believed to preserve totemism, or the designation of families by the names and emblems of birds and animals, between whom intermarriage is forbidden. They live in log-houses, paint their faces, wear skins in winter, and—except in the extreme north of their range—go with the head uncovered and decorated with feathers. Some of them have traditions of a race of giants 'living to the northward,' who, ages ago, invaded their territory and killed many of their people. Once, they say, one of these giants came down from the mountains, and as he went through the villages, caught up a man in each hand, and after knocking their heads together, placed them inside his 'parka' or skin-coat. Is not this very suggestive of Homer's story of Polyphemus? Other traditions tell of a race of dwarfs away to the north, who may be the small Arctic Eskimos, and of big fish like mountains, which are doubtless the Arctic whales. They also tell of a fearful eruption from one of the volcanic mountains; and it is noteworthy that a similar tradition exists among all the other natives of Alaska.

In the south-eastern division is found another branch of the Indian race—the Thlinkets—and these are, next to the Eskimos, the most numerous of the aborigines of Alaska. They number about seven thousand, and are distributed both on the mainland coast and the islands. Among the Thlinkets, totemism is very pronounced, and forms even a stronger tie than blood relationship. The totem clans are named Raven, Bear, Wolf, Whale, and so on; and as men may not marry in their

own clans, the children belong to the clan of the mother. The Thlinkets are the most advanced of all the races we have mentioned, as they have also the best section of Alaska for their habitat. They are clever navigators in their canoes, are expert fishers and hunters, dexterous in carving and plaiting, skilful in building, and 'cute in trade.

Thlinket traditions tell of two heroes who, at the beginning of the world, fought with the spirits of darkness for the future good of mankind. These two heroes or gods were the founders of the Raven and the Wolf clans; but neither the raven nor the wolf occupies any important place in their mythology. Their traditions also point to a migration from the interior of America, and a similarity has been traced between their language and that of the Apache and Aztec tribes: they have all the physical characteristics of the average North American Indian, and their prevailing vice is indolence.

As regards religion, we find among the Thlinket tribes a distinct notion of a Creator. The most important personage in their mythology is Yeshl, who was the ancestor of the Raven clan, and who seems to be credited with the creation of all physical objects. He is the friend of man, existed before he was born, never grows old, and never dies. He sends reminders of his existence with the east wind, which is supposed to blow from his abode. He has a son, who is even fonder of man than Yeshl himself, and frequently intercedes when the father is filled with wrath against the people for ill-doing. We have here a striking approach to certain peculiarities of the Christian faith.

The Thlinkets, however, do not believe that all men sprang from the same stock, but that Yeshl travelled from land to land, and made a new man in each with a different language. After he had finished his work, he said: 'I am now going away, but my eye will be always on you. If you live wicked lives, you cannot come to me, as the good and brave only can live in my place.' Sir James Douglas, of the Hudson's Bay Company, says that 'the Thlinkets think that there is a future state of retributive rewards and punishments. After death, the souls of men ascend through successive stages one over another, like the stories of a house, to the highest heaven, where they find a strong gate guarded by a giant, who knows the name of every spirit that makes its appearance there. After proclaiming the name aloud, he proceeds to question the spirit regarding its past life, either by receiving it into heaven, or driving it back to the inferior stages, where it wanders about comfortless amid yawning gulfs, opening before it at every step. The knowledge of these things has no perceptible effect on their conduct; they steal, cheat, and lie whenever they feel an interest in doing so, without any visible apprehension of incurring Yeshl's displeasure. They admit that theft, falsehood, and roguery are criminal, but nevertheless have recourse to them without hesitation whenever it suits their purpose.'

Here we must close our rapid and necessarily imperfect sketch of the strange Peoples of Fur-land. We have said enough to show how much of interest there is about them, and how many ethnological and mythological questions they suggest. Even now, they are as

little known as the strange weird regions in which they hunt and fish, are born, marry, fight, toil, gorge, and die. In the great struggle for existence, surely their part is neither without importance nor without instruction.

HELEN'S ESCAPE.

BY H. F. ABELL.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

PING! crash! and, shattered into a thousand pieces, down came the bust of Molière which stood at the top of the bookcase in my room at No. 5 Rue de Douai, Paris. This was on the evening of May 27, 1871, and the Commune was desperately gasping its last breath in the ubiquitous presence of the victorious Versailles troops of Macmahon.

'Better the bust of Molière than my head,' I remarked to myself as I quitted my easel, at which I was trying to work, and went to the window to peer out into the street. The scene which met my furtive gaze through the half-opened *persiennes* I can never forget. Almost under my window—for No. 5 was but the third house from the corner of the street—was what had been a large and well-constructed barricade, composed of street stones piled around a Clichy-Odéon omnibus, a couple of nightcarts, and a miscellaneous heap of obstructions—its front facing the Rue Laval, its two sides commanding the Rue Pigalle, and its rear towards the Rue de Douai. All about it were stretched the corpses of men, in blue or white blouses or hybrid uniforms, who had fallen during the night; and against the walls of the opposite houses were half-a-dozen wretches slowly dying from their wounds, and calling aloud to be put out of their misery. Everywhere else, rifles, accoutrements, shattered fragments of the barricade, empty wine bottles, and—blood.

I had been a close prisoner in the house for four days; I had been made to assist in the construction of the barricade described above, in spite of my plea of 'Civis Britannicus sum;' but I had determined not to fight, and, favoured by darkness and the drunkenness of the Communist sentries, had managed to slip home unobserved. The bullet which had destroyed Molière was the first which had fairly entered my room, although, during the three preceding days, there had been severe fighting in the street and my *persiennes* were riddled almost to fragments. I had only ventured to look out once before, for the fate of those who looked out of a window dangled before my eyes in the shape of two or three motionless heads and arms hanging over window ledges; but the arrival of the bullet stimulated my curiosity, and I remained, lying flat on the balcony, peeping through the iron-work of its railing. There were not more than a score of men left in the dilapidated barricade, and these were either too drunk or too desperate to fly. About four hundred yards up the Rue Laval I saw a blue mass, tipped with steel, which I guessed to be the Versailles troops advancing from their capture of the Buttes Chaumont and the Belleville heights, to the destruction of what was almost the last hornet's nest. Presently, there was a tremendous volley; the men

in the barricade yelled and crouched down, rose up and fired. Then the street was filled with white smoke; but I could hear the clatter of feet advancing at the *pas gymnastique*, followed by yells of defiance, cries of agony, the crash of falling obstacles, and more volleys. The smoke cleared, the 'Reds' were rushing along the street past my door, followed by the cheering troops. Now and then, a man threw up his arms and fell flat on his face; the others staggered on; there were more cries of agony, which told me that the bayonet was doing its sickening work. Then all was over, and the Commune was dead as far as fighting was concerned, although the lurid glare reflected on the evening sky in half-a-dozen directions sufficiently proclaimed that it had not died without a terrible Parthian shot.

We—that is, my Italian landlord and I, the only occupants of a house usually filled from basement to attics with artists and art students—had not an atom of food or a drop of drink in the house; and I determined to get as far as the *charcutier* at the corner—now opened for the benefit of the Versailles sentries grouped all about—for the purpose of taking in supplies. So I crept out cautiously—for I knew that the victors, maddened by resistance and bloodshed, would not hesitate to shoot upon mere suspicion—bought what I required, and returned, having been absent half an hour.

It was half-dark when I reached my room again, and the weird gray light which came from the west, and made a strange pattern on the floor as it pierced my battered *persiennes*, seemed an appropriate tint for the close of such an awful day. I felt its influence, and, safe as I was, moved gently, as in a house of death. Then I was amazed to see a man sitting, or rather lying, in my armchair. When I approached nearer, I saw that he was wounded and insensible; that his face and his left arm were bound up in bloody rags, and that his tattered clothing was besmeared with mud and chalk and blood. I poured some brandy down his throat, and he revived. 'Thank God!' he exclaimed—'thank God!' But he was so exhausted that his head sunk back again. He had uttered those words in English, and, astonished as I was to find him in my room at all, I was still more so when I saw he was a fellow-countryman.

Presently he made an effort and sat up. 'You're all right,' I said, as I noticed he looked fearfully and anxiously around, as if pursued; 'you'll be better when you've had something to eat and drink.'

His face brightened at the sound of my English speech. 'You are an Englishman,' he said. 'I am glad. These brutes have nearly done for me. Look here!'—as he spoke, he undid the bandage from his hand—'that's a bayonet-wound.' As he showed it, a piece of glass fell from his sleeve or his bandage to the ground. Seeing it, he added: 'And I had to jump clean through a window. But I'm safe here? You won't give me up?'

'Of course I won't,' I replied. 'Why should I?'

'Well, you see I'm a banker here. I heard that the Commune had made a raid on more than one business house for what they call "contributions to the holy cause of universal liberty." I

happened to have a lot of securities which had been deposited with me for safety by wealthy Parisians. I heard that the Communists were on the scent, and I escaped with them just in time. The soldiers entered the house just as I left it, chased me, fired at me, wounded me in the head and hand, and I got into a shop. I was followed there, fired at again, and just jumped through the window in time to avoid an ugly push with a bayonet. But I'm not quite comfortable, for they might be here at any moment.'

His mind was evidently unhinged by what he had gone through; for, in spite of my assurances that the Commune was a thing of the past, and that order was re-established, whilst he ate and drank with avidity what I set before him, at every unusual sound he started to his feet in the greatest alarm. However, food and drink gave him courage; and although he refused to have his wounds dressed, and remained with his face almost hidden in hideous bandages, he accepted my invitation to remain where he was for the night. Over a cigar and a bottle of Médoc I found him to be an exceptionally intelligent and well-informed man, who had been at an English public school and university, and had been settled in Paris many years. Personally, he said, he was ruined by the Commune; but he was glad to have been able to save the property of his clients, and had no doubt but that they would make him some compensation for the losses he had sustained in guarding their interests.

He refused to occupy my spare room, but preferred to sleep in my armchair; and at midnight, when we separated, he said: 'My name is Rayne—Dixon Rayne, of the firm of Rayne & Company, Rue le Pelletier. I don't know how I can ever repay you adequately for your kindness to me to-night; but be sure that I shall endeavour to do so.'

When I entered the room the next morning, he was gone.

Now, there were two or three little things about Mr Rayne and the circumstances of his escape, which, coupled with the fact of his sudden disappearance, struck me as being rather odd, and instinctively I felt rather relieved when he was gone. Of course his story was plausible enough, for I knew that the Communists had not hesitated to lay their hands upon all the money and valuables and securities they could find, under the plea of *pro bono publico*, but in reality for personal enrichment. But why he should have displayed such fear of arrest was strange, when he must have known that all cause for fear was removed by the triumph of the Versailles troops. Again, he did not ask my name, as a man in receipt of a kindness and wishful to repay it would generally do. Neither, upon searching the Directory for Paris, could I find any such firm as Rayne & Company either in the Rue le Pelletier or out of it. Lastly, what little I could see of my visitor's face for the rags which he so assiduously preserved, did not impress me, although I knew very well that in a hurried flight for life, Apollo himself would assuredly be shorn of much of his natural beauty.

However, Mr Rayne, good or bad, was gone, and there was an end of it, as I thought, and I was soon too busily occupied with my own affairs

to trouble my head about him. Shortly afterwards, I ventured out for a tour of exploration amidst the ruins of defaced, despoiled Paris, perhaps also with a view to the reproduction upon canvas of such incidents as I had witnessed or could imagine. When I returned home, I found an official in police uniform in my room. 'Monsieur is English?' he asked.

I admitted the fact.

'Has Monsieur any countrymen of his in the house or anywhere about?'

I replied that I knew of none.

The official described himself as *désolée*, but it was his duty to search. Accordingly, he searched high and low, cupboard and drawer, passage and closet. 'I am obliged to Monsieur,' he said as he re-entered my studio. Suddenly, he stooped and picked up from the floor the piece of glass which had fallen from Mr Rayne's arm bandage; and I noticed that it was stained glass of a yellow colour, such as may be seen sometimes in the staircase windows of Parisian houses, but never in a shop front.

The officer looked keenly at me as he held the glass, and his remarkable politeness at once gave way to an official abruptness which was evidently more natural to him.

'How did this come here?' he asked. I suppose I must have looked almost guilty, for he repeated the question in a more peremptory manner, as I stood wondering how I should answer; so there was nothing to be done but to tell him all that had happened on the night of Rayne's arrival. After a series of minute questions concerning my visitor, the purport of which I could not guess, and my answers to which he carefully noted down, he left me.

I lit a pipe and pondered over this strange matter for an hour; then I thought I would go to breakfast on the boulevards. Close to the street door was a tall man in ordinary civilian dress, smoking a cigar, and apparently interested in the work of demolition of the barricade which was going on. He glanced carelessly at me, and I passed on; but on reaching the crossing at the church of Notre-Dame de Lorette, I looked round to see if the way was clear, and behold he was following me at a distance of fifty yards, and so on down the Rue Lafitte, on to the boulevard, and over to the Café du Cardinal, so that I knew I was being watched. The same man, unless he was disguised, was not engaged on the job again; but I seemed to feel instinctively that the eye of the law was on me, and some one was intrusted with the duty of observing my slightest movements.

Finally, to cut a long story short, I was visited by two gentlemen in mufti, although they were clearly officials, who drove with me to the depot of the Prefecture of Police, where I was submitted to a searching examination by a magistrate concerning Mr Rayne, and allowed to go, after I had been actually thanked and apologised to for the trouble and inconvenience to which I had been put.

Piecing all the evidence together with the nature of the questions put to me, I came to the conclusion that Mr Rayne must have been a political offender, or a spy, or perhaps even a Communist leader.

In three weeks' time I had cleared up my

affairs in Paris, and after an unexpectedly prolonged sojourn in the city of famine and bloodshed, returned gladly enough to my own home amidst the Surrey hills.

IMPROVEMENTS IN TANNING.

NOTHING is more remarkable in the history of the industrial arts than the fact that the most ancient of these arts—that of preparing skins for clothing—has stood still with Chinese persistency, while those of spinning and weaving have advanced by leaps and bounds. Skins of beasts killed in the chase were, without doubt, the primitive clothing of our race. Some process, therefore, akin to tanning must have been pursued long before the days of Simon the tanner, in order to prevent the skins from putrefying and to render them durable. As it was in the beginning, so it is now; a substance known as tannin, the active principle of tannic acid, has been depended upon for the conversion of skins into leather. Tannic acid is widely spread through the vegetable world in the bark, leaves, and fruits of plants, the best known being that of oak-bark.

The art of leather-making is simple. The skins are unhaired and 'fleshed' or cleaned by removing the fatty matters that cling to the under surface. Left to soak in an infusion of tannin, time will do the rest. The art of the tanner is to expedite this process. In order to loosen the hair by softening the hides, they are steeped in lime-pits, and, when 'handled' or hooked out, are found to be in the state of gelatine. When cleansed from the lime—the most troublesome part of the process—the pores of the skins are greedy to absorb the tannin; and in a period ranging from weeks to years, a tannate of gelatine is formed, or what we call leather. On a small scale we may make leather in a teacup; for any animal jelly dissolved in water will fall in hardened flakes of true leather on the addition of a few drops of tannic acid.

Science has ransacked the world to find tanning substances of quicker action than those in common use; but oak-bark maintains its rights, and tanners come back to it after repeated trials with a long list of other materials. Time seems to be a vital element in tanning, and what has been gained in time has been at the cost, as a rule, of quality in the product.

The lime in the hides has much to do with the after-processes. It is the great evil which tanners have to contend with, since no known method, hitherto, has been able to free the skins entirely from its presence. The plan followed from time beyond memory has been to soak and wash the fleshed skins in a bath of *bate* or *pure*, a euphemism for the refuse of dogs and other animals. How, with our strides in chemistry, a manufacture, ranking as one of the highest national importance, should, for ages, have been dependent upon a practice exciting disgust, which even apprenticeship and journey-work cannot conquer, is one of the curiosities of industrial life.

Relief hails from Australia. In return for the cattle with which we have replenished the empire colony, our brothers over there have long sent us hides and skins, and end by teaching us how to dress them. Mr E. P. Nesbit, a schoolmaster

of South Australia, and a gentleman of hereditary scientific tastes, since he is a descendant of the author of *Nesbit's Mensuration*, a work known in every English school, has taken the tanners in hand, and offers to teach them thrift in leather-making. Some time ago he invited a number of manufacturers and men of science to an exhibition of a new method of unliming hides and skins at the tanneries of Messrs Etty and Barrow of Grange Walk, Bermondsey. The result was a perfect success and full of promise. In less than an hour, instead of days or weeks, hides submitted to the new treatment were rendered absolutely free from lime, as well as from what the craft expressively calls 'muck'—that is, fat and dirt, which more or less prevail in all hides and skins, and interfere with good tanning. Hitherto, mechanical means of repeated washings have been trusted to for extracting the lime which the skins imbibe. Animal refuse, as we have said, has been used to soften the water of the bath, and thus to open the pores of the skins, and the lime which they contained was, as it were, rinsed out, not dissolved, since it is soluble in water to a very small degree. In districts where the water is soft, this cleansing of the hides is easier without *bate* than in chalky districts, where the water is hard, the effect of the carbonate of lime in the water being to close the pores; and extra *bate* is required, sometimes even then without effect.

The new method of unliming hides and skins, patented by Mr E. P. Nesbit, can hardly be called a discovery or an invention. It is 'a happy thought' which strikes the mind of intelligence in the midst of customs petrified by tradition; an example of applied science, an elementary principle of chemistry put into industrial practice, and thereby lifting a rule of thumb into the region of the skilled arts. The 'mere schoolboy' knows that lime dissolves very slightly in water, but that it becomes immediately soluble if the water is charged with carbonic acid. The principle is exemplified in the common custom of softening hard water by adding more of the lime which made it hard. But, as the patentee naively states, the tanners knew the difficulty, but did not know the remedy; the chemists knew the remedy, but did not know the difficulty.

Let a short colloquy between the writer and the patentee explain itself.

'How did the idea come into your head?'

'Why, I got acquainted with an Australian tanner who happened to speak of the trouble his craft had in getting rid of the lime in the hides. That ought not to be difficult, I told him. Let me try my hand. With that I took a small piece of the saturated skin, then put it into a soda-water bottle with cold water, and charged the contents with carbonic acid gas, in the usual way of making soda-water. I took the skin back the next day, looking quite clean and plumped out. Is there any lime in that? "Not a particle," was the answer, after testing.—"Then I have got at it," said I; "and what can be done on a small scale can be done on a large."—"You had better put the plan into practice here," said my friend the tanner.—"No, indeed," I rejoined; "I am off at once to England, the great leather market of the world."

British tanners are a close corporation, conservatively standing in the old ways, and were not ready to believe in an outsider who professed to teach them their trade, which they had followed since the world was young. The patentee was, however, happy enough to meet with one or two enterprising men of business, as also with a capitalist, Mr Max Strauss, of Holburn Viaduct, who made himself master of the subject, and about a year ago, brought the working of the process to an issue in the tanneries of Messrs Barrow Brothers of Bermondsey. Since then, Messrs Etty and G. B. Barrow, of Grange Walk, have undertaken the agency for the production of leather on the new principle, to witness the working of which drew together the influential company referred to.

At this exhibition of the new process, the little slip of moist skin and the soda-water bottle were represented by a heap of stout limed hides, 'fleshed' and unhaird, in readiness the day before; and by a tank of cold water capable of immersing one hundred and fifty hides, corked down, so to speak, or better, say, with a 'patent stopper,' of a heavy lid, bolted down with stout iron screws to render the tank air-tight when full of hides. A tube through this, leading to the bottom of the tank, is put in connection with a gas generator, to which our attention is next called. The apparatus employed, constructed by Messrs Hayworth, Tyler, & Co., engineers, and as simple in principle as every part of the process, comprises a generator, gasometer, and small steam pumping-engine. The generator is of iron, charged with fourteen pounds of whiting, upon which, while kept stirred, a thin stream of dilute sulphuric acid trickles to about the same weight in the course of an hour. Carbonic acid gas generates rapidly, as is seen by the ascent of the gasometer, and is driven forward by the pumping-engine to the tank, which it enters through the pipe opening at the bottom.

A slight hitch or two, easily obviated, so far from proving a disadvantage, still more conclusively confirmed the correctness of the principle. The lid of the tank, from some trifling defect of the vulcanite fittings, was not quite air-tight, whence the pressure of gas upon the hides was less than advised; while the generator had to be charged twice instead of once with whiting. A rough-and-ready experiment pardonably takes more time in preliminaries than when an industrial process is in full working and automatic order. Three-quarters of an hour passed in these observations, out of which we may assume that the hides were subjected to the action of the carbonic acid a full half-hour, or just half the normal time. This was meant to be a crucial test of the value of the process. The tank was opened and the hides hauled out, looking deceptively white and clean; for, upon scudding or scraping one of them upon the curved 'beam' used by tanners, so much 'muck'—namely, dirt and yellow grease—was pressed out, that the experts present were fain to own that such rapid and perfect cleansing had never before been accomplished. The clear cold tank-water was now cloudy-white with lime.

Was any lime left in the hides? The test of lime is the readiness of the hide to take the tannin. If free from lime, it is thirsty for the

infusion; if not free, the absorption is a long and tiresome process, beginning with a liquor of nearly spent tan, and then successive immersions for many weeks or months in liquors of higher and higher degrees of strength. The operative cut off a corner of the hide, held it for a couple of minutes in a strong infusion of tan, and handed it round for inspection. It had taken the tan at once, and at least three weeks' action upon the hide was condensed into two minutes. A remaining question as to the quality of the leather thus produced proved equally satisfactory. The curried hides and skins were of fine grain and beautifully supple. Their excellence has been particularly shown in their suitability for enamelled and japanned leathers for bags and patent-leather boots.

The impression made upon those who witnessed the process was, that this ancient art is on the eve of a great transformation both scientific and economic, which will raise its rank among our skilled industries and notably advance the national well-being. Mr Nesbit computes that, at the lowest, one-third of the time of leather-making will be saved. This alone must release some millions of the vast capital now sunk in the manufacture, to fructify in other industrial directions. Further, the cost of plant and material is brought to a minimum—the whiting and sulphuric acid are almost too cheap to enter into account, the unliming of five hundred hides being done for eighteenpence; while the mechanical appliances involve the most moderate outlay.

PARSON VENABLES' ADVENTURE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

ST FIMBARRUS is the name of a lonely little parish on a hillside in a distant county. The country round about is all wild moorland. From the church porch of St Fimbarrus you can see many miles of undulating downs, now rising into hills of respectable elevation, and again sinking into valleys, through which a little stream brawls among stunted trees. There are no trees in St Fimbarrus itself, save a few weakly firs in the vicar's garden, which he nurses with sedulous care, in the hope that they may one day afford some shelter from the fierce winds that sweep down the glens on every side towards the vicarage. It is a hope unlikely to be realised; certainly, its fulfilment is so distant that ere it comes, the vicar will have been laid in that other tenement of his, within sight of his study window, which he purchased when his last child was laid there.

It was a bright afternoon in May, and the vicar stood on the gravel sweep before his house, scanning the sky anxiously. He turned to gaze successively at each quarter of the heavens, inhaled rather dubiously several large mouthfuls of the air, to satisfy himself whether it tasted salt, as it must if the wind blew from the sea, the rainy quarter at St Fimbarrus; and then, with a brighter countenance, he re-entered the house.

'You may put on your things, Anna,' he cried out cheerfully as he crossed the hall, 'and tell Hugh to bring the pony round.'

'Then I shall get my cross-stitch pattern, after all; and I can talk with Mrs Hartle about the

butter.' So saying, Mrs Venables, in a state of some excitement, gathered up her shawl, her spectacles, and her knitting, on which she had been employed, in preparation for going up-stairs to make ready for the desired journey.

'You can talk to her about anything you please, my dear,' said the vicar, rather testily, for he was in truth somewhat tired of hearing of his wife's difficulties with regard to the cross-stitch pattern and the butter.

'I shall talk to her about those two things, and nothing else,' said the old lady with determination; 'we shan't have more than enough time to settle them.'

'Well, well, my dear, as long as you are satisfied,' returned the vicar.—'Will you be ready in ten minutes?'

'Not if you flurry me with calling to know how long I shall be. I have so many things to remember, and I can't tell what I've done with my tablets.—Belinda! Where is Belinda?—Oh, very well! I'm coming up-stairs, my love.'

The vicar went out again into the sunshine. He had not taken many turns along the walk beneath the windows of the house, when a crunching sound of wheels on the gravel announced the arrival of the pony.

'How is he to-day, Hugh?' asked the vicar. 'Pretty quiet?'

'Too much oats inside him, sir,' said the man, touching his hat. 'Oats goes to friskiness.'

'I'm afraid you're right, Hugh,' the vicar answered, observing how impatiently the pony was stamping on the gravel.—'Poor Charles! good Charles!' and he attempted to stroke the animal's nose—a compliment which Charles resented by first tossing his head, as if he wished to feel his master's fingers between his teeth, and then starting off at full racing speed in the direction of the open gateway. The vicar hung on to the back of the chaise. Hugh, muttering blasphemies, made desperate efforts to catch 'good Charles's' head; while in the midst of the confusion, a window was thrown up and Mrs Venables cried loudly: 'Stop, stop! We're not nearly ready yet.'

'I wish you'd make haste, my dear,' returned the vicar; 'this restive animal has nearly torn my arms out of the sockets.'

'Nonsense! You must keep him quiet.'

'That's more easily said than done; but we will try.'

'It's very easy, I'm sure,' returned the lady. 'Men have no tact. I'll come down presently with an apple.'

The vicar looked at Hugh and shook his head somewhat dubiously; he doubted the virtue of the apple.

'If the missus would leave his feed to me, sir, he wouldn't be half so lively,' remarked Hugh; 'but when ladies will go and fill his box with a double portion of oats, so as he's a-eatin' all day, and never goin' out at all'—

'I know—I know,' the vicar said hastily. 'Ladies don't understand horse-flesh, Hugh.'

'They don't,' rejoined the man gruffly.

At this juncture, Mrs Venables sallied forth, accompanied by her niece Belinda, who carried several thick shawls and a heavy carriage rug.

'Shall we want all those wraps on such a bright day?' the vicar asked.

'Yes; indeed we shall. It will be very cold when the sun goes in;' and with that, Mrs Venables took the wraps from her niece and stowed them carefully in the back seat. After satisfying herself that they were not likely to fall out, she went up to the pony's head. 'Naughty Charles!' she said, in a coaxing voice—'bad Charles, to startle your good mistress so, and pull your master's arms out of the sockets.'

This affectionate adjuration apparently did not penetrate to Charles's heart, for he whisked his head about, at the imminent risk of striking his mistress in the face; and being somewhat elated at the result of his last manoeuvre, he was steadily endeavouring to get on his hind-legs, with the apparent intention of dancing into the town.

'Better not touch him, ma'am,' advised Hugh. 'I'll hold him fast enough while you get in.'

'He seems quite excited to-day,' said Mrs Venables, a little nervously.—'I think you had better drive him, Theophilus.'

'O yes, Uncle Theo,' Miss Belinda interposed; 'do drive him yourself—he seems so very wild.'

'Stuff!' said the vicar. 'If Charles is at all fresh, Hugh's is a much safer hand on the reins than mine.—Get in, my dear, or we shall not reach the town to-day.'

But as Mrs Venables placed her foot upon the step, Charles made a sudden start, which, though checked on the instant by a sharp tug at his head, was almost sufficient to throw the old lady down.

'Theophilus,' she said, retreating two or three steps from the pony-carriage, and looking at her husband with a face full of apprehension, 'this pony is not himself to-day, and I must insist on your driving.'

'I know what's the matter with him, aunt,' said Miss Belinda mysteriously. 'Some pixy's got into him. I've seen a cow go on just like that at milking-time, and they always know then that the pixies are about the farm.'

The vicar turned round angrily. 'How often am I to tell you, Belinda, that I won't have those silly tales repeated about my house! Is it possible for me, do you think, to expel superstition from the minds of the honest people over whom I am set, if one of my own family spreads it abroad?'

'Never mind, never mind,' interposed Mrs Venables. 'Belinda didn't mean any harm. It's quite likely she may be right too; and that's another reason why you should drive, Theophilus. I always feel so safe when you have the reins.'

'It's not at all a well-grounded feeling, my dear,' replied the vicar, 'if you only knew it. You are vastly safer with Hugh.—But there; I give way.—Hugh, you must stay at home. Look out for us about half-past six.'

'And, Belinda,' called Mrs Venables as the pony-carriage passed out on to the road, 'have a little fire, and keep your uncle's slippers warm.'

As soon as Charles emerged upon the high-road, the evil spirit came forth from him and he fell into a steady trot.

'There, you see, Theophilus; he is quite quiet now; I knew he would be with you.'

The vicar could not repress a slight feeling of triumph as he contrasted the present demure conduct of the pony with his late obstreperous behaviour. 'He certainly is,' he answered. 'I begin to think I must have some of the qualities of a professional whip.'

Charles's conduct was indeed exemplary; and a steady uneventful drive of about an hour, all down hill, brought the vicar and his wife to the top of the steep descent above the town.

'There is Dr Hartle!' exclaimed Mrs Venables excitedly. 'Don't you think he is growing very gray?'

'Not more so than he has been for the last ten years, my dear.—How are you, Hartle?'

The doctor, mounted on a stout brown cob, had ridden up alongside the vicar's carriage and was exchanging greetings. 'Jane will be delighted to see you,' said he. 'She has been complaining for three days past that she sees no visitors now. You will stay and take tea with us?'

The vicar demurred to this proposal, and the point was not settled when they arrived at the door of the doctor's pretty dwelling.

'Jane!' cried the doctor, pushing open the door of his parlour: 'here is Mrs Venables.—I am awfully glad you came in to-day, Venables; for I have just got a batch of music which I want to show you.'

'I can't think,' said the vicar, 'why you go foraging among all this newfangled jingle, when you don't half know the works of the old men who really understood where noise begins and music ends.'

'I declare,' said the doctor energetically, 'if a month passes without my seeing you, Venables, you retrograde in the most shocking way. Let me see—March, April. It is barely five weeks since we spent that delightful evening together where you really did begin to see what fine work had been turned out in the last thirty years.'

'Yes, I know,' the vicar admitted; 'but when I came to think it over, I perceived that I was wrong.'

'I quite expected it!' ejaculated Dr Hartle. 'I knew you would go back to your musty fugues and canons. Well, I shall have to convert you again, that's all. Here is a batch of songs by Liszt now. Read that over to yourself, and then I'll sing it.'

'Liszt?' said Mr Venables, taking the sheet of music. 'He was a man of deplorable character.'

The doctor muttered something beneath his breath, at which his friend looked up hastily; but he was wise enough not to repeat it.

'This is very strange and eccentric music,' said the vicar, after carefully perusing the song; 'and the harmonies seem against all rule. Here is the pedal actually used in a descending scale.'

'My dear sir, how often must I tell you that the breach of formal rules never can condemn any music if the effect is good! Now, listen!' The doctor possessed a very sweet tenor, not powerful, but admirably trained, and he rendered the song extremely well.

'There's merit about that music,' the vicar said; 'but what a pity that a man of talent should allow himself such license.'

This remark led to a long discussion. It was an old dispute, and every inch of the ground of battle was familiar to both the combatants. A vast array of authorities was marshalled; hosts of opinions, of every degree of weight, were adduced; volumes of reference were piled up on the table to a mountainous height; phrases without number were hummed, sung, played on

the doctor's excellent piano, or even drummed out on the table. The afternoon wore away, and neither of the disputants was in the least inclined to admit himself worsted, when the town clock chimed six, and the vicar, starting up, declared he had had no idea it was so late, and that he must not lose a moment in setting out on his homeward journey.

'I should be very sorry to be out after dark,' he said. 'The roads across the downs are very confusing in a bad light.'

'Pooh! You should know them well enough. There's an excellent light, too, till nearly eight o'clock now.—What, won't you be convinced? Then, I'll order round your pony.—Where is Mrs Venables?'

Where Mrs Venables was, nobody seemed to know. The housemaid was certain she had heard the two ladies talking up-stairs not ten minutes before, while the cook was equally positive that she had seen them walking in the garden. It was quickly ascertained that they were not in either of these places now, and messengers were despatched in every direction in which it seemed likely they had gone. The pony had been at the door for twenty minutes, however, and Mr Venables was in a fever of impatience to be gone, before his wife and Mrs Hartle came strolling slowly down the street talking as leisurely as if nobody had been waiting for them.

The vicar was a man of temper; he forbore to reproach his wife, and merely pointed out to her that in a few minutes the town clock would sound half-past six, the hour at which they had arranged to be at home.

'Yes; I knew it would be so,' said the old lady calmly; 'we always are late when you begin to quarrel with Dr Hartle about your crotchets and your quavers.'

'My dear,' rejoined the vicar, with just the smallest tinge of reproach in his voice, 'if you had been ready when I was, we should have reached the top of Dumblely Hill by this time.'

'You shan't throw the fault on me, Theophilus,' said his wife firmly. 'You were to blame, and you alone.—Now, listen to what Mrs Hartle told me.'

Mrs Hartle's news proved interesting enough to beguile the tedium of the weary climb up Dumblely Hill; and as Charles toiled slowly across the road from side to side of the steep ascent, neither his master nor his mistress observed that thick clouds had obscured the setting sun and that the air was growing dense and moist. It was only when, on reaching the hilltop, the vicar shook out the reins and urged Charles forward, that he looked back and saw that the town was hidden from sight by wreaths of mist. The hedgerows, too, were beginning to look ghostly; little drifts of cloud were stealing along the hollows; and the vicar, as he glanced uneasily about him, could not conceal from himself the conviction that before they could reach the vicarage the fog must have surrounded them altogether.

'I wish we were at home,' he said, cracking his whip; 'or, at all events, over the next hill.'

'Oh, I don't think much of this,' replied Mrs Venables cheerfully. 'We have been out when

it was much thicker. I haven't told you half my news yet.—Do you know, Robert Tomkins is going to emigrate! Think of that—with all those young children. I call it infamous!

'If he can't get anything to do here?' suggested the vicar, glancing nervously over his shoulder.

This remark led Mrs Venables off into a tirade on the evils of emigration, which she regarded as a species of impiety, an unwarrantable interference with the decrees of providence, who knew much better where a man was likely to thrive than his own judgment could tell him. The good old lady was in the habit of enforcing this belief with copious extracts, not only from various pious writers, but also from her own experience, and in this rhetorical exercise she became so much engrossed that she observed nothing of the thickening of the mist to a solid wall around them, nor of the slackening of Charles's pace as his master's nervous hand now urged him forward, now checked him sharply with a momentary fear that he had lost the road.

'I don't know what to make of this,' the vicar exclaimed at last; and, handing over the reins to his wife, he sprang out. 'I can't tell what road we are in.'

The fog had indeed become so dense that the borders of the road were not in sight; only a little space of a few feet immediately around the carriage was visible; all beyond was a uniform mass of cloud.

'Don't go out of sight, Theophilus,' Mrs Venables entreated; 'I shall be very frightened if you do.'

'Nonsense!' replied the vicar, who was groping about in the mist. 'How am I to ascertain where we are unless I can find some landmark?'

'But you can do that in the carriage. If you will only get in, we can drive up to the edge of the road and see quite well. If you go out into the mist, you will never get back to me again.'

The vicar returned with a dejected countenance and climbed into his seat.

'I think I saw the great quoit which was overturned by the storm last February,' he said; 'but one looks so much like another in this light.—If only Hugh were with us!'

AMUSING ANSWERS.

OUR courts of law have furnished us at various times with very witty and amusing remarks, lawyers and prisoners alike being guilty on this score. Doubtless, every one has heard of the Irishman, who, in reply to the question, 'Guilty or not guilty?' said 'he would like to hear the evidence before he would plead.' A magistrate in another case was dealing with a vagrant, and in a severe tone addressed him thus: 'You have been up before me half-a-dozen times this year;' thereby giving him to understand that he had appeared too often on the scene. The prisoner, however, was equal to the occasion, for he replied: 'Come, now, judge—none of that. Every time I've been here, I've seen you here. You are here more than I am. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.'

Curran, the Irish advocate, was one day examining a witness, and failing to get a direct answer, said: 'There is no use in asking you questions, for I see the villain in your face.'—'Do you, sir?' said the man, with a smile. 'Faix, I never knew before that my face was a looking-glass.' On another occasion, he was out walking with a friend who was extremely punctilious in his conversation. The latter, hearing a person near him say curocity for curiosity, exclaimed: 'How that man murders the English language!'—'Not so bad as that,' replied Curran; 'he has only knocked an i out!'

'Prisoner at the bar,' said a judge, 'is there anything you would wish to say before sentence is passed upon you?'—The prisoner looked towards the door, and remarked that he would like to say 'Good-evening, if it was agreeable to the company.'

'I remember,' says Lord Eldon, 'Mr Justice Gould trying a case at York, and when he had proceeded for about two hours, he observed: 'Here are only eleven jurymen in the box; where is the twelfth?'—'Please you, my lord,' said one of the eleven, 'he has gone away about some business; but he has left his verdict with me.'

This is almost on a par with a case tried in one of the Lancashire courts, when Serjeant Cross was a resident barrister in that county. The jury having consulted and agreed upon their verdict, were addressed by the clerk of the peace: 'How say you, gentlemen of the jury; do you find for the plaintiff or the defendant?'

'What sayn yo? I dunnot understand,' said the foreman.

'Why, as you have decided, all I want to know is, whether your verdict is for the plaintiff or the defendant?'

The foreman was still greatly embarrassed; but he replied: 'Whoy, I raly dunnot know, but we're for him as Mester Cross is for!'

Lord Cockburn's looks, tones, language, and manner were always such as to make one think that he believed every word he said. On one occasion, before he was raised to the Bench, when defending a murderer, although he failed to convince the judge and jurymen of the innocence of his client, yet he convinced the murderer himself that he was innocent. Sentence of death was pronounced, and the day of execution fixed for, say, the 20th January. As Lord Cockburn was passing the condemned man, the latter seized him by the gown, saying: 'I have not got justice, Mr Cockburn—I have not got justice.' To this the advocate coolly replied: 'Perhaps not; but you'll get it on the 20th of January.'

Witty and humorous replies, however, are not confined to law-courts, so we may leave the judges and their satellites and gather up a few fragments elsewhere. An Irish recruit about to be inspected by Frederick the Great, was told that he would be asked these questions: How old are you? How long have you been in the service? Are you content with your pay and rations? He prepared his answers accordingly. It so happened, however, that the king began with the second question: 'How long have you been in the service?' Paddy glibly replied: 'Twenty years.'—'Why,' said the king, 'how old are you?'—

'Six months.'—'Six months!' exclaimed the king; 'surely either you or I must be mad.'—'Yes, both, Your Majesty'—a confession scarcely anticipated by the royal examiner.

A good story is told of a general and his wife, resident in Ireland, who were constantly pestered by a beggar woman to whom they had been very generous. One morning, at the accustomed hour, when the lady was getting into her carriage, the old woman began: 'Agh! my lady, success to yer ladyship, and success to yer honour's honour, this morning, of all the days in the year, for sure didn't I drame last night that her ladyship gave me a pound of tay, and yer honour gave me a pound of tobacco!'

'But, my good woman,' said the general, 'do you not know that dreams always go by the rule of contrary?'

'Do they so, plase yer honour?' rejoined the old woman. 'Then, it must be yer honour that will give me the tay, and her ladyship that will give me the tobacco.'

While dealing with the Emerald Isle, we may be allowed to quote several other equally witty and amusing replies, such as could only proceed from a warm-hearted son of Erin. It is said that when Sir Richard Steele was asked how it happened that his countrymen made so many bulls, he replied: 'It is the effect of the climate, sir: if an Englishman were born in Ireland, he would make as many.' He was therefore—perhaps intentionally—guilty of making a bull while seeking to explain their origin.

An American and an Irishman were once riding together, and coming across an old gallows by the wayside, Jonathan thought he would have a quiet laugh at Paddy's expense. 'You see *that*, I calculate,' said he, pointing to the gallows. 'Now, where would *you* be if the gallows had its due?' Paddy replied: 'Riding alone.'

Another Irishman was observed writing a letter in a very large hand, and when questioned as to why he employed such large characters, replied: 'Arrah, dear, an' isn't it to my poor mother I'm writing? An' she is so very deaf that I'm writing her a loud letter.'

'Come down this instant!' said the boatswain to a mischievous son of Erin who had been idling in the round-top. 'Come down, I say, and I'll give you a good dozen!'—'Troth, sir, and I wouldn't come down if you'd give me two dozen.'—Another seafaring Irishman was engaged hauling a rope into a small boat, when the captain of the ship, who was on the poop, ordered him to 'bear a hand.' The captain then took a turn on deck, but on his return Barney was still working hard at the line. 'Why, haven't you reached the end yet?' cried the captain.—'No, indeed, master; and, by my soul, I've been looking for the end till I am beginning to think it has got none. I do believe, sir, somebody has cut it off!'

Footo, on his return from a visit to Ireland, was asked if he had seen Cork. 'No,' he replied; 'but when I was in Dublin, I saw a great many *drawings* of it.'—Pope, notwithstanding his diminutive and misshapen figure, is said to have been not a little susceptible of even personal vanity. One day he asked Swift what people thought of him in Ireland. 'Why,' said Swift, 'they think that you are a very little man, but a very great poet.' Pope instantly

retorted: 'And in England they think of you exactly the reverse.'

During the performance of one of Dryden's plays, an actress gave the line,

'My wound is great because it is so small,'

in as moving and affecting a tone as she could, and then paused, looking very distressed. The Duke of Buckingham (Villiers), who was in one of the boxes, rose immediately from his seat and added in a loud ridiculing tone of voice:

'Then 'twould be greater, were it none at all.'

This had such an effect upon the audience that they hissed the actress from the stage.

Prince Albert used to relate how, while at Osborne, he was in the habit of getting up early and walking about his farm. One morning, when passing a farmer's house, he stopped to make some inquiries, knocked at the door, and asked the man-servant if his master was in. The servant replied: 'He is in, sir, but not down-stairs.'—'Oh, very well,' was the Prince's reply; and he was about to leave.—'Would you be kind enough to leave your name, sir?' said the servant.—'Oh, it does not matter,' said the Prince.—'Because,' continued the servant, 'my master would be angry with me if I did not tell him who called.'—'Very well,' said his Royal Highness; 'you may say Prince Albert.' Upon which the man drew back, looked up significantly, put his thumb to the tip of his nose, extended his fingers, and exclaimed, 'Walker!'

FOR THE LAST TIME.

WITHIN this room she passes her still days!

I pause upon the threshold, while my eyes

Gaze wistfully around, for memories

Of her sweet face, her thoughts, her words and ways,

Shall make the sunshine that through life's dark maze

May gild the pathway with its golden dyes;

And when I walk far off 'neath alien skies

My heart shall still be gladdened by its rays.

For the last time I look around. I hear

No sound save pattering ivy 'gainst the pane.

Ah! how my heart grows chilled with sudden fear

Lest this last hope that I have held be vain—

Lest I should never see your fair face, dear,

Or clasp once more your hand in mine again!

But no; I hear your footstep at the door.

Love, you can meet me thus with smiling face,

While I—I do but long for breathing space

To give these cold stiff lips the power once more

To greet you calmly, as they could before

I knew the truth. And yet, would I retrace

The path that I have trod, and leave this place

With the heart quiet and free that once I bore?

I cannot tell. Thoughts wander through my brain

Like dreams that come and go beyond our will.

You speak, I know; I answer back again;

But nought of all seems real to me, until

We come to say good-bye. Then bitter pain

Gives me sure proof I am not dreaming still!

KATE MELLERSH.

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LOVE.

LOVE is such an old, old story, and so much that is good and expressive has been written and sung about it, that we feel rather scared on approaching the subject. But it is one that will bear constant re-inspection; it can never be exhausted; it possesses the secret of perpetual youth; for it plays so important a part in the state of our existence, whether that be one of happiness or unhappiness, that our interest in it can never be abated. In all phases of our life we are subject to be affected by it in its various forms; and even if we restrict its meaning to that special form of affection which is generally understood by it, we shall find that its interest to us is perennial. In early youth, as we stand on the threshold of life, ere yet we dare to enter the lists of love ourselves, and when the sly allusion brings the hot blood with a rush of colour to our face, we still observe the feats of others with not a little curiosity. Unconsciously, we are gaining, by storing up the experiences of others, the education which is preparing us for the fatal hour when we shall have to take our stand amongst the doomed victims of Cupid.

Later on, what is life to us but a great ocean of love? No longer do we stand outside; but, happy and joyous, we bathe ourselves in its sweet and impalpable essences. It is the medium through which impressions of the external world reach our senses; and hence life is beautiful and bright to us. The reluctant youth may hang back; but at that age he cannot but have many a glimpse of the truth—of the reality of love—of that ethereal influence which pervades the whole universe, and gives to man the key to by far the greatest portion of the pleasures of life. In moments of vague, thrilling disquiet, he will feel it; as he springs up and returns the bounding tennis-ball and meets a glance from that flashing eye opposite—as he whirls round a ballroom in the undulating curves of the waltz, and at moments when the music

seems to become almost human in its pathos and expression, and he feels uncomfortably conscious of some extraordinary change in his constitution, and wonders what is the matter, and pales and trembles. And when we have finished with the juvenile part of love's warfare, we yet take pleasure in looking on at the mischievous little god tormenting the youngsters, as he once used to torment us, and chuckle and fight our own battles over again, and compare notes. Thus love is always interesting to us, not merely as far as our experiences go, but also as it affects others.

On the nature of love, there have been many wise and learned disquisitions; but the only practical solution of the question we can arrive at is, that it is an attachment, a yearning experienced by one person for another; and this yearning, strange to say, seems not to be dependent on any special characteristic of the person loved. It is a terrible force, as every one knows—one that governs the world—one that is capable of making a human being superlatively happy both in the present and in the future of this life; and on the other hand, one to which many a human being can trace his or her lifelong misery and eventual destruction.

This is a terrible consideration, and one which it is worth our while to pause and think over; for the truth is that we have no control over that force, which, when once aroused, lays us at the mercy of some one else, and makes this other person the arbiter of our fate. We cannot decide by an effort of the will that we shall love such and such a person, and not fall in love with such and such another person. If the love be unreturned, we shall probably find it easier to control our own feelings; for usually then our inborn pride rises, and makes us assume an individuality and independence which is incompatible with the state of dependence on the feelings of another which is a natural concomitant of love. But it is absurd to say that in all cases love unreturned dies. If the love be returned, then we think it highly improbable that any other considera-

tions will influence it. Thus, many a refined man has been madly in love with a woman whom he has known to possess qualities which, under other conditions, would have shocked him. But they don't influence him—he is hardly conscious of them; his love is returned, and that is all he cares for. Has not every one met with cases in which a girl falls in love with a man, and still continues loving him—supposing her love to be returned—even after she has found out that he is a villain? In fact, we may lay it down as a general rule, that love once aroused, and returned, is only in very rare cases capable of being controlled. This will not be difficult to understand, when we bear in mind that love is a single and distinct feeling, as distinct and single a feeling as either admiration or respect, and not a mixture of feelings, as many people suppose, and as the ordinary language leads one to infer. And just as respect for a person may exist without admiration, so love can exist independently of either admiration or respect. There need not even exist admiration of personal beauty, for many cases could be cited where women have fallen in love with ugly men having no acquirements of any kind.

This opens a very grave question, one of such serious importance to all of us as to be quite appalling. Yes, my dear young friend, the constitution of your nature is such that you are quite capable of falling in love with a girl who may be worthless, capable of being so carried away by this love as to marry her, and capable also of suffering for your mistake. You may simply have your life blighted, your good-nature and high spirit turned to cynicism and sour irritability, and hurried even to an untimely death. Such also may be your fate, sweet maiden, with that face yet wreathed in smiles—seemingly made for nothing but joy and happiness.

It is sad to think, and still sadder to know, that every year this holds true far too often. Are we perfectly helpless, then, in the face of nature? Does she offer us no remedy for this terrible state of things? How can we be considered responsible—how can we be made thus to suffer for what seems so entirely beyond our control? That is a question often asked, and one which, if we continue merely asking it, will never be answered for us. Nature deigns not to answer our questions; her laws and methods are continually operating, and we have not to ask, but to learn and act thereby. If in this case we set ourselves to learn by the experience of others, we shall soon come to see a rent in the cloud—to feel gradually that even in this case we have to some extent the power of guiding our fate—of, at anyrate, averting disaster.

Now, then, what is love? We have been treating this question superficially; but let us go deeper. Why do you love your wife, my friend? Is it for her beauty? There are many women more beautiful than she; you have seen them, and yet you do not love them. Is it for her talents? There are many women more talented than she; you have known them, and yet you do not love them. No, you answer, rather bewildered; you do not know why you love her—only, somehow, she fits in with you. We are now getting a little closer. She fits in with you. Now, let us see why you did not love those other women.

You can't exactly say; but, somehow, they did not seem to fit in with you; there was something dissonant in your characters. We are now closer still to the solution of the question—in fact, we seem to see it. There seems to have been some sympathy, some power of receptivity in your mind or character for another mind or character of a certain type. When you met your wife, you recognised in her physiognomy, in her gait, in her manner of talking, in fact in all her external qualities, the indications of the counterpart of your own mind. Then there was an upheaval of your being towards hers; and this made itself conscious to you through the sensation of love. You were yourself totally unable to say why you loved her; most men are little acquainted with the true springs and motives of their actions.

It certainly lies within our power to influence and change to some degree our character. And here lies the solution of the difficulty; for by so modifying our character as to make it instinctively friendly and partial to the good and virtuous and such qualities as insure our happiness, we would be preparing a receptivity for a nature which would not disappoint our expectations. But not only must we have that receptivity, but we must also possess the power to recognise such a nature in others—to avoid mistake. If we were able to read other people's characters, and were also perfectly virtuous ourselves, we should be very unlikely to make a mistake; for the reading of a person's character in such a case must be instantaneous, instinctive. Such perfection it is impossible to attain, and hence all people are liable to err; but he that understands and acts on these considerations is less likely to be mistaken.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE ROADS DIVIDE.

ON the second morning, true to promise, the watch arrived by the early post; and Hugh took it up with pride to the Hall, to bestow it in a casual way upon poor breathless and affectionate Elsie. He took it up for a set purpose. He would show these purse-proud landed aristocrats that his cousin could sport as good a watch any day as their own daughter. The Massingers themselves had been landed aristocrats—not presumably purse-proud in their own day in dear old Devonshire; but the estates had disappeared in houses and port and riotous living two generations since; and Hugh was now proving in his own person the truth of the naïf old English adage—'When land is gone and money spent, then learning is most excellent.' Journalism is a poor sort of trade in its way, but at anyrate an able man can earn his bread and salt at it somehow. Hugh didn't grudge those twenty-five guineas: he regarded them, as he regarded his poems, in the light of a valuable long investment. They were a sort of indirect double bid for the senior Meyseys' respect and for Winifred's fervent admiration. When a man is paying attentions to a pretty girl, there's nothing on earth he desires so much as to appear in her eyes lavishly generous. A less abstruse philosopher, however, might

perhaps have bestowed his generosity direct upon Winifred *in propria persona*: Hugh, with his subtler calculation of long odds and remote chances, deemed it wiser to display it in the first instance obliquely upon Elsie. This was an acute little piece of psychological byplay. A man who can make a present like that to a poor cousin, with whom he stands upon a purely cousinly footing, must be, after all, not only generous, but a ripping good fellow into the bargain. How would he not comport himself under similar circumstances to the maiden of his choice, and to the wife of his bosom?

Elsie took the watch, when Hugh produced it, with a little cry of delight and surprise; then, looking at the initials so hastily engraved in neat Lombardic letters on the back, the tears rose to her eyes irrepressibly as she said with a gentle pressure of his hand in hers: 'I know now, Hugh, what that telegram was about the other morning. How very, very kind and good of you to think of it.—But I almost wish you hadn't given it to me. I shall never forgive myself for having said before you I should like one the same sort as Winifred's. I'm quite ashamed of your having thought I meant to hint at it.'

'Not at all,' Hugh answered, with just the faintest possible return of her gentle pressure. 'I was twisting it over in my own mind what on earth I could ever find to give you. I thought first of a copy of my last little volume; but then that's nothing—I'm only too sensible myself of its small worth. A book from an author is like spoiled peaches from a market-gardener: he gives them away only when he has a glut of them. So, when you said you'd like a watch of the same sort as Miss Meysey's, it seemed to me a perfect interposition of chance on my behalf. I knew what to get, and I got it at once. I'm only glad those London watchmaker fellows, whose respected name I've quite forgotten, had time to engrave your initials on it.'

'But, Hugh, it must have cost you such a mint of money.'

Hugh waved a deprecatory hand with airy magnificence over the broad shrubbery. 'A mere trifle,' he said, as one who could command thousands. 'It came just to the exact sum the *Contemporary* paid me for that last article of mine on "The Future of Marriage." (Which was quite true, the article in question having run to precisely twenty-five pages, at the usual honorarium of a guinea a page.) 'It took me a few hours, only, to dash it off.' (Which was scarcely so accurate, it not being usual for even the most abandoned or practised of journalists to 'dash off' articles for a leading review; and the mere physical task of writing twenty-five pages of solid letterpress being considerably greater than most men, however rapid their pens, could venture to undertake in a few hours.)

Winifred looked up at him with a timid glance. 'It's a lovely watch,' she said, taking it over with an admiring look from Elsie: 'and the inscription makes it ever so much nicer. One would prize it, of course, for that alone. But if I'd been Elsie, I'd a thousand times rather have had a volume of poems, with the author's autograph dedication, than all the watches in all England.'

'Would you?' Hugh answered with an amused smile. 'You rate the autographs of a living

versifier immensely above their market value. Even Tennyson's may be bought at a shop in the Strand, you know, for a few shillings. I feel this is indeed fame. I shall begin to grow conceited soon at this rate.—And by the way, Elsie, I've brought you a little bit of verse too. Your Laureate has not forgotten or neglected his customary duty. I shall expect a butt of sack in return for these: or may I venture to take it out instead in nectar?' They stood all three behind a group of syringa bushes. He touched her lips with his own lightly as he spoke. 'Many happy returns of the day—as a cousin,' he added, laughing.—'And now, what's your programme for the day, Elsie?'

'We want you to row us up the river to Snade, if it's not too hot, Hugh,' his pretty cousin responded, all blushes.

'Tuus, O Regina, quid optes, Explorare labor; mihi jussa capessere fas est,' Hugh quoted merrily. 'That's the best of talking to a Gorton girl, you see. You can fire off your most epigrammatic Latin quotation at her, as it rises to your lips, and she understands it. How delightful that is, now. As a rule, my Latin quotations, which are frequent and free, as Truthful James says, besides being neat and appropriate, like after-dinner speeches, fall quite flat upon the stony ground of the feminine intelligence—which last remark, I flatter myself, in the matter of mixed metaphor, would do credit to Sir Boyle Roche in his wildest flights of Hibernian eloquence. I made a lovely Latin pun at a picnic once. We had some chicken and ham sausage—a great red German sausage of the polony order, in a sort of huge boiled-lobster-coloured skin; and towards the end of lunch, somebody asked me for another slice of it. "There isn't any," said I. "It's all gone. Finis Polonia!" Nobody laughed. They didn't know that "Finis Polonia" were the last words uttered by a distinguished patriot and soldier, "when Freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell." That comes of firing off your remarks, you see, quite above the head of your respected audience.'

'But what does that mean that you just said this minute to Elsie?' Winifred asked doubtfully.

'What! A lady in these latter days who doesn't talk Latin!' Hugh cried, with pretended rapture. 'This is too delicious! I hardly expected such good fortune. I shall have the well-known joy, then, of explaining my own feeble little joke, after all, and grimly translating my own poor quotation. It means: "Thy task it is, O Queen, to state thy will: Mine, thy behests to serve, for good or ill." Rough translation, not necessarily intended for publication, but given merely as a guarantee of good faith, as the newspapers put it. *Aeolus* makes the original remark to Juno in the first *Aeneid*, when he's just about to raise the wind—literally, not figuratively—on her behalf, against the unfortunate Trojans. He was then occupying the same post, as clerk of the weather, that is now filled jointly by the correspondent of the *New York Herald* and Mr Robert Scott of the Meteorological Office. I hope they'll send us no squalls to-day, if you and Mrs Meysey are going to come with us up the river.'

On their way to the boat, Hugh stopped a

moment at the inn to write hastily another telegram. It was to his London publisher: 'Please, kindly send a copy of *Echoes from Callimachus* by first post to my address as under.' And in five minutes more, the telegram despatched, they were all rowing up stream in a merry party toward Snade meadows. Hugh's plan of campaign was now finally decided. He had nothing to do but to carry out in detail his siege operations.

In the meadows, he had ten minutes or so alone with Winifred. 'Why, Mr Massinger,' she said with a surprised look, 'was it you, then, who wrote that lovely article, in the *Contemporary*, on "The Future of Marriage," we've all been reading?'

'I'm glad you liked it,' Hugh answered with evident pleasure; 'and I suppose it's no use now trying any longer to conceal the fact that I was indeed the culprit.'

'But there's another name to it,' Winifred murmured in reply. 'And Mamma thought it must be Mr Stone, the novelist.'

'Habitual criminals are often wrongly suspected,' Hugh answered with a languid laugh. 'I didn't put my own name to it, however, because I was afraid it was a trifle sentimental, and I hate sentiment. Indeed, to say the truth—it was a cruel trick, perhaps, but I imitated many of Stone's little mannerisms, because I wanted people to think it was really Stone himself who wrote it. But for all that, I believe it all—every word of it, I assure you, Miss Meysey.'

'It was a lovely article,' Winifred cried, enthusiastically. 'Papa read it, and was quite enchanted with it. He said it was so sensible—just what he's always thought about marriage himself, though he never could get anybody else to agree with him. And I liked it too, if you won't think it dreadfully presumptuous of a girl to say so. I thought it took such a grand, beautiful, ethereal point of view, all up in the clouds, you know, with no horrid earthy materialism or nonsense of any sort to clog and spoil it. I think it was splendid, all that you said about its being treason to the race to take account of wealth or position, or prospects or connections, or any other worldly consideration, in choosing a husband or wife for one's self—and that one ought rather to be guided by instinct alone, because instinct—or love, as we call it—was the voice of nature speaking within us.—Papa said that was beautifully put. And I thought it was really true as well. I thought it was just what a great prophet would have said if he were alive to say it; and that the man who wrote it'—She paused, breathless, partly because she was quite abashed by this time at her own temerity, and partly because Hugh Massinger, wicked man! was actually smiling a covert smile through the corners of his mouth at her youthful enthusiasm.

The pause sobered him. 'Miss Meysey,' he broke in, with unwonted earnestness, and with a certain strange tinge of subdued melancholy in his tremulous voice, 'I didn't mean to laugh at you. I really believe it. I believe in my heart every single word of what I said there. I believe a man—or a woman either—ought to choose in marriage just the one other special person towards whom their own hearts inevitably

lead them. I believe it all—I believe it without reserve. Money or rank, or connection or position, should be counted as nothing. We should go simply where nature leads us; and nature will never lead us astray. For nature is merely another name for the will of Heaven made clear within us.'

Ingenuous youth blushed itself crimson. 'I believe so too,' the timid girl answered in a very low voice and with a heaving bosom.

He looked her through and through with his large dark eyes. She shrank and fluttered before his searching glance. Should he put out a velvet paw for his mouse now, or should he play with it artistically a little longer? Too much precipitancy spoils the fun. Better wait till the *Echoes from Callimachus* had arrived. They were very fetching. And then, besides—besides, he was not entirely without a conscience. A man should think neither of wealth nor position, nor prospects nor connections, in choosing himself a partner for life. His own heart led him straight towards Elsie, not towards Winifred. Could he turn his back upon it, with those words on his lips, and trample poor Elsie's tender heart under foot ruthlessly? Principle demanded it; but he had not the strength of mind to follow principle at that precise moment. He looked long and deep into Winifred's eyes. They were pretty blue eyes, though pale and mawkish by the side of Elsie's. Then he said with a sudden downcast, half-awkward glance—that consummate actor—'I think we ought to go back to your mother now, Miss Meysey.'

Winifred sighed. Not yet! Not yet! But he had looked at her hard! he had fluttered and trembled! He was summoning up courage. She felt sure of that. He didn't venture as yet to lay siege to her openly. Still, she was sure he did really like her; just a little bit, if only a little.

Next morning, as she strolled alone on the lawn, a village boy in a corduroy suit came lounging up from the inn, in rustic *insouciance*, with a small parcel dangling by a string from his little finger. She knew the boy, and called him quickly towards her. 'Dick,' she cried, 'what's that you've got there?'

The boy handed it to her with a mysterious nod. 'It's for you, miss,' he said, screwing up his face sideways into a most excruciating pantomimic expression of the profoundest secrecy. 'The gentleman at our 'ouse—'im with the black moustarche, you know—'e told me to give it you into your own 'ands, if so be as I could manage to catch you alone anyways. 'E was very pertickler about your own 'ands. An' I needn't wait: there ain't no answer.'

Winifred tore the packet open with trembling hands. It was a neat little volume, in a dainty delicate sage-green cover—*Echoes from Callimachus, and other Poems*; by Hugh Massinger, sometime Fellow of Oriol College, Oxford. She turned at once with a flutter from the title-page to the fly-leaf: A Mdlle Winifred Meysey; Hommage de l'auteur.' She only waited a moment to slip a shilling into Dick's hand, and then rushed up, all crimson with delight, into her own bedroom. Twice she pressed the flimsy little sage-green volume in an ecstasy to her lips; then she laid it hastily in the bottom of a drawer, under a careless pile of handkerchiefs and lace bodices.

She wouldn't tell even Elsie of that tardy much-prized birthday gift. No one but herself must ever know Hugh Massinger had sent her his volume of poems.

When Dick returned to the inn ten minutes later, environed in a pervading odour of peppermint, the indirect result of Winifred Meysey's shilling, Hugh called him in lazily with his quiet authoritative air to the prim little parlour, and asked him in an undertone to whom he had given the precious parcel.

'To the young lady 'erself,' Dick answered confidentially, thrusting the bull's-eye with his tongue into his pouched cheek. 'An' I give it to 'er be'ind the laylacs, too, where nobody in the world never seen us.'

'Dick,' Hugh Massinger said, in a profoundly persuaded and sententious voice, laying his hand magisterially on the boy's shoulder, 'you're a sharp lad; and if you develop your talents steadily in this direction, you may rise in time from the distinguished post of gentleman's gentleman to be a private detective or confidential agent, with an office of your own at the top of Regent Street. Dick, say nothing about this on any account to anybody; and there, my boy—there's half-a-crown for you.'

'The young lady give me a shillin' already,' Dick replied with alacrity, pocketing the coin with a broad grin. Business was brisk indeed this morning.

'The young lady was well advised,' Hugh answered grimly. 'They're cheap at the price—dirt cheap, I call it, those immortal poems—with an autograph inscription by the bard in person.—And I've done a good stroke of business myself too. The *Echoes from Callimachus* are a capital landing-net. If they don't succeed in bringing her out, all flapping, on the turf, gaffed and done for, a pretty speckled prey, why, no angler on earth that ever fished for women will get so much as a tiny rise out of her.—It's a very fair estate still, is Whitestrاند. "Paris vaut bien une messe," said Henri. I must make some little sacrifices myself if I want to conquer Whitestrاند fair and even.'

Paris vaut bien une messe, indeed. Was Whitestrاند worth sacrificing Elsie Challoner's heart for?

H. M. S. V I C T O R Y.

ROUND the memory of none of our old warships gather such hallowing associations as round those which have made the name of *Victory* a household word wherever the English tongue is spoken. Its mention calls up of their own accord in every Englishman's mind thoughts of Nelson and Trafalgar's 'crowning mercy;' but that should not be all. For its own sake, the name of *Victory* ought to have a hardly less weighty claim on our affectionate regard. Few of our battle-ships of renown, if any, can boast a name of such distinguished ancestry.

The *Navy List* gives as the distinguished services of ships named *Victory*, four of our proudest sea triumphs: 'Defeat of the Spanish Armada (flagship of Sir J. Hawkins), 1588. (Flag) *Victory* over the French off La Hogue

(1692). Jervis's victory over the Spanish off Cape St Vincent (1797). (Flag) Trafalgar (1805).' This is indeed a noble record, yet it is incomplete. 'The names of battles,' allowed as distinctions by the Admiralty, 'are those only of acknowledged victories, and where either the opposing forces have been equal or the enemy has been the stronger.' Such is the wording of the recent royal warrant authorising the Navy to record the war-service of each ship after the vessel's name in the *List*, just as the war-services of each regiment have always been recorded after its title in the *Army List*. But the official record of the battle-honours awarded to successive ships named *Victory* omits all mention of several important engagements in which they took a prominent part. Under Blake, Monk, Keppel, Howe, Hood, St Vincent, the *Victory* did the state right good service.

There have been five *Victories* in all in the service since 1570, when the first of the name was launched. As each, from old age, or whatever cause, was struck out of the list of the navy, a new one as speedily as possible seems to have been built, keeping unbroken the continuity of the series.

The first *Victory* is described in the *Archæologia* as being a vessel of eight hundred tons, with a complement of four hundred men—two hundred and sixty-eight seamen, one hundred soldiers, and thirty-two gunners—and armed with fifty-two guns. These last, before the ship disappears from the active list in 1624, were increased to sixty—the number carried by a first-rate of the period—and consisted for the most part of culverins (eighteen-pounders) and demi-culverins (nine-pounders), as broadside guns; with a few heavier pieces, set down as 'cannon-petro,' firing a stone shot of sixty-three pounds-weight, for long-range practice. As a 'shipp-royall of ye Queene's Navie,' and the third largest in the service, the *Victory*, in 1588, bore the flag of Rear-admiral John Hawkins in the fleet which defeated the Spanish Armada. For the distinguished share that his vessel took during the first four days of the running-fight up the Channel, Hawkins—while the fleet was still in the presence of the enemy, off the Sussex coast—received, along with Frobisher, the special honour of knighthood at the hand of the Lord High Admiral himself. Elizabeth, too, afterwards warmly commended the gallant services of the *Victory* during that fateful July week.

As to the subsequent history of this vessel, not much information can be gleaned anywhere. Contemporary documents record its name as the flagship in an abortive expedition to the Azores and coast of Spain in 1589, under the Earl of Cumberland, which resulted in the capture of a number of treasure-laden galleons and spice-ships from Manila. But sickness broke out on board, and the expedition had to return with less than half its numbers. The *Victory* seems to have been put out of commission after this and laid up in ordinary; for there is no mention of the vessel's name in any extant list of ships which took part in the numerous expeditions against the Spaniards under Drake, Essex, and Raleigh, between 1590 and 1603, though it is to be

found in the *Navy List* down to as late as 1624.

Phineas Pett, the great master-shipwright under James I. and his successor, in his manuscript autobiography records the launch at Woolwich, April 21, 1631, of the second *Victory*, a second-rate of five hundred and sixty tons, mounting fifty-two guns, and carrying two hundred and sixty men. This ship gained great distinction in Blake's various actions with the Dutch, notably in the indecisive engagement off Dover Roads, in November 1652, when with only thirty-seven sail he gave battle to Tromp's huge fleet of eighty. To the *Victory* in this fight is mainly due the credit of rescuing the admiral, whose flagship would have been overpowered by a number of the enemy's ships of heavier metal, had not the *Victory*, together with a sister vessel, the *Vanguard*, borne down and made the Dutchman sheer off. Again, in the next year the *Victory* bore a prominent share in Monk's great triumph off Camperdown, when the heroic Tromp met his death. So severely knocked about in these fights, however, had the brave little warship been, that its place in line of battle knew it no more. Though for thirty-six years the *Victory's* name still figures in the *Navy List*, the ship does not seem to have again been employed in active service. It is mentioned in the 'List of His Majesties Navie Royall' drawn up in 1660 at the instance of Pepys, on his entering on his duties at the Admiralty, as seaworthy; and again in 1668 in Pepys's own *Memoirs relating to the State of the Navy*, as in bad repair and laid up in harbour.

H.M.S. *Victory* the third—one of the finest hundred-gun first-rates of the time—seems to have been one of the new ships built by order of King William, about the year 1690. Its one recorded service is the battle off Cape La Hogue, May 19, 1692, as flagship to Admiral of the Blue, Sir John Ashly, commanding the lee squadron. From 1693, when the vessel would appear to have gone to sea for the last time, down to 1734, in the reign of George II., the *Victory* was kept laid up in ordinary, a poor old hulk, finally to be handed over to the breaker-up.

It is curious that from 1692 down to 1744, no mention is made in existing lists of the employment in the various naval expeditions of any of our first-rates. Not a single name of any vessel larger than a ninety-gun ship appears on the active list, though the *Britannia*, *Royal William*, *London*, *St Andrew*, *Royal Sovereign*, all of which fought at La Hogue with the *Victory*, one-hundred-gun first-rates, were new ships.

Of the fourth *Victory*, carrying one hundred and ten guns, little more is known than the story of the vessel's mysterious and tragic fate. Launched at Portsmouth in 1737, it was considered, during its brief seven years' existence, the premier flagship of the royal navy and the finest first-rate afloat. To judge by the splendid model of the vessel in the naval museum at Greenwich Hospital, this encomium was fully deserved, and is in no degree an exaggeration. The ship was the largest hitherto built, of nineteen hundred and twenty tons, one hundred and seventy-five feet in length of keel, and fifty and a half feet in breadth, by twenty feet deep. Under the flag of Admiral Sir John Balchen, a veteran of dis-

tinguished career, the *Victory*, with a fleet of thirteen other sail of the line, had been despatched, in September 1744, to raise the blockade of a flotilla of storeships for Gibraltar, which a powerful French squadron had shut up in the Tagus. After successfully performing his mission, and escorting the storeships into the Mediterranean, Balchen was on his way home, when, on October 3d, a terrific storm in the Channel scattered his ships. Some were dismasted, and others had to heave their guns overboard, but eventually all reached port in safety—except one. The flagship, with the venerable admiral (aged seventy-five), on board, and a crew of one thousand, including a number of midshipmen of the best families in England, was never heard of again. The *Victory* is supposed to have struck on the Gaskets, off Alderney; for during the night of the 3d, heavy distress-guns were heard in that direction by the islanders, who, however, owing to the violence of the storm, were powerless to render aid.

The fifth *Victory*, the last of the series, Nelson's immortal flagship, was laid down at Chatham in 1759, from designs by Sir Thomas Slade, and launched on May 17, 1765. Its dimensions were two thousand one hundred and sixty-four tons, one hundred and eighty-six feet length of keel, and fifty-two and a half feet of breadth by twenty-one and a half of depth; giving the *Victory* once more the distinction of being the largest and finest ship of war yet constructed. One point worthy of note in connection with the *Victory* is, that while the ship turned out to be perhaps the most perfect and smartest line-of-battle man-of-war England ever possessed, try as they might, our naval constructors never could manage to build another exactly similar or of equal efficiency. The great success which the *Victory* proved—as evidenced by her sobriquet of 'the smartest three-decker afloat'—is made still more remarkable when one considers the low ebb at which the art of naval construction was between 1740 and 1790. Our home-built vessels were surpassed, both for speed and manœuvring capabilities, by the ships of Spain and France during this period. Indeed, the best ships in the British service were either captured vessels, recommissioned under our flag, or else vessels built with slavish exactness on the lines of these. On the other hand, our own ships, when taken, were invariably rated in the enemy's service in a lower grade than they originally occupied.

The active career of the present *Victory* dates its beginning from 1778, when the *Victory* flew Admiral Keppel's flag in his encounter with the French fleet under the Comte D'Orvilliers, off Ushant. The odds were thirty-eight sail of the line on the French side against thirty on the British; yet D'Orvilliers shrunk from engaging. It was only when Keppel had at last gained the weather-gage, that the Frenchman could be brought to show fight. During the three hours' broadside-to-broadside fighting that ensued, until, under cover of the fast-closing-in night, D'Orvilliers slunk back into Brest, the *Victory* was in the thick of the fray, receiving very serious damage. Next, in 1782, the ship figures as flagship to Lord Howe—in the place of the ill-fated *Royal George*, which capsized at Spithead while fitting out for this very service—when he relieved

Gibraltar, and finally raised the long three years' siege. Ten years later, on the outbreak, in 1793, of the war with the French revolutionary government, the *Victory* was once more in commission with the Mediterranean fleet, and took part in the operations at Toulon as Lord Hood's flagship. From Toulon the British fleet proceeded to the reduction of the island of Corsica; and while cruising in these waters, the flagship, by a strange coincidence, had the narrowest escape of suffering the fate of Admiral Balchen's hapless *Victory* in a storm of unusual violence. But the stout-timbered old vessel managed to weather the tempest in safety, and rejoined her consorts off Ajaccio.

It was in this expedition that Nelson, as captain of the *Agamemnon*, sixty-four, first made the official acquaintance of the *Victory*. At Trafalgar, eleven years later, the *Agamemnon* was again serving in his command, joining the fleet, to Nelson's expressed satisfaction, just before the battle. Lord Howe's victory off Ushant on 'the glorious 1st of June' was fought by the Channel fleet. On Sir John Jervis taking over command of the Mediterranean fleet, he hoisted his flag in the *Victory*, destined to win more laurels in the great battle off Cape St Vincent in 1797. Nelson's triumph off the Nile was gained with a squadron of thirteen seventy-fours, detached 'on particular service' from the main Mediterranean fleet, which was lying at the time in the Tagus. So the glories of the 1st of August 1798 do not add another leaf to the *Victory's* chaplet. Indeed, this was the most unhappy period of the brave old battle-ship's career. From 1798 to 1801 the *Victory* was temporarily struck out of the *Navy List*, being employed as a convict hospital hulk, until the attention of the Admiralty was drawn to the fate of so favourite a ship.

We now come to the most illustrious portion of the *Victory's* long career. After being laid up at Portsmouth for some months after the truce of Amiens, the outbreak of hostilities in 1803 once again saw the *Victory* in commission, as flagship on the Mediterranean station. The command of the fleet was given to Nelson, with special instructions to watch the Toulon fleet. Throughout 1804 he kept cruising on and off the port, trying to induce the French admiral, Latouche-Treville, to come out and try the chances of battle; but all to no purpose, until Villeneuve had taken over the Toulon fleet, with positive instructions from Napoleon to put to sea at the first opportunity. In January 1805, taking advantage of a storm that drove the British fleet off the station, he contrived to do so; but Nelson was speedily on his track. Eastward he steered, on the lookout for the French, and then back to Gibraltar—but no Villeneuve was sighted. All through the cruise, every ship was kept prepared night and day for instant battle, ready to beat to quarters at any moment. One episode of the hunt after the French was the passage through the Strait of Messina, 'between Scylla and Charybdis,' by the whole British fleet, led by the *Victory*—'a feat unprecedented in naval history.' Nelson's justification to the Admiralty at home of the perilous exploit was that, 'although the danger from the rapidity of the current was great, yet the object was equally great.' From the Mediterranean, Nelson followed the French

to the West Indies, and then back to Europe. Twice during the long chase, the hostile fleets were on the point of anticipating Trafalgar: once in February, in the Mediterranean, off Sardinia, as they were about to cross each other's path, when a storm drove Villeneuve back to port for a hasty refit; the second time, in June, in the West Indies, off Port Royal, by a strange hap, exactly where Rodney had gained his glorious victory over De Grasse. Nelson was steering for this very spot, calculating that the French must pass close by there, when a report, which turned out to be false, that they had been seen somewhere else, drew him in another direction. The French all the time were in the neighbourhood of Port Royal. What the result of this last fight would have been, it is hard to guess, seeing that Nelson had only with him ten sail of the line and three frigates, against Villeneuve's eighteen sail of the line and ten frigates. That it would have gone hard with the *Victory*, for the French to a great extent identified the ship with Nelson himself, we have the hero's own evidence. 'The French,' he said, 'meant to have made a dead set at the *Victory*.'

Every one knows the story of the affecting scene on the beach at Southsea, when Nelson went on board the *Victory*, on September 14, 1805. The actual spot at which he stepped on to his barge was for long marked by a monument—the *Victory's* sheet-anchor, now a trophy on the Southsea Esplanade. But the scene on board the flagship when Nelson joined the fleet off Cadiz on the 28th of September was still more impressive and unprecedented than the departure from Portsmouth. 'The officers who came on board to welcome his return forgot his rank as commander-in-chief in the enthusiasm with which they greeted him.'

And now the 21st of October has come at last—

At the head of the line goes the *Victory*,
With Nelson on the deck,
And on his breast his orders shine
Like the stars on a shattered wreck.

Leading the weather column, the *Victory* bore down on the combined French and Spanish fleets a little before mid-day. 'The action'—Collingwood's graphic despatch to the Admiralty reads—'began at twelve o'clock by the leading ships of the columns breaking through the enemy's line, the commander-in-chief [*Victory*] about the tenth ship from the van, the second in command [Collingwood himself, in the *Royal Sovereign*] about the twelfth from the rear; the succeeding ships breaking through in all parts astern of their leaders, and engaging the enemy at the muzzles of their guns.' As the *Victory*, in an almost dead calm, slowly forged down on the semicircle in which the combined French and Spanish fleets were drawn up, the ship was the mark for a heavy concentrated fire. The *Bucentaur*, eighty, on board of which, though without hoisting his flag, was Admiral Villeneuve, led off, firing the first shot at half-a-mile range. It fell short. A second, three minutes later, struck the water close alongside; the third went over the ship; the fourth through the topsail. A pause followed, and then, as if by prearranged signal, eight ships opened broadside after broadside on the *Victory*.

At six hundred yards off, the flagship's mizzen-top was shot away, and her wheel, so that the *Victory* had to be steered by the relieving tackles, from below. But though severely damaged in her hull, and with fifty men struck down before she replied with a single shot, the *Victory* continued her advance in scornful silence. The vessel's sails were in tatters, and her foremast tottering, as she reached the enemy's line, steering to pass astern of the *Bucentaur*. On this ship the *Victory's* energies were first concentrated, a carronade loaded with a sixty-eight-pound shot and five hundred musket-balls into the *Bucentaur's* stern-sheet cabin windows leading off. Then, as the mighty three-decker swept past, the whole larboard broadside, every gun either doubly or trebly shotted, was poured into the *Bucentaur*.

Through the darkening smoke the thunder broke O'er her deck from a hundred guns.

Rendered *hors-de-combat* at once, with twenty guns dismounted and four hundred of her crew killed outright, the hapless *Bucentaur* heeled over on one side, and lay with a deep list, helpless on the water, for the greater part of the action. The *Victory's* starboard broadside was divided between the *Redoubtable*—which ship at once shut up her gunports, and henceforward only fired musketry from her tops—and Nelson's old antagonist, that 'Anak of the sea,' the *Santissima Trinidad*. How the flagship became locked to the *Redoubtable* throughout the greater part of the action, and the story of Nelson's death, there is no need to repeat here.

The *Victory* bore the hero's remains to England; and at the earliest moment afterwards that the exigencies of the service permitted, in 1812, was withdrawn finally from the active list, and placed in thorough repair, to be preserved at Portsmouth as a memento of England's great sea-captain and his greatest triumph.

HELEN'S ESCAPE.

CHAPTER II.

FROM Paris besieged and terrorised, to quiet, pleasant Kensham was a change I duly appreciated. We led a very tranquil life—that is, my wife, my daughter Helen, and myself; for our neighbourhood, although within easy distance of London, had not yet given a sign of expanding into a fashionable suburb; we knew everybody, and very little served to excite and amuse us.

Five years passed since my life in the Rue de Douai; and Helen, at that time a bread-and-butter miss of awkward appearance, had blossomed into a pretty girl of eighteen. We had many friends about; but we were most intimate, Helen especially, with a gentleman named Corner, an Australian of great wealth, who lived with an aunt in an old-fashioned house not far from ours. When I say that John Corner was a fine-looking, black-bearded man, who stood six feet high, was an excellent athlete and a more than average scholar, I describe a man after whom many a fair Surrey lass sighed in vain, and whom I regarded as a very good husband in prospect for my Helen. I would not know if any form of betrothal had passed between them, but they were constantly billing

and cooing, and I was very satisfied with the arrangement, for, although I did not deem wealth a *sine quid non* for my future son-in-law, I was not a rich man, and I would not have parted with her to one who could not keep her as I should have wished. When I saw that in the ordinary course of events nothing was likely to prevent Helen from becoming Mrs Corner, I determined that by no fault of mine should she prove to be unworthy of the man she married. So, as I abominated the system of sending girls to boarding-schools, I had her taught French and music and the usual curriculum at home by the best masters and mistresses obtainable.

They were a great trouble, these various professors, the French masters especially so. If I got one who promised well, just as he was getting into good swing, something—conscription or dying relations or *mal de pays*—would call him away. Willing and able men with provincial accents abounded; but, as I was a good French scholar myself, I determined that Helen should be Parisian or nothing. Finally, Monsieur Pontneuf arrived. I got him through the French Consulate in Finsbury Circus; and I was introduced to a military-looking man, broad in the shoulder, and thin in the flank, with small hands and feet, and a pleasing, although rather melancholy face of the intellectual Gallic type. He could speak but very little English; his references were exceptionally good; and, from a certain reserve and hauteur in his manner, I guessed at once that he was an imperialist gentleman driven to poverty and exile by the irony of Fate. My wife and Helen were charmed with him, and he very soon became established in our little world on a footing of almost familiar friendship. But he never took advantage of the favourable impression he had made; and after being with us three months, he was as punctilious in the respect he paid my wife and daughter as on the day of his introduction.

There was a tone of sadness about his reserve which interested me, and I felt sure that he was a man with a history, although, of course, I never presumed to broach the topic. Considering his nationality, he had a singular aversion to gaiety and social amusement, and firmly declined my repeated invitations for him to join in such rollicking diversion as our neighbourhood offered. He spent his leisure time in wandering about, cigar in mouth and hands folded behind his back, engaged in deep thought, and very soon obtained the nickname amongst the irreverent local youth of 'Dismal Froggy.'

It may be imagined that amongst ourselves we often talked about Monsieur Pontneuf, and tried to build up from our imaginations the history or the romance which had made him so solitary and pensive in his manner. At length Helen seemed to throw some light upon the matter, for she said at dinner one evening: 'Papa, what do you think I have found out about Monsieur Pontneuf?'

Of course I could not divine what it was.

'Why,' she replied, 'that he has a sweet-heart.'

'Impossible! Monsieur Pontneuf is fifty, if he is a day, and what girl is there about here who would fall in love with a middle-aged Frenchman?'

'I'll tell you who,' replied Helen—'Gabrielle, Miss Corner's French maid. I've seen them more than once together, and the servant from the Cedars brought Monsieur a note to-day.'

The notion seemed to me rather ridiculous that our solemn professor should have won the affection of the laughing, dark-eyed Gabrielle, who was, moreover, spoken of as the flame of John Corner's coachman; but the evidence of my own eyes soon proved that there was at anyrate some foundation for Helen's assertion. Upon more than one occasion of an evening I met Monsieur Pontneuf and Gabrielle together, although, from an English point of view, their deportment did not convey the idea that they were sweethearting; indeed, Gabrielle seemed to me to hold Monsieur Pontneuf somewhat in awe, for I overheard her address him as 'Monsieur,' and her manner was very deferential.

Now, it was an invariable habit of mine on a summer evening to take a stroll out of doors with my cigar or pipe, a habit I had contracted in Paris, where one never dreams of passing a close evening shut up in a warm house. A very favourite haunt of mine on these occasions was a path running along a feeble stream which we dignified by the title of 'the river,' leading to a sequestered summer-house apparently constructed for the express convenience of lovers, who, on Saturday or Sunday nights especially, patronised it largely. On other nights I generally had it to myself, and always stopped there for a few minutes to sentimentalise over the beauty of the moonlit scene spread before me. One night I became aware that it was occupied, from the sound of voices within, and as one of the voices was that of Monsieur Pontneuf, in spite of my abhorrence of eavesdropping, I paused and listened. He was speaking in French, and I managed to catch this scrap of conversation: 'Then, I am to understand that, so far as you know, he was in Paris in the year 1871, and that, when you entered his service, he was living near Amiens?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the voice of Gabrielle.

'Mind,' said Monsieur Pontneuf, 'don't let me catch you mistaking facts, or it will go very hard with you.'

'I am telling you truly, so far as I know, as I am a good Catholic,' replied the girl.

'He left Amiens hurriedly one night?' said Monsieur.

'Yes, sir. We were at supper in the kitchen when he came in, and told me to pack up as soon as I could, for we had to catch the English mail-train at ten o'clock.'

'Did he seem flurried or confused?'

'Not particularly, sir. He was pale and spoke rapidly—that was all.'

'I suppose you never heard him allude to a Madame Arosa?'

'You mean the old lady who?—'

'Yes, yes—of course I do.'

'Never, sir.'

'Of course nobody knows that you are in the habit of meeting me? At anyrate he does not?'

'I don't think so, sir; I am very cautious.'

There was a movement of feet in the summer-house, which warned me to get out of the way, so I slid behind a clump of bushes, and presently the two appeared in the moonlight.

'Report to me all you see and hear,' said Monsieur.'

'I will, sir.'

The Frenchman slipped something which chinked like coin into her hand, and they separated, he taking the path leading to the village, she going in the opposite direction towards the Cedars. From this conversation it was quite clear to me that whatever might be their relationship to one another, Monsieur Pontneuf and Gabrielle were not lovers; and, putting circumstances together, I made up my mind that my professor, like so many others in his calling, was a political refugee, either Napoleonist or Communist; and I knew very well that the French republican government, to whom both were equally hateful, was sparing no pains or expense to find out the whereabouts and to keep itself informed of the actions of all such offenders. Evidently, he was making use of the girl Gabrielle as a spy and informer; or it might even be that he was engaged in a plot against the government. During my artist life in Paris and London, I had been brought into constant contact with this class of gentry; and I knew that we should often shudder if we knew what sort of individuals make use of our free island as an asylum and live amongst us as harmless bread-winners. However, Bonapartist or Communist, criminal or innocent, Monsieur Pontneuf performed his duty to me satisfactorily and thoroughly; and it was not for me to pry behind the scenes of his life. I found John Corner in the smoking-room when I arrived at home; but I said nothing to him about what I had overheard during my walk.

'Well,' he said, 'you know I don't want to meddle in your affairs; but I've been rather put out and puzzled lately about a matter concerning which perhaps you can enlighten me; I mean about this Monsieur Pontneuf, who gives Helen her French lessons. Do you know anything about him?'

'Nothing more than that he was accredited to me by the French Consulate in London, and that he showed me very high testimonials.—But why do you ask?'

'Well,' he replied, 'because there is something going on between him and my aunt's maid Gabrielle. She has never asked so frequently for leave to go out of an evening as she has since Monsieur Pontneuf came here.'

'Perhaps there is a little affection between them.' Even to Jack Corner, whom I loved as my own son, I did not feel justified in confiding what I had chanced to overhear in the summer-house.

'I don't think so,' said Jack, shaking his head. 'He's a middle-aged man, and she's a mere girl of eighteen. Besides, she has never spoken to my aunt about it, and servant-girls always like to confide these little matters to mistresses who take an interest in their welfare. No; I think he is what we don't suspect him to be—a plotter perhaps, or a proscribed Communist leader.'

'It doesn't much matter if he is, so long as he performs his duties.'

'No. But I don't care about our maid being mixed up in this sort of business,' said Jack; 'for not only does it distract her attention from her duties, but it might involve us in unpleasantness.'

'Well, I don't know how we can find out; and I must admit that I fail to see how we can suffer by whatever two French people choose to concoct together.'

But it suddenly struck me that Jack must have seen me near the summer-house, for he was looking curiously at me, as much as to say: 'I should like to ask you about it, but I don't like to.' However, I was resolved not to say anything unless pressed, and changed the conversation. But I noticed that Jack seemed uncomfortable during the remainder of our talk, and I was puzzled to account for it. Our conversation at length turned on the trips abroad we were severally going to make during the next week—he to Switzerland, for a clamber amongst the High Alps; I and my ladies to Paris, for the important purpose of choosing the trousseau for Helen's wedding, which was to be celebrated in the late autumn.

But I saw that his mind was uneasy about Gabrielle and Monsieur Pontneuf, for, as we were bidding each other good-night at the door, he said: 'You keep an eye on Monsieur Pontneuf, or perhaps you will be astonished one of these fine days.'

'What do you mean, Jack?'

'Why, that I believe him to be nothing less than one of these Socialist dynamitards, and that he is in the thick of a plot against our own government here at home.'

PAGANINI.

TOWARDS the close of last century, an Italian woman of Genoa had a dream, and it seemed to her, as she afterwards told her little son, as though white-winged seraphs approached her couch and predicted the advent of a child whose skill as a violinist would be so transcendent that the very spirits of earth and air would seem to acknowledge his sway. The child was Nicolo Paganini—the destined Hercules of the violin—born February 18, 1784.

Ere the poor little lad could plainly speak, his days of toil began. No sooner could he hold a violin, than his father proved himself an inexorable taskmaster; the boy was urged to intense and even dangerous application; rare precocity was stimulated by privation of food, and thus the sickly child developed into a suffering man. It was in 1793 that Paganini made his first public appearance at Genoa, and played a series of variations on the air *La Carmagnole*, which had everywhere accompanied the victorious banners of the armies of the French Republic. Up to fifteen he remained quiescent under the yoke of his avaricious and tyrannical parent; but no sooner did he find in the exercise of his wondrous talent a means of delivery from the house of bondage, than he broke wildly from all restraint, and plunged into every form of dissipation, indulging especially in gambling, a universal vice in Italy, as it was indeed throughout the whole of Europe. Pitted against past masters of the craft, Paganini's means were rapidly exhausted. Jewels, watch, rings, even his fiddle, were disposed of; and he was indebted to the kindness of a French gentleman for the loan of a favourite Guarnerius, upon which he ever afterwards played, to enable him to fulfil an engage-

ment at a concert at Leghorn. On this occasion, Paganini performed a series of most difficult studies, which he had composed in still earlier years, and his skill was rewarded with triumphant applause. 'Never again,' replied the enthusiastic Frenchman, as the young artist hastened to return the violin, 'will I profane the strings which your fingers have touched; that instrument is yours.' This was the violin which Paganini bequeathed to his native town of Genoa, where it is still shown under a glass case in the municipal palace.

In 1805 Paganini accepted the position of director of music and conductor of the orchestra in the service of the Princess Maria, afterwards Grand-duchess of Tuscany, sister of Napoleon, and wife of Bacciochi; and it was at this period of his early career that he first elaborated many of those peculiarities, such as performances upon one string, which afterwards became so characteristic of his style. At Ferrara he had a narrow escape from being lynched. It had been arranged that a certain Signora Marcolini should take part in his concert, but at the last she left him in the lurch, and a danseuse with a pretty voice was good enough to come to the rescue. Nevertheless, the disappointed public hissed and hooted her down, and Paganini resolved to be avenged. At the close of the concert, he proposed to amuse the audience by imitating on the violin the sounds of various animals. Having reproduced the mewling of a cat, the barking of a dog, the crowing of a cock, &c., he suddenly burst forth into a perfect imitation of the donkey's bray; and the musician bowed once again, as he added with his cynical smile: 'This for those who hissed before and laughed.' The result was electrical. The Ferrarese—who enjoyed a widespread reputation for stupidity—took the joke as especially personal to themselves; in a moment the pit rose to a man, charged through the orchestra, scaled the stage, and would have killed Paganini, had he not precipitately fled. One evening, at a concert in Leghorn, he came upon the stage limping from the effects of a nail which had run into his foot, and there was some tittering among the audience. Just as he was beginning to play, the candles fell out of his music desk, and once more there was an uproar. Suddenly the first string broke, and the merriment waxed yet louder; but, to use the words in which he naively told the story of himself, 'I played the piece on three strings, and the sneers quickly changed into boisterous applause.'

Early in 1828, Paganini, at the request of Prince Metternich, for the first time visited Vienna. Men and women of all classes of society went mad about him: verses were poured forth in his honour, snuff-boxes and cigar-cases displayed his portrait; gloves, rings, stockings, coats, everything in the shop-windows was à la Paganini; a good stroke at billiards was called 'un coup à la Paganini'; dishes were named after him; and an enthusiastic cabman, who drove him to his concerts, besought of him permission to paint his cab in the Italian colours and to print upon it the words, 'Cabriolet de Paganini.' These extraordinary successes, however, served only to give new currency to the tales of crime and *diablerie*, which had so often circulated in connection with him. To atone for the base assassination of a rival, it was said that he had passed years within the

walls of a dungeon with nothing but his violin to mitigate the rigours of captivity. He was a captain of banditti—a deadly duellist—in league with the Prince of Darkness. In England, some of the people who thronged his passage to and from the theatre sought to discover, by touching him, whether he were really a being of flesh and blood; and an Italian lady who followed him one evening to the stage-door, where his cab stood in readiness, hesitated not to avow that his feet never touched the ground, and that he was borne away through the air in a chariot of fire, drawn by a pair of black horses! Yet all the stories told of him were not unpleasing, for there were many who regarded him as an angelic being whose mission it was to vouchsafe to mortals some foretaste of the heavenly harmonies which will be hereafter; while others spoke of a choir of sweet-toned spirits hidden within the instrument as he played. One day, as he walked in the streets of Vienna, Paganini saw a poor boy scraping some Neapolitan airs before the windows of a great house. Instantly crossing the road, the great artist entered into conversation with him, and ascertained that he maintained a sick and widowed mother by his scanty earnings as an itinerant musician. Taking the boy's fiddle and bow, Paganini commenced to play. A crowd rapidly collected; and when he concluded the performance, he handed round the hat, and made a collection, which he presented to the young Italian, amid the cheers of all assembled, remarking as he did so: 'I hope I've done a good turn to that little animal.'

The singular personality of Paganini was displayed no less conspicuously in private than in artistic life. His existence alternated between excitement and exhaustion. He would sit sometimes for hours wrapped in moody silence, and at other times surrender himself to the wildest effervescence of gaiety. Full of contradictions, he was especially talkative when travelling; and though, latterly, the delicacy of his lungs affected his voice, he loved to talk loud and fast when the rattle of the wheels over the pavement was most deafening. He journeyed with the utmost speed from place to place, and to the charms of scenery or the strange sights of foreign towns was equally insensible. In the hottest weather, he would wrap a furred pelisse round him, and huddle himself up in a corner of the carriage, with every window closed. Arrived at his hotel, he would have all the windows open, and called it taking an air-bath. But he never ceased to anathematise the climates of Germany and France, and declared that Italy was the only country fit to live in. Soup or a cup of chocolate was all that he took before commencing a day's journey; and at night, a light supper, or oftentimes a cup of chamomile tea, was sufficient for his needs. The conqueror of Scinde himself had no greater contempt for a superfluity of baggage than Paganini. A coat, a few changes of linen, and a hatbox—a carpet-bag and a shabby trunk, wherein travelled his beloved Guarnerius, his jewels, and his money—constituted the whole of his impedimenta. His papers and accounts were thrust into a small red pocket-book in most admired disorder. He was all but ignorant of arithmetic; and his business calculations, though sufficiently accurate, were effected by methods purely original. Of general

knowledge, in fact, he had little or none; books to him were a *terra incognita*, and political events devoid of interest. To himself, he was the only important fact everywhere, and the newspapers he read merely for the sake of what might personally concern him. In his own quarters, Paganini maintained the strictest solitude, and lounged on the sofa the greater part of the day. Save at concerts, and occasionally at rehearsals, his violin was never touched; he had worked enough, he would say, and the season for repose was come.

Through the events of his German campaign, where Prague, Dresden, Berlin, and Warsaw were in succession visited, we may not follow him, but will rejoin him at Paris, where, on the 9th of March 1831, he gave his first concert at the Opera House. Paganini was then forty-seven years old, and his appearance was likened to that of some shadow from the demon world. A lean, gaunt, haggard figure, with wan thin face, framed in long black hair straggling down over his shoulders, and with a strange scornful smile hovering ever about his lips, he shuffled forward from the side-scenery to the footlights. The impression which he created on his first appearance is described as having amounted to a 'positive and universal frenzy,' and at the close of each piece the whole audience rose *en masse* to recall him.

About the middle of May, Paganini left Paris for London, and on the 3d of June he gave his first concert at the King's Theatre. Though the indescribable enthusiasm created by his playing is said to have been somewhat damped by the extravagant prices charged for admission, Paganini's tour through London and the provinces brought him a golden harvest; and it was calculated that, on one occasion, at Winchester, his own part of the performance, for which he received the sum of two hundred pounds, occupied just twenty-eight minutes. His greatest triumph, however, was probably achieved at Lord Holland's, when he was requested to improvise upon his violin the story of a son who, after murdering his father, leapt into a bottomless abyss with the girl who had refused to listen to the story of his love. Paganini stipulated for darkness; and so weird was the musical interpretation of the story that had been proposed to him, that many of the ladies fainted; and with the return of light, the scene in the concert chamber was likened to the appearance of a battlefield cumbered with the bodies of the slain! There is reason to believe that the proceeds of his performances in England amounted to twenty-four thousand pounds.

The remainder of his story is quickly told. Broken in health, and having acquired a large fortune by the exercise of his art, he bought, among other property in his native Italy, a charming country-seat near Parma, where, though he occasionally played at concerts chiefly for the benefit of the poor, he spent two or three years in comparative retirement. In 1836, however, he was induced to lend his name to the establishment of a gambling-room and concert-hall in Paris, called the Casino Paganini. The undertaking unfortunately proved a failure; and the fatigue of the journey which, in consequence of law proceedings, he was compelled to make to Paris, without doubt hastened his end. Fearing the effect of a northern winter, his medical

advisers recommended him to return to the south; and after a painful journey through France, he at length arrived at Nice, where, on the night of the 27th of May 1840, he quietly passed away. The last evening of his life, he would have no light in the room; but on suddenly awaking out of a peaceful sleep, he drew aside the curtains of his bed and gazed forth into the unclouded glory of an Italian night. His window was open, and the whispering of the breeze among the trees seemed to rouse within him the longing to render back again to nature somewhat of the sweet sensations she was bestowing upon him in that final hour. Yet, though the moon had risen, and was pouring a flood of radiance across the bed, to him everything seemed in shadow, for his eyes were dim. He extended his hand and grasped the beloved violin—the faithful friend which had so often been the soother of his troubles—and strove to bring some sound out of the instrument. But the magic power had for ever quitted his fingers, and falling back upon his pillow, he expired.

He left eighty thousand pounds, together with the title of Baron (conferred upon him in Germany), to his only son, Achille Paganini, the offspring of his union with Antonia Bianchi, a singer with whom he had long since quarrelled. Life for Paganini had indeed been a 'fitful fever,' and it seemed as though even his remains were not to be permitted to 'sleep well.' He died, it seems, unshriven and unfortified by the last sacraments of his Church; and he was, in consequence, refused burial in consecrated ground by the Bishop of Nice. The body was therefore transferred by sea from the lazaretto of Villa Franca to a country-seat in the neighbourhood of Genoa. Finally, owing to the strange and ghostly sounds—wailings of the unsatisfied spirit of the great musician—which it was affirmed were heard by night proceeding from the coffin, his friends obtained permission to inter the corpse near the village church adjoining his favourite residence, the Villa Gajona. It was not, however, until five years after his death, and then without any display, in conformity with the orders of government, that this tardy tribute was rendered to the remains of the immortal Paganini.

PARSON VENABLES' ADVENTURE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

MR and Mrs Venables drove on for a little way in silence. It was growing cold, and a thick rime appeared on the vicar's beard and hair and on his wife's shawl. Doubtless, Charles's tail and mane were completely silvered with it; but for some time past the pony had been hidden from the sight of the driver.

'If that was the great quoit, we should be near the cross-roads,' said the vicar.—'Hark! what is that noise?'

They both listened intently, and distinguished a man's voice, calling, as it seemed, to some animals. Judging by the loudness of the sound, it was not distant from them.

'It is probably Collins driving home his goats,' said the vicar. 'I wish we could make him hear us. Hardly any weather baffles him; the downs

are so familiar to these men who have been bred on them.—Halloa! Collins—hilliho!'

He shouted at the full power of his voice, and waited for an answer. An indistinct halloo came in reply, mingled with the barking of a dog; but the sound was evidently more distant than before, and in a moment it ceased altogether.

Mrs Venables began to whimper. 'I didn't think Collins would have left us like this!' she sobbed. 'Cruel man! he may find us dead in the morning.'

'Pooh, pooh!' said the vicar cheerfully; 'we shall be all right presently.—Here we are at the cross-roads, I declare. Now, we have only to turn up here and we shall be at home presently. Put your other shawl about you, my dear.—There! Now you are quite comfortable again.'

But, oddly enough, Charles declined to turn up the cross-road. He resisted stoutly every effort which his master made on the reins; and at last, by a strong tug of his muscular neck, he actually got his head round in the opposite direction, and trotted away at a sharp pace towards the quarter whence they had come.

'He's running away!' screamed the old lady. 'Hold him in! Pull him up!'

'What the mischief is he up to now?' exclaimed the vicar. 'I can't pull him up, my dear; his muscles are far stronger than mine.'

They were indeed; the bull-necked little beast had the power of ten ponies in his chest and loins, when he chose to put it forth; and a much stronger man than the vicar would scarcely have succeeded in holding him in, when his mind was bent so obstinately on running away as it was at this moment. He rattled along at a great pace; never had he been known to go so fast; stone hedges and granite quoits would doubtless have appeared to fly behind, had it been possible to see them.

'It is useless,' said the vicar, laying down the reins in calm despair. 'I have no power over him. After all, animals are often much wiser than men; he may know better than we where he is going.'

Mrs Venables cowered closely to her husband's arm. 'I am afraid he will run up against something,' she said, in a timid whisper.

'I don't think he will,' rejoined the vicar; 'he is a sensible beast on the whole.'

It was not long before Charles came to a dead stop, so suddenly as to shake his master and mistress violently in their seats.

'Where are we now?' inquired the vicar, petulantly. 'Get on, you brute!' And he flicked Charles sharply with his whip. But Charles refused to stir: he stood like a solid rock, and neither threats nor entreaties had the smallest effect on him. The whip was equally ineffective; and the vicar turned towards his wife with a mournful shrug of the shoulders.

'He knows he is in some dangerous place, Theophilus,' said the old lady. 'Oh, I am so terrified! I daresay he is standing on the brink of an old mine-shaft. Don't beat him any more; he may throw us down some awful pit.'

'There's no knowing where he may have brought us, certainly,' the vicar admitted; and with that relapsed into silence.

Presently, Charles began to give signs of a most uncomfortable restlessness. He stamped impatiently on the ground, whinnied loudly, and jerked himself more than once in the shafts in such a way as to suggest very disagreeable possibilities in the event of his being really on the brink of some precipice.

'I don't like this,' said Mr Venables. 'I think I must unharness him; he will do some mischief, break the shafts, or upset us, perhaps.'

'Do be careful!' entreated his wife, seeing him preparing to dismount. 'I wish you would not get out.'

'Of course I shall be careful.' The answer came in an irritable tone, for the vicar's temper was beginning to give way under these accumulated trials. His fingers were chilled, and the straps and buckles slippery with the rime; but he succeeded at last in freeing Charles, who gave a snort of relief, and instantly trotted away without, apparently, the smallest thought for the safety of his companions in misfortune.

'Oh, he's gone!' exclaimed Mrs Venables, whom this desertion by their dumb companion seemed to strike with additional dismay. 'What on earth shall we do?'

'We had better shout, I suppose,' said her husband, getting into his seat again; 'there's a possibility, of course, that some one may hear us.'

They shouted together; the old lady's thin piping contrasted oddly with her husband's stentorian bellows. There was no reply, save that when the noise of their voices ceased, there appeared to be a mournful murmuring in the air, but that was probably imagination. They waited a few minutes and then called again more loudly; and this time there was an extraordinary answer. A loud rattling rending sound broke the stillness, there was a sudden crash, and a sound of voices: a light flashed; something hard and metallic was flung to the ground at no great distance from them; and then, with a scuttering of feet, everything died away into silence again.

Mrs Venables was too much frightened to speak; she clung closely to her husband's arm; and he himself was too much disconcerted for a moment to venture on speech.

'As to what that may have been, I can't venture a guess,' he said. 'It seems likely that we shall be here for some time, however. You had better put on all the wraps we can find.'

He rummaged about under the seat, and found a heavy carriage rug, which, when drawn up over them, promised to protect them very fairly from the cold.

'Come, it might be worse,' said the parson. 'I don't remember spending a night out of doors before: it will be a new experience.—Are you warm, my dear?'

Mrs Venables was very warm; in fact, she was clothed in so many shawls that nothing short of Arctic frost could have reached her. She was in fact comfortable enough; and as everything around was now profoundly quiet, she soon began to yield to the drowsiness induced by the excitement of the last hour. The parson made her as comfortable as he could, and sat thoughtfully considering their position. Reflection brought out no new facts. Nor did it offer any better solution of the existing difficulty, than that they

should sit still until something happened—for instance, until the day broke; though the unpleasant thought suggested itself that even then, unless the fog had lifted, their position would not be improved.

The situation was disagreeable enough; but the parson, who was not devoid of philosophy, was beginning to nod over it, while Mrs Venables was snoring loudly, when a step was heard by the side of the wheel, a light was flashed into the vicar's eyes, and a rough voice exclaimed: 'Why, master, what be 'ee sitting here for?'

'It's Hugh!' cried Mrs Venables, joyfully awaking in an instant from her slumber. 'O dear Hugh! how did you find us?'

'Ay, Hugh, where are we?' the vicar broke in. 'Did you come out to look for us? What a good fellow you are! Are you sure you know the way back?'

'Way back!' repeated Hugh contemptuously. 'Back where?'

'Where? Why, home!—to the vicarage, to be sure! Where else could we want to go at this time of night?'

'And where do 'ee think you be, then?' asked Hugh, still more contemptuously than before.

'Now do, like a good fellow, ask no more questions,' said the vicar, getting down from his seat; 'but show us the way back, unless it is too far to walk.'

'Well, I never knew the like of this!' said Hugh; and with that he laid his hand on his master's shoulder and guided him a few paces in advance of where the shafts of the pony-carriage touched the ground. 'There!' he said gruffly, 'what be that?'

'That's a wall, it seems,' said the vicar, considerably mystified.

'Ay,' said the man; 'and what be that?'

'A gate, as I live!' shouted the vicar—'my own gate, the vicarage gate.—Anna, we are at home!'

'Do you mean to tell me, Theophilus,' said the old lady in a tremulous voice, 'that I have been sitting screaming myself hoarse, and catching my death of cold at my own gate all the time?'

'I am afraid you have, my dear.—Ho, ho! what a joke this is!—You mustn't tell Hartle, Anna.—Let me help you out.'

'I can get out very well by myself,' said Mrs Venables testily; 'and as for helping me, you might have thought of that an hour ago, and saved me from this ridiculous position.'

'My dear,' said the vicar, rather dismayed at the suddenness of this attack, 'I did all I could.'

'Oh, I don't know,' his wife answered impatiently. 'We shall be the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood.—And what has become of Charles, I should like to know?'

'Yes, Hugh, what has become of Charles?' repeated the vicar, relieved to have the opportunity of changing the subject.

'In the paddock,' replied Hugh. 'Came in forty-five minutes ago—so the boy says; and he'd have told me at once, if he hadn't had a fool's head atop of his shoulders.'

'So! No wonder the poor beast was restive!' commented the parson. 'I shouldn't have sat so quietly myself, if I had known my supper was within fifty yards of me.'

As they stood on the doorstep waiting for an

answer to their summons, Mrs Venables whispered to her husband: 'We needn't tell Belinda.' The parson nodded, and at that moment the door was opened by a trim maidservant, and Miss Belinda came running out into the hall.

'Oh, Uncle Theophilus!' she cried—'oh, Aunt Anna, I have been so frightened!'

'Frightened, you silly child—what at?' asked Mrs Venables.

'There were such horrid shrieks at the garden gate,' said Miss Belinda; 'you never heard such howls and bellowings.'

'Some one of the farmers going home from the inn,' said the parson. 'What is there so terrible in that?'

'O no!' said his niece. 'They were not human voices—they were much too harsh; they were like the screaming of fiends.'

The vicar looked at his wife as if to satisfy himself what she thought of this plain speaking about her vocal powers.

'Stuff and nonsense, Belinda!' said the old lady angrily. 'I can't listen to such trash. How could there have been any fiends at the gate of the vicarage?'

'Oh, but there were,' Miss Belinda persisted; 'for Jane said she would go out and see what it was, though I advised her not; and she went as far as the gate with a lantern; and there she saw a hearse with plumes on it, and she was so frightened that she dropped the lantern and ran back, and we barred the door and bolted it.'

'Now, don't let us have any more of this,' said the vicar decisively. 'Your head is too full of these things, Belinda; and Jane is as foolish as you are. Let us have our supper, and pray, oblige me by forgetting this nonsense.'

And the truth about Parson Venables' adventure is now for the first time made generally known.

THE FADING OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE family album upon the drawing-room table is a never-failing subject of interest to visitors, and among individuals who lack original ideas, forms an agreeable subject of conversation in place of that of the weather. Of late years, however, there is more diffidence in placing it in prominent positions for the ready examination of waiting friends, the sad-coloured pictures of 'the hue of a November fog in Cheapside, or a bad piece of gingerbread spoilt in the baking,' being at variance with average ideas of artistic elegance. A more serious aspect of the case is the gradual discoloration or fading of the likenesses of members of the family who have passed away by death, raising the question in the minds of survivors what is to be done to preserve those lineaments for future inspection ere it be too late.

When the white parts of an ordinary photograph begin to turn yellow, that photograph is doomed unless immediate efforts be made to preserve it, and those efforts may not always be successful. Treatment with a weak solution of bichloride of mercury, under the hands of a skilful photographic practitioner, is one of the best methods of making the attempt; this may arrest decay, but will not restore the likeness to the condition of a first-rate photograph. Bichloride of mercury, or corrosive sublimate, is highly

poisonous, and is best left alone by the uninitiated. A better way of preserving the memento is to send the photograph to a platinum-printing or carbon-printing firm of photographers, in a sufficiently large way of business to keep upon their premises artists skilled in the use of the brush and pencil. Their usual plan, then, is to obtain upon glass or paper an enlarged positive copy of the fading photograph: this copy is 'retouched,' that is to say, worked upon by hand so as to remove obvious defects due to decay or to original bad work; a negative is taken from the perfected positive, and from this negative any number of copies may be printed by photographic means in permanent carbon pigments or in platinum black. To obtain the positive already mentioned, a primary negative has to be taken, so that two negatives are necessitated by the process, both of which, as well as the positive, are usually worked upon somewhat by the hand of the artist; the method of getting a good permanent photograph from a bad fading one is therefore complicated, and requires skill.

In the carbon process, carbon or other suitable permanent pigment is spread upon paper or glass along with solution of gelatine and of bichromate of potash or ammonia: where the light acts upon this surface through the negative, the decomposition of the salt renders the gelatine insoluble; consequently, when the paper is afterwards placed in warm water, the gelatine unacted upon by light dissolves off in company with its pigment, thus leaving the white paper exposed; but where the light has acted, the gelatine and pigment remain to form the shadows of the picture. These are the broad principles of the process, omitting various practical details which it would exceed present limits to particularise. The other permanent process, in which the dark parts of the picture are formed of platinum black, gives the most durable pictures known, platinum being a metal which has more power than gold of resisting change under atmospheric and other influences; indeed, platinum black is infinitely more permanent than the paper upon which it is printed. In some cases, either from badly prepared sensitised paper, or from faults in the photographic manipulations, platinum prints have been known to turn yellow in the whites under the influence of sulphuretted hydrogen; such discoloration has sometimes been subsequently removed by the application of chemical reagents, without the dark parts of the picture having been affected all through the operations. There are methods of taking photographs in silver which have exactly the appearance of platinotypes, so that an expert cannot always tell the difference without the application of chemical tests; these black and engraving-like silver prints are in all probability much more permanent than the ordinary photographs used for the stocking of albums.

The best photographers know how to produce permanent photographs, if their patrons insist upon having them; but such pictures have not usually the appearance of ordinary photographs, unless the carbon process with a pigment of the requisite colour be employed. Messrs Gézuzet, Bros., of Brussels, photographers to the Queen of the Belgians, have for a long course of years issued to the public none but carbon photographs,

even of such small dimensions as *cartes de visite*. The colour of the pigment has been such that unskilled purchasers cannot tell that they are not ordinary photographs; after lapse of years such likenesses preserve their pristine beauty, whilst silver prints alongside them in the same albums fall into the sere and yellow leaf.

On turning over the leaves of any album, those photographs whose life is fairly on the wane may be at once recognised by a sickly yellow colour taking the place of the whites of the picture. To detect this change in its incipient stages, the whites of the photograph should be compared with the cardboard of the leaves of the album; both should be equally white. First-rate photographers think it their duty to turn out pictures of this class with pure whites in the highest lights; second-rate photographers commonly turn out pictures dingy in the high lights and feeble in the shadows, faults usually due to bad printing or bad negatives.

Common photographs consist of silver in a more or less reduced state upon a film of albumen coagulated by the chemicals through which it has been passed. The greatest enemies of the permanence of such prints are: (1) Traces of chemicals not fully washed out of the print by the photographer. (2) Damp. (3) The action of sulphur or its compounds. The last of these agencies of degradation is the most difficult to avoid; the albumen itself contains sulphur as an essential constituent; it is this sulphur which attacks silver egg-spoons. The air of towns contains sulphurous gases from drains, and among the products of the combustion of coals and gas. Bronze powder, used instead of gold for printing addresses upon some of the cards upon which photographs are mounted, has sometimes proved a prolific cause of local fading, the bronze dust falling upon the picture, and in course of time producing white spots thereon, when the powder contains sulphide of tin. A story is told of a young man asking a photographer not to mount his likenesses upon the ordinary trade cards of the establishment, as he did not wish his friends to see the cheap prices printed thereupon. The photographer, therefore, mounted the pictures upon the backs instead of the fronts of the cards. In due time the bronze-printing did its work, and the low price paid became visible in white letters upon the face of the photograph itself.

All the conditions governing the fading of ordinary photographs are not yet fully understood; but pictures of this class rarely remain unchanged in appearance for twenty years, and in no instance, probably, are they permanent in a historical sense; they serve but temporary purposes. At their advent, the public disliked their chocolate colour; by force of long familiarity therewith, there is now, on the other hand, a certain amount of prejudice against photographs in black and white, but this feeling is diminishing year by year, especially among the more cultured classes, so that at Photographic Exhibitions engraving-like pictures are steadily on the increase. The remedy for the fading of the family photographs rests in the hands, or rather in the heads, of the general public more than anywhere else; if the public demand permanent likenesses in platinum, or in carbon or other permanent pigment, and see that they get them, the supply

will follow the demand, and the household album will then no longer suggest by its colours a collection of leaves of trees gathered in the autumn season.

FROM THE UNDER-WORLD.

ONLY a few days ago, and the Old Priory Garden was wrapped in its snowy mantle; the trees were bare and black, or covered with hoar-frost; the earth hard and ice-bound; the half-hardy herbage crumpled up and brown, or hanging limp and dejected-looking on their shrivelled stalks; even the holly and ivy had lost their crisp glossy freshness; and the yew drooped sadly in the biting hail and cutting east wind, rendered all the more insidious by an hour or two of brilliant sunshine in the middle of the day, that would melt the frost and snow off the turf in patches, to be all the more easily a prey to the bitter wind, and rendered sapless and lifeless.

Round every corner comes this Eastern fiend, lifting up every dry leaf, and penetrating to the inmost recesses of the tender under-shoots. Nothing is safe from its fierce treachery. Here, it strikes down the hale middle-aged man with an acute attack of pleurisy; there, a happy, well-cared-for child is barely pulled through the sudden sharp touch of croup; and scores of the 'uncared-for' atoms of humanity are not pulled through, but are choked out of existence without help.

Now, an aged individual creeps out of doors into the pleasant sunlight. As long as he keeps in the shelter of the south wall, he is fairly safe; but an old acquaintance greets him, and in a fatal moment he turns the corner of the wall, perhaps stands two minutes talking. Suddenly, a slight shiver seizes him and thrills through his frame; he retreats hastily homewards. 'Too late.' And his friend passes onward with an undefined foreboding that the man is going to be ill; little thinking that, in the idle moments of friendly gossip, the east wind has chilled the lifeblood, and checked the already too languid circulation in the aged veins. Job says: 'The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;' and again in Hosea: 'The east wind increaseth desolation;' and over there in 'God's-acre' are newly made graves, that have been filled by the cruel ravages of this unrelenting monarch, over whose occupants might be fitly written the above epitaphs. When gentle Charles Kingsley wrote his ode to the *Bluff North-easter*, did he think the 'wind of God' would be his own death-warrant? But so it was: the disease that carried this gentle, loving soul to his grave was intensified and aggravated by the baleful effects of a sudden chill.

But at last—at last this arch-enemy has departed; and though a chill rawness is in the air, still there is a strange subtle difference to the senses. Waking up in the very earliest dawning, your ears are saluted with the musical trickling of water down the spouting, the soft fall of rain on the roof, and sudden little wet dashes against the window. The wind has a low hollow murmur

in the distant elms, and swirls round in fitful gushes, that have a gentler cadence. As you lie still and listen gladly to these welcome sounds, you are conscious of breathing easier and taking deeper respirations before dropping off into a more restful and life-giving sleep. Strangely enough, you sleep an hour later than usual. But to what a different world you wake up! After another twenty-four hours' rain, and you go out of doors in the wet glistening morning, what do you find? That a thrush is singing its sweet shrill melody from the top of an apple-tree, whose bare and apparently lifeless branches have already felt the quickening thrill of the rising sap; and looking closely, you find tiny points of vivid crimson in every twist and turn of the boughs. The brown sheaths of the pear have opened, revealing the tender white cone of the coming blossom. The hardier fruit-trees have made best use of the time, and are sprouting rapidly. You feel a puff of the south wind; and along the old wall, from the 'dark under-world,' have appeared the pale snowdrop; and in another corner, half-a-dozen golden gems of the winter aconite peep out cheerfully. The daisies have not yet dared to lift their ruffled faces; but the turf has a brighter appearance, and a sweet keen smell that is simply delicious. Whence comes this vivifying principle? From the black earth, causing all nature to shine forth at a breath of the south wind, that rives even the zone of the winter king.

He who holds the world in the hollow of His hand has seen fit for some of His children to 'go over to the majority;' but in the returning beauty and freshness and joyousness of nature we can also discern 'the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.'

A NEW MODE OF ELECTRIC WELDING.

It has long been known, says the *Times*, that the most refractory metals are fusible in the electric arc, and of late the fact has been applied to the reduction and welding of metals. In the welding process of Professor Elihu Thompson, of Boston, United States, the joint to be welded is traversed by an alternating current of electricity strong enough to fuse the metals together. But in the new process of Dr Bernardo, of St Petersburg, a continuous current from a charged accumulator is employed. The metals to be welded are connected to the negative pole of the accumulator, and a carbon pencil, such as is used in the electric arc lamp, is connected to the positive pole of the accumulator. The consequence is that when the carbon pencil is brought into contact with the joint, and then withdrawn, an arc is started between them, and the metals of the joint are fused in its intense heat until they run together. Carbon blocks are in certain cases used to retain the molten metal in its place, and a little sand is also employed as a flux. By these means boiler-plates can be mended *in situ*, blowholes in castings filled up, and iron rods jointed together. To weld two pieces of $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch boiler-plate, forty cells of the accumulator joined 'in series' and three 'in parallel' are taken to supply the current; and a 1-inch carbon pencil in a portable holder is used to strike and maintain the arc.

The power of the latter is regulated by the number of cells employed. The accumulator of Dr Bernardo has plates made of strip-lead, he having found that cells with paste in the plates do not stand the strong currents which he requires.

A DREAM-MAIDEN.

THE dawn of day is sweet and still,
And fair the light of noon,
When, wrapped in purple haze, the hill
Dreams through a golden June.

But still the hour I love the best
Comes when the sun has rolled
His glowing chariot where the West
Throws wide her gates of gold;

For then I seek the land of dreams,
And all the world to me
Falls faint and far as songs of streams
To one who hears the sea.

Where low above the river-shore
The rustling branches swing,
The lady of my dreams once more
With me is wandering.

I see her bright hair's sunny gleam,
Her lithe form's slender grace;
But even in my dearest dream,
I never see her face.

Far over all that pleasant land
Her happy voice is borne,
Sweeter than waves along the strand,
Or winds among the corn.

The sea-gull stays his flight to hear;
The brook his babble stills;
And on the mountain-side, the deer
That subtle music thrills.

Yet all the magic of her song,
Far sweeter than the birds
That sing the summer woods among,
For me has never words.

But still I follow where she goes,
Until the cruel day
Steals down the path of pearl and rose,
To bear my love away.

Time brings, I know, an hour for me
When dreaming will be past,
When I my lady's face shall see,
And hear her words at last.

Oh, that the happy day would rise,
When she for whom I wait
Will come from the dim land that lies
Beyond the Ivory Gate!

D. J. ROBERTSON.

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DOLLS.

'A DOLL,' according to Dr Johnson, 'is a puppet or baby for a little girl to play with.' This definition we consider to be unworthy of the mind which framed it. The word 'puppet' recalls to our mind's eye only an unpleasantly lively Jack-in-the-box, or two little ugly boxing-men fastened together with a string; while a 'baby' suggests only a 'long baby,' which may be pleasant enough to dress and undress, or to christen, or rock in a miniature cradle, or take out driving in a miniature perambulator, but which at a doll's tea-party is simply a nonentity, and which can no more have wild adventures by flood and fell, or camp out, or marry another doll and set up housekeeping in a house with a small green front door (for show), and a large white back one (for use), than the cat could—rather less, in fact. As for the 'little girl'—well, evidently in Dr Johnson's day the little girls were more exclusive, or the little boys more contemptuous of their sisters and their sisters' dolls. Or perhaps Dr Johnson, being an unpleasant child with an unhealthy fondness for tea, and who carried about uncompiled dictionaries in his head while he was as yet of tender years, if he did ever, in a misguided moment, condescend to play with a puppet or baby, was ashamed of the fact, and wished it to be buried in oblivion. Whatever the case was, we again repeat the statement that the definition is insufficient; and had Dr Johnson made any study, however slight, of dolls as a class or of dolls in particular, it is almost needless to say that he would have perceived his error.

Who was the first child that ever played with a doll, it would be hard to say; but we do not doubt that the earliest children of the earth possessed dolls as well as the later ones. That the ancient leader of the Hebrews, when he was but little Moses, had a doll may be regarded as amounting almost to a certainty; for in those tiny sarcophagi which are discovered in Egypt, there have been found beside the poor little mummies—only mummies now, but which were once bright

little dark-eyed children of Egypt, full of mischief and glee—pathetically comical little imitations of themselves, placed there by loving mothers within reach of the cold little baby fingers. That reminds us of another baby figure, a little girl's, which was found in one of the Buried Cities with a doll clasped to her breast.

The doll, of which the modern doll is just a reproduction with improvements, emigrated from Holland to Britain some centuries ago; but before her advent there must have been a British doll of some sort or other; and we doubt not that at the time when art was first awakening in our islands, and when our ancestors painted themselves and each other blue, the children of the tribe, or, according to Dr Johnson, the little girls, had dolls, also painted blue, which must certainly have been a great saving in clothing to those small British matrons. It is a fallacy to suppose that a doll, in order to be a doll, must be of almost perfect physical construction, with limbs well stuffed with sawdust or bran, and with a ruddy complexion and large dark eyes. Such is not the case; and perhaps if we were to make investigations we should find that the ragged little gutter child who hugs in her arms, with true motherly pride and devotion, the very dirtiest of dirty shawls or old pinafores, tied in a large knot at one end, gets more pleasure out of her doll than does the little aristocrat at the west end, whose doll is a native of Paris, with golden hair, and eyes that open and shut, which has teeth and a voice, can do almost everything but speak the language, and possesses a costume for every day in the week. There is not a doubt that the more a child needs to exercise its imaginative faculty with regard to its playthings, the happier it is, and the more chance does it get of bringing its ingenuity and originality into play in its future life. What effect Ruskin's bunch of keys, and cart, and ball, and boxes of well-cut bricks—the sum-total of his childhood's playthings—had on his after-career, it would be hard to say; but he tells us how he could at an early age 'pass his days contentedly

in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of his carpet, and examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses.' Poor little embryo art critic!—getting, perhaps, as much enjoyment out of the ugly red bricks of the sooty London houses, as he may have got afterwards in contemplating the architecture of St Mark's or of the Doge's Palace.

Far away in a lonely Yorkshire parsonage, about the same time that little John Ruskin was counting the bricks, or admiring the squares in his carpet, some remarkable children were amusing themselves in their own unchildish ways—writing little dramas, poems, and romances, and playing their 'secret plays' with their dolls, which were wooden soldiers, mostly titled, and generally either statesmen or men of genius. 'Mine was the prettiest of the whole, and the tallest, and the most perfect in every part,' wrote Charlotte Brontë. 'He was the Duke of Wellington.' Jane Welsh Carlyle's doll had more of the real about it than Charlotte Brontë's, but its end was such as few dolls can hope to have. She always loved her doll; but when she had got into the first book of Virgil, she thought it shame to care for her any longer, and having judged the poor victim, decided that she must die, and die as be seemed the doll of a young lady in Virgil. With some lead pencils, her four-post bed, her dresses, which were many, a few sticks of cinnamon, and a nutmeg, she built the doll a funeral pile, and poured over it all some sort of perfume. Then the doll, being seated upon her four-post bed, recited, with her judge's aid, the last speech of Dido, stabbed herself with a penknife, and perished there nobly. But, alas, the student of Virgil had miscalculated her own callousness. As the flames hungrily licked up the second Dido and her stuffing of bran, poor little 'Jeanie's' affection all came back, and she would have saved her doll when it was too late; and when she could not, burst into such cries of anguish as brought out her alarmed friends, who carried her forcibly into the house. It seemed a sort of portent of what her life was to be, poor little woman—a life of sacrifices, sometimes needless ones too, and sacrifices which would have been better left unmade; a life in which she tried to do away with the fact that she could love as few people can, and tried to take life as a Stoic would, or as did the little Spartan boy who would not complain even when his very heart was being gnawed away.

With ordinary children, a doll plays many parts, and, curiously enough, a child's doll always seems to bear a strong resemblance to the child in constitution and disposition, if not in appearance. A selfish child has always a selfish doll; and a delicate child's doll is always ill. A doll we once knew was passionately fond of preserved ginger; and as sure as there was any ginger in the house, so sure was that brazen-faced doll to demand some, and force its owner, with much reluctance and many apologies, to beg for just a tiny bit in order to satisfy its cravings. Curiously enough, if that doll's owner had a weakness, it was a weakness for preserved ginger.

Another doll of our acquaintance—a very dear friend of ours in days gone by—a doll named Franky, of a dark (tan-glove) complexion, utterly

without backbone, and who always wore a Norfolk jacket and suit of red flannel, once expressed—after seeing an officer of the Black Watch—a wild desire to possess a complete Highland costume. He had once before wanted a popgun, and had—through persistently asking for one—always through the medium of his much embarrassed proprietor, of course—got three popguns of various sizes presented to him by friends of the family; and so he thought it well to pursue the same method as previously. He did so, but with what results! Certainly, he obtained kilts, with a sporran, velvet jacket, and everything complete. But the kind friend who donated the costume, thinking it would be a pleasant surprise for his owner if she altered Franky's complexion for the better, bestowed upon him a new face of an unhealthy (white-kid-glove) hue, and very correct features, with the most inane expression imaginable. Alas for Franky! From that day his doom was sealed. At first, his owner disowned him; and it was only after she had made a careful scrutiny of his limbs, hair, and pedal extremities, that she would acknowledge in this horribly vapid Highlander her own beloved but strangely transmogrified Franky. Almost immediately, Franky took scarlet fever, and had to be isolated in a disused cradle in the lumber-room. Of course, having other children to look after, it would not have been right for his owner to run the risk of nursing him, and so she allowed him to be tended by three (imaginary) hospital nurses. One day, her maternal affection overcame her fear of contagion, and she penetrated the sickroom, caught him up from his cradle, and kissed him passionately; but the sight of his sickly face and idiotic expression was too much for her, and, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, she cast him away with loathing and disgust. That is many years ago; but we believe the hapless Franky, still attired in full Highland costume, lies in that lumber-room, suffering from a long-protracted attack of scarlet fever, and without even the imaginary hospital nurses to tend his sickbed.

Poor Franky! he is not alone in his misfortune. We wonder how many like cases would be revealed to the public, were all the lumber-rooms and old 'doll closets' in the United Kingdom to undergo strict investigation. What startling revelations and harrowing details there would be, and what a fearful list of mutilated and disfigured bodies, and unrecognisable remains, we should have to make! Perhaps, like Maggie Tulliver's unfortunate doll, some of the harmless victims might have been used as substitutes for some real offender, and been hammered and hacked and knocked about in an unjust and brutal manner. Perhaps still more might have fallen victims to a younger generation than their owners, possessed of much curiosity and a genius for dissecting; while more still might be only the victims of neglect—once idolised and honoured members of society, but now despised, unloved, and stowed away in odd corners, while their once devoted friends amuse themselves with the big world's playthings; or have stopped playing altogether, said good-night, and gone to sleep for ever. Poor old 'puppets and babies,' what happiness you have given! How many memories, happy and sad, how many days of sunshine and of rain, you bring back to us! How can we,

though our playground be wider, and our plays bigger and more complex, yet not so happy, keep from having a warm little corner in our hearts for what we once loved so much—our dolls!

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER IX.—HIGH-WATER.

MEANWHILE, Warren Relf, navigating the pervasive and ubiquitous little *Mud-Turtle*, had spent his summer congenially in cruising in and out of Essex mud-flats and Norfolk broads, accompanied by his friend and chum Potts, the marine painter—now lying high and dry with the ebbing tide on some broad bare bank of ribbed sand, just relieved by a battle-royal of gulls and rooks from the last reproach of utter monotony; now working hard at the counterfeit presentment of a green-grown wreck, all picturesque with waving tresses of weed and sea-wrack, in some stranded estuary of the Thames backwaters; and now again tossing and lopping on the uneasy bosom of the German Ocean, whose rise and fall would seem to suggest to a casual observer's mind the physiological notion that its own included crabs and lobsters had given it a prolonged and serious fit of marine indigestion.

For a couple of months at a stretch the two young artists had toiled away ceaselessly at their labour of love, painting the sea itself and all that therein is, with the eyots, creeks, rivers, sands, cliffs, banks, and inlets adjacent, in every variety of mood or feature, from its glassiest calm to its angriest tempest, with endless patience, delight, and satisfaction. They enjoyed their work, and their work repaid them. It was almost all the payment they ever got, indeed, for, like loyal sons of the Cheyne Row Club, the crew of the *Mud-Turtle* were not successful. And now, as September was more than half through, Warren Relf began to bethink him at last of Hugh Massinger, whom he had left in rural ease on dry land at Whitestrand under a general promise to return for him 'in the month of the long decline of roses,' some time between the 15th and the 20th. So, on a windy morning, about that precise period of the year, with a north-easterly breeze setting strong across the North Sea, and a falling barometer threatening squalls, according to the printed weather report, he made his way out of the mouth of the Yare, and turned southward before the flowing tide in the direction of Whitestrand.

The sea was running high and splendid, and the two young painters, inured to toil and accustomed to danger, thoroughly enjoyed its wild magnificence. A storm to them was a study in action. They could take notes calmly of its fiercest moments. Almost every wave broke over the deck; and the patient little *Mud-Turtle*, with her flat bottom and centre-board keel, tossed about like a walnut shell on the surface of the water, or drove her nose madly from time to time into the crest of a billow, to emerge triumphant one moment later, all shining and dripping with sticky brine, in the deep trough on the other side. Painting in such a sea was of course simply impossible; but Warren Relf, who loved his art with supreme devotion, and never missed an

opportunity of catching a hint from his ever-changing model under the most unpromising circumstances, took out pencil and paper a dozen times in the course of the day to preserve at least in black and white some passing aspect of her mutable features. Potts for the most part managed sheet and helm; while Relf, in the intervals of luffing or tacking, holding hard to the mainmast with his left arm, and with the left hand just grasping his drawing-pad on the other side of the mast, jotted hastily down with his right whatever peculiar form of spray or billow happened for the moment to catch and impress his artistic fancy. It was a glorious day for those who liked it; though a land-lubber would no doubt have roundly called it a frightful voyage.

They had meant to make Whitestrand before evening; but half-way down, an incident of a sort that Warren Relf could never bear to miss intervened to delay them. They fell in casually with a North Sea trawler, disabled and distressed by last night's gale, now scudding under bare poles before the free breeze that churned and whitened the entire surface of the German Ocean. The men on board were in sore straits, though not as yet in immediate danger; and the yawl gallantly stood in close by her, to pick up the swimmers in case of serious accident. The shrill wind tore at her mainmast; the waves charged her in vague ranks; the gaff quivered and moaned at the shocks; and ever and anon, with a bellowing rush, the resistless sea swept over her triumphantly from stem to stern. Meanwhile, Warren Relf, eager to fix this stray episode on good white paper while it was still before his eyes, made wild and rapid dashes on his pad with a sprawling hand, which conveyed to his mind, in strange shorthand hieroglyphics, some faint idea of the scene as it passed before him.

'She's a terrible bad sitter, this smack,' he observed in a loud voice to Potts, with good-humoured enthusiasm, as they held on together with struggling hands on the deck of the *Mud-Turtle*. 'The moment you think you've just caught her against the skyline on the crest of a wave, she lurches again, and over she goes, plump down into the trough, before you've had a chance to make a single mark upon your sheet of paper. Ships are always precious bad sitters at the best of times; but when you and your model are both plunging and tossing together in dirty weather on a lippy channel, I don't believe even Turner himself could make much out of it in the way of a sketch from nature.—Hold hard, there, Frank! Look out for your head! She's going to ship a thundering big sea across her bows this very minute.—By Jove! I wonder how the smack stood that last high wave!—Is she gone? Did it break over her? Can you see her ahead there?'

'She's all right still,' Potts shouted from the bow, where he stood now in his oilskin suit, drenched from head to foot with the dashing spray, but cheery as ever, in true sailor fashion. 'I can see her mast just showing above the crest. But it must have given her a jolly good wetting. Shall we signal the men to know if they'd like to come aboard here?'

'Signal away,' Warren Relf answered good-humouredly above the noise of the wind. 'No more sketching for me to-day, I take it. That

last lot she shipped wet my pad through and through with the nasty damp brine. I'd better put my sketch, as far as it goes, down below in the locker. Wind's freshening. We'll have enough to do to keep her nose straight in half a gale like this. We're going within four or five points of the wind now, as it is. I wish we could run clear ahead at once for the poplar at Whitestrand. I would, too, if it weren't for the smack. This is getting every bit as hot as I like it. But we must keep an eye upon her; if we don't want her crew to be all dead men. She can't live six hours longer in a gale like to-day's, I'll bet you any money.'

They signalled the men, but found them unwilling still, with true seafaring devotion, to abandon their ship, which had yet some hours of life left in her. They'd stick to the smack, the skipper signalled back in mute pantomime, as long as her timbers held out the water. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to lie hard by her, for humanity's sake, as close as possible, and to make as slowly as the strength of the wind would allow, by successive tacks, for the river-mouth at Whitestrand.

All day long, they held up bravely, lurching and plunging on the angry waves; and only towards evening did they part company with the toiling smack, as it was growing dusk along the low flat stretch of shore by Dunwich. There, a fish-carrier from the North Sea, one of those fast long steamers that plough the German Ocean on the lookout for the fishing fleet—whose catches they take up with all speed to the London market, fell in with them in the very nick of time, and transferring the crew on board with some little difficulty, made fast the smack—or rather her wreck—with a towline behind, and started under all steam, to save her life, for the port of Harwich. Warren Relf and his companion, despising such aid, and preferring to live it out by themselves at all hazards, were left behind alone with the wild evening, and proceeded in the growing shades of twilight to find their way up the river at Whitestrand.

'Can you make out the poplar, Frank?' Warren Relf shouted out, as he peered ahead into the deep gloom that enveloped the coast with its murky covering. 'We've left it rather late, I'm afraid, for pushing up the creek with a sea like this! Unless we can spot the poplar distinctly, I should hardly like to risk entering it by the red light on the sandhills alone. Those must be the lamps at Whitestrand Hall, the three windows to starboard yonder. The poplar ought to show by rights a point or so west of them, with the striped buoy just a little this side of it.'

'I can make out the striped buoy by the white paint on it,' his companion answered, gazing eagerly in front of him; 'but I fancy it's a shade too dark now to be sure of the poplar. The lights of the Hall don't seem quite regular. Still, I should think we could make the creek by the red lantern and the beacon at the hithe, without minding the tree, if you care to risk it. You know your way up and down the river as well as any man living by this time; and we've got a fair breeze at our backs, you see, for going up the mouth to the bend at Whitestrand.'

The wind moaned like a woman in agony. The timbers creaked and groaned and crackled. The black waves lashed savagely over the deck. The *Mud-Turtle* was almost on the shore before they knew it.

'Luff, luff!' Relf called out hastily, as he peered once more into the deepening gloom with all his eyes. 'By George! we're wrong. I can see the poplar—over yonder; do you catch it? We're out of our bearings a quarter of a mile. We've gone too far now to make it this tack. We must try again, and get our points better by the high light. That was a narrow squeak of it, by Jove! Frank. I can twig where we've got to now, distinctly. It's the lights in the house that led us astray. That's not the Hall: it's the windows of the vicarage.'

They ran out, to eastward again, for more sea-room, a couple of hundred yards, or farther, and tacked afresh for the entrance of the creek, this time adjusting their course better for the open mouth by the green lamp of the beacon on the sandhills. The light fixed on their own masthead threw a glimmering ray ahead from time to time upon the angry water. It was a hard fight for mastery with the wind. The waves were setting in fierce and strong towards the creek now; but the tide and stream on the other hand were ebbing rapidly and steadily outward. They always ebbed fast at the turn of the tide, as Relf knew well: a rushing current set in then round the corner by the poplar tree, the same current that had carried out Hugh Massinger so resistlessly seaward in that little adventure of his on the morning of their first arrival at Whitestrand. Only an experienced mariner dare face that bar. But Warren Relf was accustomed to the coast, and made light of the danger that other men would have trembled at.

As they neared the poplar a second time, making straight for the mouth with nautical dexterity, a pale object on the port bow, rising and falling with each rise or fall of the waves on the bar, attracted Warren Relf's casual attention for a single moment by its strange weird likeness to a human figure. At first, he hardly regarded the thing seriously as anything more than a stray bit of floating wreckage; but presently, the light from the masthead fell full upon it, and with a sudden flash he felt convinced at once it was something stranger than a mere plank or fragment of rigging.

'Look yonder, Frank,' he called out in echoing tones to his mate; 'that can't be a buoy upon the port bow there!'

The other man looked at it long and steadily. As he looked, the *Mud-Turtle* lurched once more, and cast a reflected pencil ray of light from the masthead lamp over the surface of the sea, away in the direction of the suspicious object. Both men caught sight at once of some floating white drapery, swayed by the waves, and a pale face upturned in ghastly silence to the uncertain starlight.

'Port your helm hard!' Relf cried in haste. 'It's a man overboard. Washed off the smack perhaps. He's drowned by this time, I expect, poor fellow.'

His companion ported the helm at the word with all his might. The yawl answered well in spite of the breakers. With great difficulty,

between wind and tide, they lay up towards the mysterious thing slowly in the very trough of the billows that roared and danced with hoarse joy over the shallow bar; and Relf, holding tight to the sheet with one hand, and balancing himself as well as he was able on the deck, reached out with the other a stout boathook to draw the tossing body alongside within hauling distance of the *Mud-Turtle*. As he did so, the body, eluding his grasp, rose once more on the crest of the wave, and displayed to their view an open bosom and a long white dress, with a floating scarf or shawl of some thin material still hanging loose around the neck and shoulders. The face itself they couldn't as yet distinguish; it fell back languid beneath the spray at the top, so that only the throat and chin were visible; but by the dress and the open bosom alone, it was clear at once that the object they saw was not the corpse of a sailor. Warren Relf almost let drop the boathook in horror and surprise.

'Great heavens!' he exclaimed, turning round excitedly, 'it's a woman—a lady—dead—in the water!'

The billow broke, and curled over majestically with resistless force into the trough below them. Its undertow sucked the *Mud-Turtle* after it fiercely towards the shore, away from the body. With a violent effort, Warren Relf, lunging forward eagerly at the lurch, seized hold of the corpse by the floating scarf. It turned of itself as the hook caught it, and displayed its face in the pale starlight. A great awe fell suddenly upon the astonished young painter's mind. It was indeed a woman that he held now by the dripping hair—a beautiful young girl, in a white dress; and the wan face was one he had seen before. Even in that dim half-light he recognised her instantly.

'Frank!' he cried out in a voice of hushed and reverent surprise—'never mind the ship. Come forward and help me. We must take her on board. I know her! I know her! She's a friend of Massinger's.'

The corpse was one of the two young girls he had seen that day two months before sitting with their arms round one another's waists, close to the very spot where they now lay up, on the gnarled and naked roots of the famous old poplar.

MODERN DIVINATION.

It might have been supposed that in 1887, a year so close to the end of a century celebrated for the great strides made in all matters of science, it would hardly have been possible to find an educated man resorting to divination for the discovery of water; nevertheless, the following extract from a local paper (the *East Anglian Daily Times*) will show that belief in the art of the diviner is far from extinct; neither is it by any means confined to the ignorant peasantry, as is the case with many superstitions which still survive among us. The extract is headed, 'Remarkable Experiments in Suffolk,' and is as follows:

'For the double purpose of remedying the deficiency in the water-supply, and of fixing in the parish something permanent and beneficial

in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee, a movement has been set on foot by the rector of Wattisham, Suffolk, to sink a well, in a central and convenient spot, for the general use of the villagers. This project has the support of the leading parishioners, and on the 28th of September the first active steps were taken to put the scheme into execution. To avoid if possible the unnecessary labour and cost frequently attendant on boring for water, the novel experiment of discovering exact places where a supply could be found by the art of "divination," was put into practice on the day mentioned. Through the instrumentality of the Rev. — Drake, of Brockley, a Mr Lawrence, from Bristol, attended as diviner. The articles used for the purpose of indicating the presence of water underground were a piece of steel spring about a foot in length and a V-shaped hazel stick. The yard behind Wattisham Hall was first selected for the trials. With the piece of spring held in a bowed shape in front of him, and firmly grasped with both hands, the operator slowly stepped about the yard. In a very short time, and at one particular spot not far from the house, the spring began to twist and curve about in the most uncontrollable manner. With the hazel stick tightly held apex downwards, he again stepped towards the same spot, when the upward movements and twists of the stick were so violent as to break it. Mr Lawrence predicted that at this spot a plentiful supply of water would be found. A small piece of common land opposite the church was next tested in the same manner, and at one spot both the spring and the hazel stick again denoted by their active movements the presence of water. This spot is now marked by a small stone bearing an inscription, "V.R. Jubilee, 1887," as here it is proposed to sink the well for the parish. After some careful searching on the premises of an off-lying farm called Judgments, belonging to Mr Harvey, a spot was discovered in the orchard in the same way, the hazel sticks moving so vigorously on each occasion as to break in the divinator's hands. At Hitcham Lodge, the residence of Mr Hammond, boring operations have been carried on at some considerable expense to the owner, and although a depth of over one hundred feet has been reached, no water has been discovered. A visit was paid by Mr Lawrence, and within fifteen feet of the site chosen by Mr Hammond for his well, a spot was pointed out where water would be found, and, in the operator's opinion, at not half the depth now bored. A certain amount of scepticism prevailed as to the efficiency of the tests with some of those who were present; but it is hoped that an early commencement of boring operations, with a subsequent discovery of water at some or all of the spots indicated, will dispel all doubts, although the mystery—for such it still appears—remains unsolved.'

Now, this resort to the diviner for the discovery of water, strange as it may appear to many, is by no means uncommon in the *west* of England; and it will be seen that in this instance the 'dowser,' as he is termed locally, was sent for from Bristol, none being apparently known in the eastern counties.

Some years ago, the writer had the good fortune to witness near Bath an experiment almost pre-

cisely similar to the above, and can therefore testify to the accuracy of the description given by the reporter of the method employed by the diviner, excepting that in the one witnessed by us there was no metal spring employed, but simply the hazel wand; and it is certainly most interesting to observe the sudden and apparently uncontrollable movement of the wand, as held by the diviner, in certain spots, whilst it remains perfectly inert in others, and again, perhaps, moves very slightly. By the violence of the movement the diviner decides as to the nearness and volume of the water; and we may say that in the case referred to near Bath, a well had been dug unsuccessfully to a great depth before the dowser was called in; but in the spot indicated by him, water, although not commensurate with the violence of the rod, was found at a much less depth, within a few yards of the first abortive attempt.

The success which usually follows the indications of the diviner naturally accounts for the continued popularity of a practice which dates back to far distant prehistoric times; and although it is now shorn of many of the rites and ceremonies which once accompanied it, and may be looked upon rather as a psychological curiosity than a superstition, the practice is full of interest both in its past and present use.

In the first place, it must be observed that the diviners of the present day are few in number,—they themselves say not one in a thousand has the power of the rod; and, indeed, a group of spectators may narrowly watch the proceedings of a dowser, and try one after another to imitate them in vain, till some young girl or some old man among them, taking the wand in hand, finds, to his or her surprise, that he or she is gifted with the strange power, and the rod turns just as it has done in the hands of the expert. The cause of the phenomenon has yet to be explained; in some cases, it may be, and probably is, imposture. The late Dr Carpenter believed that where every kind of suggestion had been rigidly excluded, failure was certain, and that success was in all cases due to guesses on the part of the performer, or to the unintentional promptings they have received from bystanders, just as in the modern thought-reading performances. But it is certain that many of those who accidentally find themselves endowed with the 'power of the rod' cannot be classed among impostors, neither have they anything to gain by exhibiting that power; and we do not think the sudden and peculiar motion of the rod could be produced unconsciously, although some French *savants* have supposed that the movement in the rod is due to the tension of the muscles held long in one position, resulting in involuntary motion. Sometimes, however, the rod will turn immediately it is taken in the hand, when held over running water.

A more plausible explanation is, that persons possessing some peculiarity of nervous temperament, or subject in a special degree to rheumatism or neuralgia, would be more easily affected than others by the presence of water, and that in their hands the rod would serve as an indicator, although in what way the peculiar upward motion of the rod is produced requires considerable explanation; and the matter is further complicated by the fact that the rod is employed not

only to find water but also metals. Anciently, its functions were still further enlarged, and it was used to mark out boundaries, to discover corpses, and to bring to justice murderers and thieves.

In what way it traced boundaries we do not know; but if it could be thus employed at the present day, it would be very useful, and save a good many disputes, ending not unfrequently in wars; so that it seems a pity that the lost belief in its virtues cannot be revived. Hermes, the god of boundaries, is always represented with the caduceus, which was doubtless the magic wand thus employed; and the older Egyptian Hermes or Thoth taught the Egyptians to measure their fields; whilst Romulus employed a *litnus*, which Plutarch describes as a bent stick, to measure out the various regions of Rome. This *litnus* was afterwards laid up in the temple of Mars as a precious relic.

In the present day, the rod is used only to discover water and metals. In Cornwall it is very commonly called into requisition for the latter purpose; and Cornish miners, gifted with the power of the rod, have been employed to search for metals and for water both in Australia and South Africa, and, we believe, generally with success. It is possible that their success may be traced to some knowledge picked up of geological features, or not unfrequently of peculiarities of vegetation in the near neighbourhood of metals and of water. But it must be borne in mind that the vegetation of Australia and the Cape differs too much from that of Cornwall to serve as indications to a stranger; nevertheless, it is easy for a shrewd man to pick up from settlers the description of plants chiefly found near watercourses or mineral deposits. In Cornwall, the veriest tyro in geology would know that serpentine might be found wherever he saw the Cornish heath growing; and so with various other plants and shrubs which love certain soils and will not grow elsewhere; and it is probable that a knowledge of botany might be as useful to the 'prospector' for metals as that of geology; but it is the fact of the movement of the rod in *unskilled* hands, and in places where neither geology nor botany could be a guide, which requires explanation.

It is, however, in the ancient and widespread use of the rod as an implement of divination that the chief interest of the subject lies. All writers who have treated of rhabdomancy, or divination by the rod, have agreed in assigning to it a very high antiquity. They trace it from Scythia, where it is supposed to have originated, to Assyria, Palestine, Greece, Etruria, Rome, and by another route, through Russia and Germany to England. But if we may judge from sculptures, the use of the rod was by no means confined to the eastern hemisphere, for a very ancient Peruvian sculpture represents a figure bearing a forked stick, upon which is perched a bird, both being emblems of divination and augury.

Many traces of this old form of divination may be found in the Bible. Jerome, Cyril, and other commentators assert that the Jews learnt this form of divination in Babylon. The passage in Hosea iv. 12, 'My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them,' is referred to the practice of rhabdomancy; and it

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 bot. the idol, the figure of some god
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 of the th ultazar, Gaspar, and Melchior.
 The rod and Aaron will naturally
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 Moses to sweet waters of Marah ; or, as
 some say, beca ts faint resemblance to
 the almond, of the rod of Aaron was
 composed.

The rod of Aa of almond ; but tradition says that th . Moses—which was called the rod of the prophets—was cut by Adam from a myrtle of paradise, and was given to him by Shoaib, the father of Zipporah, to whom it had descended, in order to drive away the wild beasts from his flocks. The power of this rod of Moses over the waters was not confined to bringing water from the rock ; it was also used to convert the rivers and streams of Egypt into blood, and to divide the waters of the Red Sea. It was probably from this apparently divine approval of the use of rods in various ways, that permission was given by law to the Frisians, after their conversion to Christianity, to use divining-rods in proving homicide, and the ceremony was performed in church before the altar. Two twigs, one marked with the sign of the cross, were covered with clean wool and laid upon the altar or the holy relics, and a prayer made that God would by a sign discover the guilty.

It cannot be doubted that in all countries and in all ages, the rod or staff, either plain or variously ornamented, has been used as a symbol of authority ; the sceptre of modern monarchs has been handed down from the kings and gods of Rome, Greece, Etruria, Babylon, India, and Egypt ; and Bancroft (*Native Races of the Pacific*) says : 'The merchants of Mexico had a god called Zeacatecoatl, the god who guides. The principal image of this god was the figure of a man walking with a staff. Practically, however, every merchant revered his own staff as the representative or symbol of this god.' Hence we see that veneration for the rod or staff is by no means confined to the eastern hemisphere, although we are better acquainted with the history of divination by the rod in the Old World than in the New.

Lenormant, in his book on *Les Sciences Occultes en Asie* points out the extreme development of this superstition among the Fins ; he says : 'Whatever might be the power of those enchantments which controlled nature and supernatural beings, spirits, and gods, there is a talisman still more powerful, for it arrests their effect, and protects from it those who possess it : it is the "celestial rod," analogous to the divining-rod of the magi of India. The gods themselves can only be secured against certain enchantments by virtue of this rod. Wainamöinea, menaced by the chief sorcerer of Lapland, replies to him : "The Lapp

cannot injure me by his enchantments, for I have in my hand the celestial wand ; and he who hates me, he who creates mischief, does not possess it.'" Magicians everywhere used a wand or rod with which to command or control the spirits they summoned, and with it they traced circles or other signs on the ground, within which figure the enchantment was confined. Of these forms, the circle was the most common ; it doubtless indicated the sun, whilst the crescent indicated the moon ; and it is to this latter that the form of the divining-rod may, we think, be traced, for the power of the moon over water was recognised in very ancient times. The moon-god was symbolised by horns, which are everywhere emblems of power, and by forked sticks resembling horns ; hence, twigs were used by the Anglo-Saxons for casting lots, and are still used by the Hottentots in the same manner.

Two very curious survivals of the old superstitions connected with the use of forked sticks in divination may still be traced in common use : one is the practice of breaking the merrythought of a fowl, the bird specially used in augury, in order to have a wish ; and the other is the 'making horns,' by pointing the first and fourth fingers at a person credited with the possession of the 'evil-eye,' in order to avert the ill effects of such a person's glance. This is still in common use in Italy, and probably in other eastern lands.

It is perhaps hardly surprising that with so many respectable authorities to vouch for the 'power of the rod,' there should still remain believers in its efficacy ; for we all know how difficult it is to eradicate any belief or any ancient custom which has once taken possession of the mind of the populace. There are innumerable old customs still surviving which may be traced back to prehistoric times, and amongst them, this of the use of the divining-rod ; nevertheless, it will remain as a singular page in the history of 1887, that, in commemoration of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, a well was dug in Suffolk on a spot indicated by a divining-rod in the hands of an expert summoned from Bristol for the purpose.

HELEN'S ESCAPE.

CHAPTER III.

JACK CORNER's opinion about Monsieur Pontneuf naturally produced a vivid impression upon me ; for the notion that my quiet, polite, refined professor could be the accomplice of men whose notions and acts were just at this time arousing the horror of the civilised world, had never entered my head. But when I came to think over it, the idea was not so ridiculous as it had at first appeared ; for the position of Monsieur Pontneuf in my house was just such a one as would disarm suspicion, and he had innumerable opportunities of corresponding and plotting and arranging without the smallest chance of detection. Still, there was not sufficient reason for me to take any action in the matter, and certainly the scrap of conversation I had overheard in the summer-house did not strike me as being of a particularly compromising nature ; indeed, the impression I gained therefrom was that Monsieur Pontneuf, so far from being 'wanted' himself, was on the lookout for somebody else. But Jack Corner was not the sort

of man to hint so grave a suspicion against any one without good reason, and I felt sure that he must have overheard or have learnt something which had warranted him in saying what he did to me.

As we were going to Paris the next day, and as Jack was about to start on what he called 'his farewell bachelor jaunt,' I had asked him to dine with us, and it occurred to me that Monsieur Pontneuf might join our party, although I knew that as a rule he kept aloof from all social entertainment. To my surprise, the professor gladly and readily accepted my invitation; and appeared at the appointed time, faultlessly arrayed, and looking as unlike the ideal assassin of czars and destroyer of public buildings as could be imagined.

During the dinner, Monsieur Pontneuf showed himself in quite new colours: all his reserve and shyness disappeared; he charmed my wife with his intelligent talk, and still more so by the masterly manner in which he operated on a pair of ducks. He laughed and chatted and joked until it became hard to realise that he was identical with the 'Dismal Froggy' of the villagers.

When the ladies had withdrawn, and a bottle of my choice Burgundy was placed on the table, he expanded still further, until I really regretted that during so long a period I had been without the society of so charming a companion. It was now for the first time that he learned that I had been in Paris during the siege and under the Commune, and the subject seemed to interest him very much, especially when I related the episode of Mr Rayne's mysterious arrival and departure. I asked him what he thought about Mr Rayne.

'It is plain enough what he was,' replied the professor. 'He was one of that rascally so-called Foreign Legion enlisted from the scum of all the great cities of Europe—men who had nothing to lose and everything to gain, who hailed the supremacy of the Commune as an opportunity for enriching themselves at the expense of others; and to whom is due, quite as much as to my own countrymen, the shameful destruction of public buildings. He had probably been caught pillaging and had escaped to you.'

Jack Corner spoke villainous French, but he could understand most of what was said.

'Is Monsieur a Republican?' he asked.

I should state here that before the professor had arrived, Jack had told me that he intended, if possible, to find out who and what our guest was, and I knew that with this simple question Jack was commencing his 'pumping' process, especially as he pushed the bottle to the professor as often as he could, with the idea, no doubt, of loosening the professor's tongue.

'No, sir,' replied Monsieur Pontneuf with true refugee dignity. 'I am a Bonapartist—one of a party almost as much detested in Paris just now as a Communeard or a German, or I should not be teaching my native language in England.'

I took no part in the conversation which ensued between the two men, a conversation which, under a social guise, reminded me very much of a passage of wit between a clever cross-examining counsel and an equally clever witness. Indeed, I was rather interested in the result; and in order that my presence should not act as a deterrent,

I had another bottle brought on table, and after entreating my guests not to hurry themselves, left the room on the plea that I had a few domestic arrangements to see to. There was nothing unbecoming as a host in my doing this, for we never gave formal dinner-parties, and I knew that Jack Corner's aunt was perfectly happy in the drawing-room, talking local gossip with my wife, and listening to Helen's old English ballads at the piano.

My two guests, however, must have been vastly absorbed in their talk, for I had been an hour in the drawing-room before Jack came in. I noticed that he was rather pale, and when he turned over the leaves of Helen's music, that his hand shook; so I took the first opportunity of asking him what had passed between him and the professor, and why the Frenchman had not come in.

'He's a mystery—that's all I can tell you. I haven't got much out of him, for he is far too wide awake, and he has gone off without a word.'

'Gone off!' I exclaimed. 'What do you mean, Jack? I hope you haven't offended him?'

'I hope not,' replied Jack, smiling. 'But I think he began to see the drift of my talk, and I don't think he liked it. However, I may be mistaken, and after all, it is perhaps only his eccentricity.'

Helen and Jack sang duets together, and Jack gave us a rollicking song of the sea, and then we sat down to a quiet rubber of whist, which occupied us until eleven o'clock, when Miss Corner, an old lady of the 'smiler' type, pleased with everybody and everything, showed signs of fatigue.

I escorted them to the gate and afterwards took a stroll alone in the moonlight. Of course the chief place in my thoughts was occupied by the professor, and I could not satisfactorily account for his sudden disappearance from my house, for, so far as I could judge from his usual behaviour, he was the very last man to commit such a breach of good manners as to go away without a word of explanation or farewell. The result of a prolonged meditation, during which I had wandered almost as far as the summer-house, was, that I felt convinced that Jack had been right, and that Monsieur Pontneuf was in reality a great deal more important a personage than he chose to be taken for, whatever the mystery that surrounded him might be. The distant boom of midnight from the church tower warned me that I had gone far enough, if I wished to have a good night's rest before my journey on the next day, and I was turning homewards, when a black patch on the light sandy soil attracted my attention. Stooping down and touching it, I found it stained my finger a dark colour. I struck a light, and saw it was blood. I am not a very nervous man; but I must admit that the coming upon this appalling indication of a dark deed at such a lonely spot, at such a weird, still hour of the night, produced a feeling within me which was closely akin to terror. Then I noticed that there was blood farther on, patch after patch, as if some one had been wounded and dragged or had dragged himself along. I followed it until it stopped; but the trampled and torn appearance of the bushes on the stream side of the path showed me that some one had passed down towards the stream, which at this place forms a

deep wide pool. Down I went in the bright moonlight, guided by the appearance of the bushes, until, as I anticipated, all further traces were lost at the water's brink. I looked carefully about for some tell-tale relic of what had happened—a shred of cloth or an article of clothing; but there was nothing. I felt sure that something terrible had been enacted here, and instantly I associated Monsieur Pontneuf with it, although I scarcely dare think that Jack Corner was the victim.

I stood horror-struck for some moments, unable to collect my thoughts, irresolute as to how I should act; and the longer I stood, the more firmly I became convinced that my suave, urbane professor was, as Jack Corner had suspected, a fiend in human shape—that Jack had spoken too freely of his suspicions, and had been made an example of the saying that 'dead men tell no tales.'

Then I strode off in the direction of the Cedars, Jack Corner's house, situated but a quarter of an hour's walk from my own, in a sequestered little dell near the London Road. It was approached through a lodge-gate which opened on to a winding road through dark fir-trees; but Jack, who was of unostentatious habits, had dispensed with the services of a lodge-keeper, although, as the London Road was lonely and much infested by tramps, the gates were securely fastened every night. My surprise, therefore, may be imagined when I found the gates wide open, and my suspicions as to my poor friend's fate were thereby confirmed, for I knew that if Jack had returned home in the usual course, he would have seen that his premises were closed for the night. With a courage which could only have been the fruit of despair, I almost ran up the gloomy, weirdly shadowed road to the house. It was dark and silent, and although I rang and hammered at the door for a quarter of an hour, I could get neither reply nor admittance.

Another horrible notion crossed my mind as I stood there in the still night, wondering what my next step should be. Suppose that, after having disposed of Jack Corner, the murderer, in order more effectually to secure his escape, had gone to the house, had made away with Miss Corner and poor Gabrielle, and that a forced entrance into it would reveal their lifeless bodies?

Before, however, giving the alarm and procuring the assistance of the police, I determined to visit Pontneuf's lodging in the village; and I began to retrace my steps down the avenue. I stopped short after I had gone a little way, and for the first time I remembered Jack Corner's coachman, who was also man-of-all-work—reported to be the favoured swain of Gabrielle—who slept over the stable, and who, although he was sufficiently far from the house to be unaware of anything that might occur there, might aid me in my investigation. Accordingly, I turned off to the stable; and here another surprise awaited me. The doors of the coachhouse were wide open, and the little pony-trap, which I knew Jack had bought as a wedding present for my Helen, was not visible. I called out to the coachman above, but could get no reply; so I lit a stable lantern, and, prepared for further horrors, ascended the stairs. The man's door was open, and he was lying on his bed, so gagged with his own neckcloth that he could neither see nor speak, whilst his arms and legs were

securely fastened with carriage straps; but I was relieved to find that at anyrate he was alive, for upon my entering the room, he moved. I quickly released him from his bonds, and, stammering with excitement and fright, he told me that he had gone to bed as usual at ten o'clock, and had fallen asleep; that he was violently awakened by feeling the neckcloth tied tightly over his face; that on attempting to rise, he found that his legs had already been bound, and that, in spite of his struggles, his arms were presently bound also. He could not tell me who had done it; but said that immediately afterwards he heard the pony put into the trap and driven off.

To my mind, therefore, it was clear that Pontneuf had escaped. However, with the coachman I went on to the cottage where the professor lodged, and after some difficulty, succeeded in awaking the owner. 'Is Monsieur Pontneuf in?' I asked.

'Yes, sir, I believe so,' replied the man. 'I've been abed since nine o'clock, so I couldn't say for sartin sure, but he generally is in at this time.'

'Get a light, and let us see,' I said.

The man hesitated. Perhaps he thought I had been drinking, to make such a request, for every one knew that I had a small dinner-party that evening, and that the Frenchman had been one of the guests.

'Do you hear? Look sharp! It's a matter of life and death,' I continued; and this brought him to his senses, for he presently appeared with a candle.

We went to the professor's room; the door was open, but the room was empty, although the Frenchman's portmanteau was there. I opened it, and within I found his dress-clothes, rammed in evidently with haste, soaked with water, torn, and bedabbled with clay and blood.

The two men stood gaping wonderingly at the clothes, for of course they knew nothing of what I suspected; but to me the case was clear. Words must have passed between my poor friend and the professor upon the subject of Socialism over that second bottle of wine. The Frenchman had gone out, had waylaid Jack, and, after a desperate struggle, had killed him, and flung his body into the stream. Then he must have gone on to the Cedars, perhaps have made away with Miss Corner and Gabrielle, bound and gagged the coachman, and escaped in his victim's pony-chaise.

So I impressed secrecy on the two men, but not with the faintest hope that they could keep such a *bonne bouche* of gossip to themselves, locked the door of the professor's room, and turned homewards, troubled in my mind not only how to take the immediate action which was necessary, but how to break the news to my wife and my poor Helen.

Then I thought of Miss Corner and Gabrielle; again turned back, called up the local constable, and with him proceeded to the house. We broke it open; we searched every nook and corner from attic to basement; but not a trace of either Miss Corner or of Gabrielle could we find, although their belongings were in their rooms. This completed the veil of mystery around the affair; and I felt that I had been completely outwitted by

this scoundrel, whom I had welcomed to my own hearth as a friend.

Early next morning—or rather that same morning, for it was past three ere I crept home to my anxious wife, whose curiosity I had to satisfy with a relation of what had happened—men were set to work to drag the stream for the body, which I felt sure lay hidden somewhere. But nothing was found—a strange fact, considering that the pool, although deep, was very small, and that the stream was both shallow and sluggish. There was picked up, however, a torn, bloodstained handkerchief, marked with the initials J. C.

When I returned home, heartbroken, and not knowing how next to act—for, during my quiet, monotonous life in this little place, my faculties for grappling with sudden emergencies had rusted—I found that my wife had told Helen of my suspicions. The poor girl's agony at this cruel dashing away from her lips of the cup of happiness she was about to taste, was the most painful thing I had ever witnessed; and I resolved that I would spare no time or trouble or expense in endeavouring to bring the villain to justice who had so foully wronged her.

We had a London detective down to aid the local police in their researches; but their united industry and sagacity could throw no light on the mystery; and at the end of three weeks we were as much in the dark as before.

When the clothing found in the professor's portmanteau was searched, there was found a small notebook, on the fly-leaf of which was written the name De Bussy. The book was alphabetically arranged with proper names of all nationalities, followed by addresses in Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, and St Petersburg. One leaf alone was torn off almost from the top, and, to my amazement, I saw on the remaining fragment the name Rayne. Jack Corner's surmise had evidently been correct; the *soi-disant* professor was nothing else but a secret agent of the Socialist party; and I was convinced that the names in this book were those of other agents in various parts; and that the Englishman who had taken refuge in my room at the Rue de Douai six years previously was one. That this particular leaf, and this only, was torn was to me very significant.

SOME ARMLESS WONDERS.

THE feats which have been performed by persons born without hands and arms are surprising. Amongst women, they have ranged from the painting of portraits to the more homely work of sewing and knitting; while men with marked ability have carried on farming and other outdoor work requiring both strength and skill. These wonderful characters have attracted the attention of kings, peers, preachers, and other notable people, and the facts respecting them are of considerable interest. We give particulars of a few of the more famous examples.

The first person of this class of whom we have any account is John Valerius, a native of the Upper Palatinate of Germany. He was born in 1667, without hands or arms; and he had also the misfortune at an early age to lose his parents.

He had to exhibit himself, as the only means of making money. The feats he learned to perform with his toes and feet were marvellous. After visiting several countries, he arrived in London in 1698, and remained there until 1705. During the first year of his residence in England, a book was published containing a number of pictures representing him executing numerous feats, including the following: playing at cards and dice; shaving himself; standing erect on his left leg, holding a rapier between his great and second toe; balancing a chair with his right leg; balancing himself on a pedestal and taking up dice with his mouth; lying at full length with his head on the ground and recovering himself by the support of his left leg; lying on his back, taking up a glass of liquor and conveying it with his toes to his head; balancing a glass of liquor on his forehead; standing on a stool, taking a glass of liquor from the ground with his mouth; seated on a stool with both feet conveying a glass of liquor to the top of his head; seated on a stool and writing with his toes; seated on a stool, taking a pistol, and firing it with his right toes; seated on a low stool, he took up a musket, and by both feet discharged it. In bidding adieu to his visitors, he went through the ceremony in the most approved fashion. He took his hat from the floor, placed it on his head, and then removed it, bowed gracefully, and expressed his thanks to the company for their patronage.

A few years prior to the visit of Valerius to this country, there passed away in a remote Midland village, Sarah Tissington, the armless wonder of Carsington, Derbyshire. The particulars respecting her which have come down to us are brief, but full of interest, and occur in the parish register of her native village, under date of September 29, 1688, and are as follows: 'Sarah Tissington, a poor young woman, born into the world without any hands or arms, yet was very nimble and active in the use of her feet, with which she could not only take up things from the ground, and play at most childish games with her playfellows when she was a child; but also, when grown up, she could knit, dig in the garden, and do divers other services with her feet. She was aged twenty-four or twenty-five years, and departed this life the day and year aforesaid, born and buried at Carsington.'

Miss Hawtin, another native of the Midlands, attracted some notice in her day. She was born at Coventry, and was a pretty and intelligent woman. As a needlewoman she showed skill, and she was expert at cutting out with the scissors elaborate watch-papers. Her penmanship was of considerable merit. The operations she performed with her toes and feet almost equalled those done by folks having the use of their hands and arms.

Early in the reign of George II., Matthew Buchinger landed in England from the Continent, and made a great reputation. Some writers

regarded him as the greatest wonder that had visited this country. He was a very small man, only measuring twenty-nine inches in height. His announcements, written by himself, are very amusing, and detail the feats he performed. One of his notices is before us, and reads as follows :

BY AUTHORITY.

Lately arriv'd and to be seen at the Globe and Duke of Malbrough's House in Fleet Street, A German born without Hands, Feet, or Thighs, (that never was in this kingdom before), who does such miraculous Actions as none else can do with Hands and Feet. He has had the Honour to perform before most Kings and Princes, particularly several Times before King George. He makes a pen and writes several Hands, as quick and well as any Writing-master, and will write with any for a Wager ; he drawes Faces to the Life, and Coates of Armes, Pictures, Flowers, &c., with a Pen, very curiously. He threads a fine Needle very quick ; shuffles a Pack of Cards and deals them very swift. He plays upon the Dulcimer as well as any Musician. He does many surprising Things with Caps and Balls, and gives the Curious great Satisfaction thereby. He plays at Skittles several Ways very well ; shaves himself very dexterously, and many other Things too tedious to insert.

This is written by Matthew Buchinger, at London, 171 $\frac{1}{2}$, born without Hands and Feet at Anspach, 1674, the 3 Jan.

The Rev. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had an eye for anything out-of-the-way, and his letters and journals are full of curious facts on many subjects. A correspondent named Walton wrote to him under date October 14, 1788, and gave details of an interview with a man named William Kingston, born at Ditcheat, near Bristol. 'I went with a friend,' says Walton, 'to visit this man, who highly entertained us at breakfast by putting his half-naked foot upon the table as he sat, and carrying his tea and toast between his great and second toe to his mouth, with as much facility as if his foot had been a hand and his toes fingers. I put half a sheet of paper upon the floor, with a pen and inkhorn : he threw off his shoes as he sat, took the inkhorn in the toes of his left foot, and held the pen in those of his right. He then wrote three lines, as well as most ordinary writers, and as swiftly. He writes out all his own bills and other accounts. He then showed how he shaves himself with a razor in his toes, and how he combs his own hair. He can dress and undress himself, except buttoning his clothes. He feeds himself, and can bring both his meat and his broth to his mouth by holding the fork and spoon in his toes. He cleans his own shoes ; can clean the knives, light the fire, and do almost every other domestic business as well as any other man. He can make hencoops. He is a farmer by occupation. He can milk his own cows with his toes, and cut his

own hay, bind it in bundles, and carry it about the field for his cattle. Last winter he had eight heifers constantly to fodder. The last summer he made all his own hayricks. He can do all the business of the hayfield (except mowing) as fast and as well, with only his feet, as others can with rakes and forks. He goes to the fields and catches his horse ; he saddles and bridles him with his feet and toes. If he has a sheep among his flock that ails, he can separate it from the rest, drive it into a corner, and catch it when nobody else can. He then examines it, and applies a remedy to it. He is so strong in his teeth that he can lift ten pecks of beans with them. He can throw a great sledge-hammer as far with his feet as other men can with their hands.' Mr Wesley's correspondent concluded his letter by observing that Kingston could almost do as much without as others could with their arms.

We find a record of the marriage of an armless woman in the parish register of St James's Church, Bury St Edmunds. It is stated on the 5th November 1832, 'Christopher Newsam married Charity Morrell. Charity Morrell being entirely without arms, the ring was placed upon the fourth toe of the left foot, and she wrote her name in this register with her right foot.'

Miss Biffin was one of the most celebrated of this class of people, and in her earlier years was one of the popular sights of the large English fairs. She sewed with her toes, cut out paper patterns and performed other ingenious feats with her toes. She was also an artist. This pretty and talented woman was seen at Bartholomew fair by the Earl of Morton, and she so pleased him, that he took a deep interest in her welfare. She painted portraits, the pencil and brush being attached to her shoulder. The earl sat for his likeness, which he took away after each sitting, so that he might be able to prove it was the work of only Miss Biffin. The painting was a successful one ; and in the year 1808 he brought it under the notice of George III., who was so much pleased with the skill displayed under disadvantages, that at his own expense he engaged Mr Craig the artist to give her lessons in art. George IV. also patronised Miss Biffin ; and from William IV. she enjoyed a small pension ; whereupon, at the desire of the earl, she retired from life amongst the shows. He was a firm friend, and for twenty years corresponded with her. After fourteen years' retirement, she reappeared as Mrs Wright, a skilful miniature painter, in one or two of the larger provincial towns. She died at Liverpool in 1850, and was buried in St James's Cemetery ; her grave-stone bearing the following inscription : 'Reader, pause. Deposited beneath are the remains of SARAH BIFFIN, who was born without Hands or Arms, at East Quantox Head, county of Somerset, 25th October 1784 ; died at Liverpool 2d October 1850. Few have passed through the vale of life so much the child of hapless fortune as the deceased, and yet possessed of Mental Endowments of no ordinary kind. Gifted with singular talents as an artist, thousands have been gratified with the able productions of her pencil, while her versatile conversation and agreeable manners elicited the admiration of all. This tribute to the memory of one so universally known is paid by those who were best acquainted with the

character it so briefly portrays,' &c. Several portraits of Miss Biffin have been engraved, and one is given in the *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair* by Henry Morley.

PARSON JIM.

A WESTERN SKETCH.

THE express trains of that monument of engineering skill, the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, now daily traverse the extreme eastern portion of the Rocky Mountains, lying between the city of Denver on the north and Pueblo on the south; and summer tourists, as well as all-the-year-round men of business, pass over the picturesque road by hundreds and by thousands in the course of a single year. There was a time, however—not very long since, either—when white men were very scarce in that section, and when the only means of locomotion was a much dilapidated Concord Coach, whose trips were alleged to be *weekly*, though, as a matter of fact, the time-schedule of said coach was practically filled out to suit the driver, as he, with much 'cussing' and little speed, carried Uncle Sam's mails from stage to stage.

Rather more than twenty years ago, there was, about midway between Denver and Colorado Springs, a point on the road where the broad valley narrowed into a deep and wild gorge, known as the George Washington Gulch. The gorge is there yet, I presume, but the name has apparently disappeared, there being no such station on the railway, nor, so far as I can discover, such a place on the revised maps of Colorado. But in those old days, George Washington Gulch was a relay station of the Denver stage line. Leaving Indians out of the question, they being of a ubiquitous nature, the resident population of the Gulch numbered three souls, all told, while a census would have revealed the fact that these all occupied the same dwelling-house. There was in those times no town or settlement of any account between Denver and the Springs, so that the Stage Company was compelled to establish a number of stations at perfectly wild and unpopulated points, to properly effect changes of horses. So a rough shed had been erected in the Gulch to do duty as a barn for the accommodation of the four horses usually to be found there; while adjoining was a frame mansion, consisting of one apartment, which served as sleeping-room, parlour, dining-hall, and kitchen for the three inhabitants, as well as being the official headquarters of the Honourable Samuel Green, who, in addition to his position as agent of the Stage Company, held a postmaster's commission from the President of the United States.

The Honourable—be it remembered that Mr Green was a government official, though no post-office business had ever passed through his hands, not even a letter from or to himself, unless we count those which had to do with the stage business and went 'dead-head'—the Honourable Samuel Green's companions in the solitude of the Gulch were a negro named Ananias—doubtless from his propensity for prevarication—who was chief groom of the stables; and a half-breed Indian, whose main occupation was to trap and shoot game and then cook it. This latter indi-

vidual was known as Francis Murphy, and his chief failing was a fondness for undiluted whisky.

At the close of a fair summer day, the Honourable Samuel Green, with Messrs Murphy and Ananias, sat together on a bench placed along the front of their residence. The two last-named gentlemen were still enough to justify one in the supposition that they must be sleeping; but the Honourable Samuel was busily engaged in rapping and rubbing two or three little pieces of rock which lay in the palm of one of his hands. He was evidently much interested.

'Nias!' said he at last.

'Sah?' responded the woolly-headed darkey, rubbing his heavy eyes.

'I'm a-goin' through to Denver with Bill to-morrow.' (Bill was one of the drivers on the stage line; the other was Si—abbreviated from Silas.) The postmaster continued: 'You an' Francis Murphy keep awake part o' the time, an' sorter watch things while I'm gone.—Do yer ketch on?'

'Yes, in course, sah.'

Four days later, the Honourable Samuel Green returned to the Gulch from Denver, and brought with him a regular mining kit—picks, mattocks, hammers, shovels, blasting-powder, and other useful articles.

Two weeks passed, and again the postmaster of George Washington Gulch 'went through with Bill'—this time loaded down with samples of rich silver ore.

By the following spring the Gulch was alive with a population of over three hundred white men and three women—not counting Indians and Chinese. George Washington Gulch contained a rich vein of silver—enough to make it a scene of much activity for five whole years.

About a year after the postmaster's important trip to Denver, George Washington Gulch was floating bravely on a floodtide of wealth and prosperity. The Honourable Samuel Green actually had considerable postal business to transact, besides which, a double coach-service had to be put on the road, while Gulch passengers arrived or departed with every coach. Add to this the fact that the postmaster owned an interest in the richest claim in George Washington Gulch, and it will be readily understood that he had developed into an individual of considerable importance.

Still, if one had about that time quietly investigated among the strange characters who formed the curiously cosmopolitan population of that Colorado valley, with a view to learning who among their number was held in the highest esteem, the Honourable Samuel's name would scarcely have received mention. The parson was the favourite among 'the boys;' and hardly a man but would gladly have given his last dollar, ay, or his life's-blood, had anything so serious been necessary, to help the parson out of a tight place. Never let it be imagined for a moment that the parson of the Gulch was the orthodox pastor, in the habit of wearing broad-cloth of clerical cut and white cravats. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, certainly, but it was of the approved cowboy pattern; to a coat he was well-nigh a stranger, being content to appear in a heavy red woollen shirt; while for trousers

he substituted the highly ornamented and picturesque buckskin breeches affected by Mexicans, Indians, and other denizens of the Far West. It is also certain that the title of Reverend had never been, verbally or in writing, prefixed to his name; and yet he knew, and the boys knew, that to be called 'Parson Jim' was in itself a mark of distinction in a district where men were supposed to have no official titles or surnames, while Christian names were invariably reduced to monosyllables.

Parson Jim's record and capabilities were hardly such as would recommend him as a candidate for church-work in communities laying claim to advanced civilisation. He could not read the Pentateuch in the original Hebrew, or discuss the Thirty-nine Articles; but he was a dead-shot with a revolver, and could gracefully ride the back of a bucking broncho. The Westminster Catechism was a sealed book to Parson Jim; but he could set a broken limb, raise a tent, or build a shanty with the next man. And because he was cool as ice when fiery blood coursed through the veins of other men—because he was brave as a lion—because he was gentle as a woman with sick men—because he had a big heart—because he spoke kindly words—and because nothing came amiss to Parson Jim, the rough specimens of humanity in George Washington Gulch loved and respected him as they never could have loved and respected a grave and learned Doctor of Divinity from the East.

Now, in a Western mining town it is a gross breach of etiquette to make inquiries as to a man's pedigree, or to attempt to learn more than he chooses to tell of his history prior to his arrival in the camp. So long as he is 'square' and behaves himself, he is one of 'the boys,' and as such is bound to them by a sort of freemasonry. Hence, when Parson Jim came to the Gulch and announced himself as a preacher, the miners asked no questions. They did not take 'much stock' in preaching, but they were disposed to give the newcomer a 'show;' and when time passed, and Parson Jim proved to their satisfaction that he was made of the right 'stuff,' they not only tolerated him, but made him heartily welcome.

There was no church in the Gulch; there was no schoolhouse; there was not even a hall of any kind. There was, however, a large frame shanty used for a whisky saloon, named by its proprietor 'The Rocky Mountain Sample Rooms.' In the West, be it remembered, all the drinks are samples, no matter if the same consumer gets away with fifty glasses from the same barrel.

Parson Jim made his appearance in the Gulch during the winter immediately following the summer when the Honourable Samuel Green made his important discovery of the existence of silver in the valley. He arrived on a handsome roan mare, without bag or baggage, and made his quarters at the rude hotel connected with the Rocky Mountain Sample Rooms. During the evening, there was a scuffle in the large bar-room, and the newcomer looked in through one of the doors to see what was the trouble. A young and slender lad of perhaps nineteen or twenty years was struggling with a brutal-looking, muscular giant of twice his age. It was only a question of minutes when the big rough fellow would 'down'

his young opponent, and yet the dozen or so of onlookers made no attempt at interference. Just as the new arrival appeared on the scene, the younger combatant got in a nasty blow, which evidently hurt and irritated his opponent. Quick as lightning, the big fellow drew his bowie-knife and raised it, preparatory to plunging it into the lad.

'Hands off, you bully!' shouted the stranger in the doorway. The burly fighter glanced rapidly in the direction from whence these words came, but did not drop the hand which gripped the ugly knife.

'Drop that knife!' thundered the stranger, at the same time laying his hand upon his pistol-pocket.

The bully noticed the last-named action, and letting go the boy, yelled, with added oaths: 'Curse you, shut up! Who are you, anyhow?' The large man was evidently very angry. He held the knife in his left hand, and with his right drew a heavy revolver, which he proceeded to level at the stranger.

'Throw up your hands, quick!' shouted the latter. But the fellow did not hear this warning. Click! went the hammers of the pistols. It was a question of quarter-seconds now. Bang! went one revolver—the stranger's—and the big man fell—dead.

Then there was a momentary silence, followed by some queer ejaculations: 'Dead as a Injin!'—'Served him right!'—'Stranger's a plucky un!'—'Be-ewtiful shot!'—'Who air you, stranger, anyhow?'

'Boys,' said the new arrival, when at last he had a chance to speak, 'this is a sort of business that I am not fond of. Sometimes it is necessary, though, as it was to-night. I am sorry; but let's say no more about it. I pay the funeral expenses and answer all questions.—You want to know who I am? Well, I'm a preacher; and there'll be preaching in this room, with the landlord's permission, next Sunday morning at ten o'clock.'

It was a strange introduction for a preacher, but it was perhaps the best one he could have had in that wild place. Anyway, the respect of those rough miners was lastingly secured, and from that time on he grew in favour as a man and a preacher.

In those old coach-days there was one serious drawback to travelling between Denver and George Washington Gulch—the road was infested by a small but hitherto invincible band of desperadoes, under the leadership of a regular dare-devil known as 'Kansas.' This man Kansas had attacked and robbed the coaches fifteen or eighteen times within six months; and though he had never been known to be accompanied by more than three confederates, his band was the terror of the stage-drivers and their passengers. Once the proprietors of the stage line had organised a posse of armed men, who scoured the country in search of Kansas and his crew; but the outlaw remained at large, and within a week lightened a coach of seven thousand dollars-worth of silver ingots.

Late in the evening of a summer day, when, with the exception of a party of gamblers at the 'Sample Rooms,' all the citizens of the Gulch

were soundly sleeping, a solitary horseman rode up to the unpretentious shanty which did duty for a parsonage. It was nothing but a two-roomed hut, rudely constructed and roughly furnished. On this occasion the 'parsonage' was in sole charge of Ah Wing, a 'heathen Chinese,' who acted as Parson Jim's cook and chambermaid. Ah Wing was himself perchance in some Chinaman's paradise, for his sleepy features, usually utterly void of expression, were illumined by a yellow smile. The parson was off, as he frequently was, on a trip down the valley, and the parsonage, being well removed from the main portion of the settlement, was seldom visited during his absence. The dreaming Celestial was therefore much surprised, and indeed frightened, when he was awakened from his slumber by a violent hammering at the barred door. He cautiously drew back the wooden bolt, and peered out into the warm, starlit night. Close to the door he beheld a stalwart man with long black hair and a heavy moustache, holding in one hand the bridle of a large horse, while on his left arm he carried a girl—evidently dead or in a fainting condition.

'Where is the parson?' asked the stranger in a firm but quiet voice.

'Parson Jim he go way muchee; he no come home till Slunday,' replied the surprised Chinaman.

'Well, hold my horse, and hold him tight. This young woman is very sick, and I'm going to lay her on the parson's bed.'

He entered the room, and tenderly laid his burden on the camp cot which Parson Jim used for a bed. Then he tore a fly-leaf from an old book which he saw lying around, and producing a short end of a pencil from his pocket, wrote hastily and somewhat clumsily a few words.

'See here,' he said to the Chinaman, as he stepped to the door; 'give this piece of paper to the parson as soon as he returns. This young lady is hurt a little, and frightened a great deal, and she has fainted. Pretty soon she will come around. When she does, see that you take good care of her, you yellow-skinned, white-livered duck! Perhaps you'll behave yourself all the better if I tell you my name is Kansas!'

The Chinaman perceptibly trembled as he heard the dreaded name, but said nothing, and the handsome stranger sprang to his horse and rode away.

Ah Wing quietly surveyed his new charge, and saw that she was a yellow-haired, fair-complexioned girl of perhaps fifteen or sixteen years, slender, and evidently unused to work of any kind. The Chinaman faithfully kept watch all night, and noticed that the girl passed gradually from her faint into an easy slumber.

It was six o'clock in the morning, and the girl was still sleeping, when Parson Jim returned. Ah Wing felt much relieved, and at once handed the note to his master. It was written in a rough, unknown hand, but this is what he managed to decipher:

PARSON—You are understood to be a pretty good fellow. This girl's father was accidentally shot this evening in a scuffle with the coachpeople. She must be cared for; and I select you for the job. I know your record, and you

are the only man in Colorado I would trust with an unprotected girl. I will see that you are supplied from time to time with money for her keep.—Be true to this trust, or look out for
KANSAS.

The parson twirled the paper in his fingers, shoved it into his hip-pocket, and then asked a few questions of Ah Wing.

'What kind of a fellow brought the girl here?'

'Muchee fine Melican man,' replied the little Chinaman.

'Would you know him again if you saw him, Ah Wing?'

'Yes, siree; Ah Wing no fool.'

Half an hour later, the fair young stranger opened her eyes, and the parson, in his homely but pleasant way, proceeded to make her feel at home.

'I am afraid, miss, that you have just passed through serious trouble; but try and feel that you are at least safe and among friends. You are welcome to all this poor house affords, and anything we can do for you shall be done.'

But the girl burst into a flood of tears, and could speak no words but 'Poor father—poor father!'

Later on, Parson Jim learned that she and her father were the only passengers on the preceding day from Denver, and that they were going through to Colorado Springs on their way to New Orleans. The coach was attacked by highwaymen, and as the girl's father, Mr Winship, rather unwisely resisted them, he was shot dead. Then the girl had fainted, and remembered nothing until she found herself in Parson Jim's best room. Her name, she said, was Ethel Winship.

Putting the girl's story and the contents of the note together, it looked as though the desperado Kansas had killed the girl's father, and prompted by some feelings of remorse and pity, had undertaken to help the bereaved daughter.

A day or two later, when Ethel was somewhat rested and her grief less poignant, Parson Jim had another talk with her.

'What would you like to do?' he said.

'O sir, there is nothing for me to do. Get me work of some kind here in this place. We had no friends—father and I had lived and travelled together since my mother died, many years ago. We were getting poor, too, I know, and my father had some plans of his own, but what they were, I do not know. If you will help me to get a living here, I shall be much obliged, and I am willing to try anything.'

'My poor child,' said Parson Jim in his kindly voice, 'I am truly sorry for you. If you can be content in my rough home for a while, stay here until we can manage something better for you. I have no one for whom I care, or who cares for me—only the boys in the camp. But those same boys will tell you that not a hair of your head will be hurt while you stay under my roof. I have plenty of this world's wealth—more than the boys imagine—and I can afford a slight addition to my family.'

So she stayed, and found that Parson Jim's words were true. She could not have been treated more as a lady had she been an earl's

daughter and the guest of a dowager-duchess. As the weeks passed, Parson Jim managed to add a couple of cute little rooms to the parsonage, one of which was 'my lady's chamber,' and the other the 'parlour.' Then, too, pretty carpets and furniture came from Denver, and the boys began to think that the parson was putting on 'lugs.' But they excused a good deal in the parson, and really vied with one another in paying homage in their rough way to the parson's ward.

Of course they soon knew the story; and Parson Jim had shown the Honourable Samuel Green and one or two others the note that Kansas had left with Ethel Winship.

Months fled, and Ethel stayed on at the Gulch. She became contented, and much appreciated the parson's care and efforts to make her comfortable. She showed her gratitude in a hundred womanly ways, and kept the parsonage as neat and pretty as if it had been in Massachusetts or the English Midlands, instead of in a wild Colorado valley. Only, every time news came of a robbery or murder by Kansas and his gang, would the poor girl become agitated, and cry for vengeance on the man who took from her a dear father.

Three years slipped quickly away at George Washington Gulch. The robber had evidently not forgotten his promise to provide for the girl; for, at odd times, a packet of money had been found on the outside of the parson's window-sill, marked 'From Kansas.' It had always been placed there overnight, in a mysterious manner; for no one was ever seen to do it. Parson Jim himself still preached every Sunday in the Sample Rooms, and was still a prime favourite with the miners, though they sometimes wondered why a man who was evidently so well 'fixed' as the parson should elect to stay in a rough, out-of-the-way place like the Gulch.

Ethel Winship had grown into a beautiful woman, and was good as she was pretty. Parson Jim perceived this. Parson Jim was in love with his ward.

One evening in the spring-time, he told Ethel of his love, and asked her to be his wife.

'I cannot answer that question, dear Jim,' said the girl. 'Myself is the only reward which I can offer to any man, because I have naught else. So I have long ago made up my mind to keep myself to offer, if needs be, as a reward to the man who shall kill or capture Kansas. If it were not for that firm resolve, I would say "Yes" at once—for, Jim, you deserve my love and all I can give you. But do not ask me, dear. Perhaps Kansas will be captured, anyhow—and soon—by some one who will never think of reward. Then—well, don't think badly of me, Jim, dear: two things would make me a happy girl—vengeance on Kansas, and the right to call you my husband.'

Parson Jim heard these words sadly enough; but he thought too much of Ethel and her resolves to seek hastily to turn her from her purpose even for his own benefit.

Early in the following summer, towards sunset, Ethel sat on the porch of the parsonage quite alone. The parson was away, and had been away all day, and might not return until the following evening. One of the men from the Gulch approached and doffed his hat.

'Parson in, miss?'

'No, Zeke; he is away to-day.'

'Well, I wuz jest a-goin' ter tell him that we've got news that Kansas is likely ter be up ter mischief 'way about ten miles along ther valley ter-night. It's the first time we e'er got a pointer as ter Kansas's tricks, an' some uv us thought as like enuff we might make up a little crowd to down his nobbs. Parson's mostly game fer bizness that's right an' squar, so I kim up ter tell him.'

Ethel's eyes flashed, and the warm blood coursed quickly through her veins, as a wild thought occurred to her. She could ride like an Indian, and she was a dead shot; Parson Jim had taken a special delight in making her a good horsewoman and clever with a pistol.

'I will go,' she said. 'I'm not going to ask if I may go; I'm going, Zeke.'

'All right, miss; only it's risky work, an' not fit fer ladies. Mebbe ther parson wouldn't like fer yer ter go?'

'Yes, he would, Zeke—yes, he would.—Don't you know—don't you remember all about my poor father? I will go; and if I get within range of Kansas, I will shoot him without mercy.'

So Ethel joined the party of fifteen or twenty armed men who rode out that night for the purpose of capturing, if possible, Kansas and his desperadoes. They rode in as wide a line as the valley would permit, so that no company of horsemen might pass them unnoticed, and this plan proved a good one. About ten o'clock at night they espied four horsemen, evidently awaiting the coach, and closed in upon them. Zeke insisted on keeping Ethel Winship back, and made her promise to stay with him if the boys could effect a quick capture. But, no; the outlaws knew that certain death awaited them should they be captured, and resolved to fight dearly for their lives. There was a sharp, quick interchange of pistol-shots. Three of the robbers and three of their pursuers fell from their saddles. The fourth desperado put spurs to his horse and dashed right through the crowd of miners, who, in their surprise at his action, allowed him to pass. The desperate man emptied all the charges of his revolver behind him, as he galloped, threw the pistol down, and drew another from his belt. He rode in the direction of Ethel and Zeke, and they could see that he was a magnificent man, with long black hair and a black moustache.

'Kansas!' muttered Zeke.

Ethel no sooner heard that detested name, than she levelled a revolver at the man riding rapidly past. It required a steady arm and a sure eye to hit such a mark; but she did it. Click—bang—and a bullet lodged in the brain of the highwayman. A dozen men rode up and lifted the man. He was dead.

They laid him back on the ground, and one of the men, more curious than the rest, proceeded to examine the wound in his temple. To do so, he brushed back the long black hair, and discovered that it was false. Then he looked closely at the heavy moustache: that also was false; so he pulled both wig and moustache from the dead man. As he did so, a long and piercing scream rent the air, and Ethel Winship threw herself upon the corpse of the highwayman.

'O my God! my poor Jim!—my poor Jim! I have murdered you!' And then she fainted.

'Parson Jim!' almost whispered a dozen men.

One of the slightly wounded ruffians who also stood near, between two of his captors, nodded his head and said: 'Yes, Parson Jim. He fooled you boys badly. We call him Kansas!'

When they lifted the girl from the dead body of Parson Jim, or Kansas—Ethel Winship's lover and the slayer of her father—she, too, was dead. Kansas was punished, and Ethel's father was avenged.

HOCKTIDE IN BERKSHIRE.

HUNGERFORD, a small but pretty town at the extreme west end of the royal county of Berks, is one of the few places in England as yet untouched by municipal reform, and the manner in which town matters are carried on remains the same as when it received its charter with various rights of pasture, shooting, and fishing from John of Gaunt in 1362. The constitution of the governing body is as follows: 'High-constable,' feofees, portreeve, bailiff, tithing-men, and the Hocktide jury. No one can serve the office of high-constable until he has served the offices of tithing-man, bailiff, and portreeve. All who have filled these offices are eligible, and the Hocktide jury have the power to elect. The high-constable is during his term of office lord of the manor, and likewise coroner for the borough, and no town business can be settled without his sanction. The bailiff has to collect all market and other tolls; and the portreeve has to gather in all quit-rents, the same to be handed to the high-constable.

The 'tithing-men,' or in common speech, 'tuttimen,' are selected from the tradesmen of the town; and their duties are somewhat unique. Before the establishment of the county police, they had to act as constables, and assist in preserving order in the town. In addition to this, 'on Hockney Day'—which is the Tuesday following the Easter week—they have to visit each house in the borough and demand a coin of the realm from each male; and have the privilege of taking, if not freely given, a kiss from each female. As a rule, the ladies take the salute in good part, as the writer of this can testify, having served the office. Some are coy and run away, but generally allow themselves to be caught. The said tithing-men carry each a staff about six feet long, bedecked with choice flowers, and having streamers of blue ribbon; the whole being surmounted with a cup and spike bearing an orange, which is given with each salute, and then replaced by another one.

The proceedings of Hocktide are of a very festive character, and begin on the Friday preceding 'Hockney Day' by the holding of what is called the 'Audit Supper' at the *John o' Gaunt* inn. The guests on this occasion are those who bear office in the town. The fare is macaroni, Welsh-rabbits, and watercress, followed by steaming hot punch.

The following Tuesday, Hockney Day is ushered in by the blowing John of Gaunt's horn from the balcony of the town-hall. At nine o'clock, the Hocktide jury having been summoned, assemble in the town-hall; and having chosen a foreman

and being duly sworn, the ancient rules and regulations of the court are read over by the town-clerk; after which the names of the free suitors and commoners are called over; those who do not answer to their names have to pay a penny, or lose their right of commons and fishing for the ensuing year. The high-constable then presents his accounts; the vouchers of expenditure are passed to and examined by each jurymen; and if these be found correct, the jury attach their signatures to the balance sheet. This being done, the high-constable for the ensuing year is chosen, and the other officers are also elected. In addition to those already named, are three water-bailiffs, three overseers of the port downs, three keepers of the keys of the common coffer, two ale-tasters, hayward, hall-keeper, and bellman. Presentments as to encroachments (if any) on the town property are made and discussed, and any matter relating to the welfare of the town considered.

The business concluded, the retiring high-constable invites the jury to luncheon at the *Three Swans' Hotel*. A substantial cold collation is provided, followed by bowls of punch.

On the following Friday morning, the officers are sworn in; and in the evening, the newly elected high-constable gives a banquet to his fellow-townsmen to the number of from sixty to eighty. The banquet is a right royal one, there being everything in season, and a profusion of the choicest wines. On Saturday, the festivities are brought to a close by luncheon at the *Three Swans' Hotel*, again followed by punch *ad libitum*. The whole of the Hocktide proceedings come to an end on Sunday, when the high-constable and corporation meet in the town-hall and walk in procession to the parish church to attend divine service.

Last year, Hocktide was carried out in the most orthodox manner, the high-constable, Mr John Platt, jun., having been elected for the seventh consecutive year. From the foregoing, it will be seen that the Hungerfordians combine business with pleasure in the most agreeable fashion.

LUX IN TENEBRIS.

Lost, and within a scattered forest straying,
The soft, green vaulting of columnar trees
Above me, and the haze of sunset spraying
The nested songsters at their evening glees,

I seek all vainly for the sun to guide me
West towards his chamber through the darkening
grove;
But glimmering mists conceal him, though beside me
The air is clear, screened by the boughs above.

When lo! upon the mouldering greensward lying
Dim, ghost-like shadows front each gnarled tree,
Which tell me where the lord of day is dying:
So darkness points to light I cannot see.

My soul, of late in drearier depths repining,
The emblem takes, and hopes for liberty:
Let Doubt become a vassal to thy shining,
And lead my wandering steps, O Truth, to thee!

ERIMUS.

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MR FROUDE ON THE WEST INDIES.

IT is now nearly four hundred years since the intrepid Columbus first sighted the lands of the New World. His last glimpse of the Old World had been on the 9th of September 1492, when, after some days of calm, a breeze sprung up, and the westmost of the Canary Islands was left behind, gradually fading out of sight on the after-horizon. For more than a month, land was not again seen. The clear faith of the explorer in that western continent which lay somewhere beyond the broad Atlantic, never failed him; but the hearts of his sailors sank day by day, overawed as they were by the mystery and fear of thus plunging uninvited into unknown and inhospitable seas. Doubt and mutiny prevailed around him, and only by ingenious devices and large promises did Columbus overcome the terrors of his wavering crews. At length their hearts were cheered by the sight of floating weeds, of swarms of land-birds flying away in a south-westerly direction, of stray branches of trees with their red fruit still upon them. All these were hailed as so many indications that the strange land they sought was not far off. Often at close of day, a bank of clouds on the western horizon would be hailed with delight as the first rising peaks of a new world, and as often as the dawn of morning came would the joyful vision be dispelled in air. About ten o'clock of the night of October 11, Columbus himself, stationed on the high poop of his vessel, saw what he took to be a light in the distance; but it was not till morning dawned that the presence of land was placed beyond doubt. There indeed before him was the bright green island which he afterwards named San Salvador, one of the Bahamas, and of which he took immediate possession. With this event began a new chapter in the world's history.

During the four hundred years which have since elapsed, the long sweep of islands now known as the West Indies, or Antilles, have filled a large place in human annals. From them, as from a living centre, other arms of dis-

covery were thrust out, until at last the vast continent of America, North and South, was unveiled to the gaze of Europe. The Spanish nation, a great power in the fifteenth century, however insignificant in this present, set up in these western islands the beginnings of a new civilisation, before which the peaceful and soft-eyed natives of the Bahamas and the fierce and man-eating Caribs of Hayti were alike doomed to cruel and sanguinary extermination. The footprints of the Spaniards throughout those islands were everywhere marked with blood; the first gift of the Old World to the New was fire and a sword. Nor was Spain left to work her cruel will unmolested; for France was jealous of her power, and the brave-hearted Drakes and Raleighs of Elizabeth and James carried the English flag into the very heart of the Spanish settlements. For two centuries these three powers from time to time renewed the fight over their western possessions, till now these gems of the ocean are owned in part by all the three.

But while the Spaniards and their allies succeeded in exterminating the dark races which inhabited those islands at the time of their discovery, it is the black man and not the white that forms the great bulk of the population still. How has this been brought about? It is a painful story, and England has had her share in the disgrace. When the original natives of the Antilles had been killed out, the dominant Europeans found that the white man, by reason of his whiteness and physical constitution, was not qualified for the work of cultivating those islands with their tropical heat and glare. Vessels were therefore sent to the west coast of Africa, and there shipload after shipload of the natives were captured and kidnapped, being thrust in scores into close and suffocating holds, and thus borne across the Atlantic to cultivate in slavery the fertile lands of the New World. It is thus that the high-browed, beautiful-eyed, copper-coloured aborigines of the West Indies have been replaced by the black skin, the squat features, the woolly head of the negro. For generations the

negroes suffered and served as slaves, treated by some masters with kindness, by others with cruelty; until at length, in the fullness of enlightened public opinion, these slaves were declared to be free. But their freedom did not induce them to return to the Africa of their origin, for in the meantime they had learned a new language and been bred into a different civilisation; and so the irony of fate has brought it about, that in the rich lands whither these negroes were transhipped as slaves, they are henceforward apparently to become the masters. Everywhere the white man retreats and the black man takes possession, and soon, by all indications, these jewels of the western seas—the beautiful islands for which England and France and Spain have spent against each other such untold quantities of blood and treasure—will be the birthright of the swarthy children of Ham. If any one has a doubt about this result, he must read Mr Froude's latest volume.*

It is almost superfluous to say that Mr Froude's book on the English in the West Indies is an eminently readable one. All Mr Froude's books are so. This one is marked by the well-known characteristics of his vigorous and graceful literary style, and contains passages of marvellously beautiful description. With the politics of the book we will not intermeddle; we only wish to learn what so keen and large-minded an observer has to tell us of the historic archipelago of the western seas.

When Mr Froude left England on the 30th December 1886, the land was covered with snow; and when the anchor was dropped in the roadstead at Bridgetown, on January 12, at sunrise, there lay before the voyagers the island of Barbadoes, shining in the haze of a hot summer morning. So easily nowadays does science baffle nature, and so readily could man, if he so choose, have a perpetual summer round the globe. Barbadoes, the writer tells us, 'is about the size of the Isle of Wight, cultivated so far as eye could see with the completeness of a garden; no mountains in it, scarcely even high hills, but a surface pleasantly undulating, the prevailing colour a vivid green from the cane fields; houses in town and country white from the coral rock of which they are built, but the glare from them relieved by heavy clumps of trees. You could see at a glance that the island was as thickly peopled as an anthill. Not an inch of soil seemed to be allowed to run to waste. Two hundred thousand is, I believe, the present number of Barbadians, of whom nine-tenths are blacks.' Labour is abundant and cheap. Almost the whole of the land is still held by the whites in large estates, cultivated by black labourers on the old system, and cultivated most admirably. 'If the West Indies are going to ruin, Barbadoes, at anyrate, is being ruined with a smiling face.' The language of the Anglo-Barbadians is pure English, the voices without the smallest transatlantic intonation. 'On no one of our foreign possessions is the print of England's foot more strongly impressed than on Barbadoes. It has been ours for two centuries and three-quarters,

and was organised from the first on English traditional lines, with its constitution, its parishes and parish churches and churchwardens, and schools and parsons, all on the old model; which the unprogressive inhabitants have been wise enough to leave undisturbed.'

But there is a worm at the root of Barbadian prosperity. This is the absenteeism of its land-owners. In Barbadoes, as throughout the West Indies, sugar was the staple production, and so long as it was unopposed in the markets, did well. But the introduction of beetroot in the European markets, and the bounties on beetroot sugar by certain European governments, have changed the old conditions, and the Barbadian sugar interest, Mr Froude was told, had gone over a precipice. This untoward state of things is aggravated by the fact that the land has been 'owned during the present century by gentlemen who for the most part lived in England on the profits of their properties, and left them to be managed by agents and attorneys. The method of management was expensive. Their own habits were expensive. Their incomes, to which they had lived up, had been cut short lately by a series of bad seasons. Money had been borrowed at high interest year after year to keep the estates and their owners going. The unencumbered resident proprietors could barely keep their heads above water. There was impending a general bankruptcy, which might break up entirely the present system, and leave the negroes for a time without the wages which were the sole dependence.' This description we shall find repeated substantially of most of the other islands in the British possession, with the same dismal outlook, the same sinking note of despondency.

Yet when one enters the streets of Bridgetown, there is no sign either of impending calamity or of present want. The houses are substantial; the public buildings solid and handsome, nowhere out of repair. 'The market square would have been well enough but for a statue of Lord Nelson which stands there, very like, but small and insignificant, and for some extraordinary reason they have painted it a bright pea-green.' Walking in the heat not being a thing to be thought of, 'I sat for two hours in a balcony watching the people, who were thick as bees in swarming-time. Nine-tenths of them were pure black; you rarely saw a white face, but still less would you see a discontented one, imperturbable good-humour and self-satisfaction being written on the features of every one. The women struck one especially. They were smartly dressed in white calico, scrupulously clean, and tricked out with ribands and feathers; but their figures were so good, and they carried themselves so well and gracefully, that although they might make themselves absurd they could not look vulgar. Like the Greek and Etruscan women, they are trained from childhood to carry heavy weights on their heads. They are thus perfectly upright, and plant their feet firmly and naturally on the ground. They might serve for sculptors' models, and are well aware of it. There were no signs of poverty. Old and young seemed well fed. Some had brought in baskets of fruit, bananas, oranges, pine-apples, and sticks of sugar-cane; others had yams and sweet potatoes from their bits of garden in the country. The men were active enough driving carts, wheeling

* *The English in the West Indies; or the Bow of Ulysses.*
By James Anthony Froude. London: Longmans, Green,
& Co. 1888.

barrows, or selling flying-fish, which are caught off the island in shoals and are cheaper than herrings in Yarmouth. They chattered like a flock of jackdaws, but there was no quarrelling; not a drunken man was to be seen, and all was merriment and good humour. My poor down-trodden black brothers and sisters, so far as I could judge from this first introduction, looked to me a very fortunate class of fellow-creatures.'

But it is the old story. The children and servants revel in plenty and grumble about niceties, while the master of the house lies sleepless at midnight, knowing that burdens are accumulating which he cannot remove, and that all his surroundings of apparent wealth and abundance are as a palace built upon thin ice. At the island of Grenada, Mr Froude saw the same thing, only the imminence of the coming evil was more accentuated. Everywhere there was the same splendid luxuriance of nature; but the works of man were crumbling under the touch of decay. Grenada has the best harbour in the West Indies; but now there was not a vessel in it, nor so much as a boatyard where a spar could be replaced or a broken rivet mended. 'Once there had been a line of wharves, but the piles had been eaten by worms, and the platforms had fallen through. Round us when we landed were unroofed warehouses, weed-choked court-yards, doors gone, and window-frames fallen in or out. Such a scene of desolation and desertion I never saw in my life save once, a few weeks later at Jamaica. An English lady with her children had come to the landing-place to meet my friends. They, too, were more like wandering ghosts than human beings with warm blood in them. All their thoughts were on going home—home out of so miserable an exile.'

Grenada has become an island of pure peasant proprietors. The settlers, who had once been a thriving and wealthy community, have melted away. Not more than six hundred English are left, and these were clearing out at their best speed. They had sold their estates for anything which they could get. The free blacks had bought them, and about eight thousand negro families, say forty thousand black souls in all, now share the soil between them. Each family lives independently, growing coffee and cocoa and oranges, and all are doing very well. The possession of property has brought a sense of its rights with it, and they are extremely litigious. As to the future of these people, Mr Froude speaks despondingly. If left entirely to themselves, they would, he says, in a generation or two relapse into savages. There were but two alternatives before not Grenada only, but all the English West Indies—either an English administration pure and simple like the East Indian, or a falling eventually into a state like that of Hayti, where no white man can own a yard of land. Whether these islands should all have—as certain of them have already—some form of constitutional government, or an East Indian one such as Mr Froude indicates, is a question in practical politics which we are not called upon to discuss.

Trinidad is the largest, after Jamaica, of the British West Indian islands, and 'the hottest absolutely after none of them.' Here Mr Froude found the insanitary state of Port of Spain very pronounced, it being left to the rain alone—and

happily there is abundance of it—to wash the refuse out of the streets. A kind of black vulture, called a Johnny Crow, assists the elements by acting as scavenger, and eating up the garbage thrown out in the lanes and highways. Here also the traveller suffered from the persistent attentions of the mosquitoes; and the Trinidad mosquitoes for bloodthirsty ferocity had a bad pre-eminence over the worst that he had ever met with elsewhere. 'I killed one,' he says, 'who was at work upon me, and examined him through a glass. Bewick, with the inspiration of genius, had drawn his exact likeness as the devil—a long black stroke for a body, a nick for a neck, horns on the head, and a beak for a mouth, spindle arms, and longer spindle legs, two pointed wings, and a tail. Line for line there the figure was before me which in the unforgettable tailpiece is driving the thief under the gallows, and I had a melancholy satisfaction in identifying him.' Otherwise, there was every provision to make life pass deliciously. Yet Mr Froude, reverting to the feeling of despondency with which he seems to regard everything human in the West Indies, says: 'Languidly charming as it all was, I could not help asking myself of what use such a possession could be either to England or to the English nation. We could not colonise it, could not cultivate it, could not draw a revenue from it. If it prospered commercially, the prosperity would be of French and Spaniards, mulattoes and blacks, but scarcely, if at all, of my own countrymen. For here, too, as elsewhere, they were growing poorer daily, and those who remained were looking forward to the day when they could be released. If it were not for the honour of the thing, as the Irishman said after being carried in a sedan-chair which had no bottom, we might have spared ourselves so unnecessary a conquest.'

But, he adds, 'beautiful it was beyond dispute. Before sunset a carriage took us round the savannah. Tropical human beings like tropical birds are fond of fine colours, especially black human beings, and the park was as brilliant as Kensington Gardens on a Sunday. At nightfall the scene became still more wonderful; air, grass, and trees being alight with fireflies, each as brilliant as an English glow-worm. The palm tree at our own gate stood like a ghostly sentinel clear against the starry sky, a single long dead frond hanging from below the coronet of leaves, and clashing against the stem as it was blown to and fro by the night-wind, while long-winged bats swept and whistled over our heads.'

Of Dominica, the account which Mr Froude gives is in keeping with that given of the other islands. 'England has done nothing, absolutely nothing, to introduce her own civilisation; and thus Dominica is English only in name. Not a black in the whole island would draw a trigger in defence of English authority, and, except the Crown officials, not half a dozen Europeans.' In Jamaica, things were not quite so pronouncedly bad, though still not encouraging. 'Sugar was down of course. The public debt had increased, and taxation was heavy. Many gentlemen in Jamaica were selling, or trying to sell, their estates and go out of it. On the other hand, expenses of government were being reduced, and the revenue showed a surplus. The fruit-trade with the United States was growing, and promised

to grow still further. American capitalists had come into the island, and were experimenting on various industries. The negroes were far less indolent than they were supposed to be; they were settling on the waste lands, acquiring property, growing yams and oranges, and harming no one; they had no grievance left; they knew it, and were perfectly contented.

There can be little doubt that there is much in the internal condition of our West Indian possessions to cause anxiety to the home Government. The questions arising out of this state of things are partly political, partly social and commercial. The white man in those islands is evidently being pressed out; and the condition of the blacks will perhaps depend upon whether or not a good substitute is found for sugar-growing, long the chief object of native labour. There may be much in Mr Froude's book with which those who are interested in the subject may disagree; there is in it, at the same time, much to attract public attention to the critical state and polity of our possessions in the Caribbean.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER X.—SHUFFLING IT OFF.

THE day had been an eventful one for Hugh Massinger: the most eventful and pregnant of his whole history. As long as he lived, he could never possibly forget it. It was indeed a critical turning-point for three separate lives—his own, and Elsie's, and Winifred Meysey's. For, as Hugh had walked that morning, stick in hand and orchid in buttonhole, down the rose-embowered lane in the Squire's grounds with Winifred, he had asked the frightened, blushing girl, in simple and straightforward language, without any preliminary, to become his wife. His shy fish was fairly hooked at last, he thought now: no need for daintily playing his catch any longer; it was but a question, as things stood, of reel and of landing-net. The father and mother, those important accessories, were pretty safe in their way too. He had sounded them both by unobtrusive methods, with dexterous plummets of oblique inquiry, and had gauged their profoundest depths of opinion with tolerable accuracy, as to settlements and other ante-nuptial precontracts of marriage. For what is the use of catching an heiress on your own rod, if your heiress's parents, upon whose testamentary disposition in the last resort her entire market value really depends, look askance with eyes of obvious disfavour upon your personal pretensions as their future son-in-law? Hugh Massinger was keen enough sportsman in his own line to make quite sure of his expected game before irrevocably committing himself to duck-shot cartridge. He was confident he knew his ground now; so, with a bold face and a modest assurance, he ventured, in a few plain and well-chosen words, to commend his suit, his hand, and his heart to Winifred Meysey's favourable attention.

It was a great sacrifice, and he felt it as such. He was positively throwing himself away upon Winifred. If he had followed his own crude inclinations alone, like a romantic schoolboy, he would have waited for ever and ever for his cousin Elsie. Elsie was indeed the one true love

of his youth. He had always loved her, and he would always love her. 'Twas foolish, perhaps, to indulge overmuch in these personal preferences, but after all it was very human; and Hugh acknowledged regretfully in his own heart that he was not entirely raised in that respect above the average level of human weaknesses. Still, a man, however humanesque, must not be governed by impulse alone. He must judge calmly, deliberately, impersonally, disinterestedly of his own future, and must act for the best in the longrun by the light of his own final and judicial opinion. Now, Winifred was without doubt a very exceptional and eligible chance for a briefless barrister: your sucking poet doesn't get such chances of an undisputed heiress every day of the week, you may take your affidavit. If he let her slip by on sentimental grounds, and waited for Elsie—poor, dear old Elsie—heaven only knew how long they might both have to wait for one another—and perhaps even then be finally disappointed. It was a foolish dream on Elsie's part; for, to say the truth, he himself had never seriously entertained it. The most merciful thing to Elsie herself would be to snap it short now, once for all, before things went further, and let her stand face to face with naked facts: ah, how hideously naked!—let her know she must either look out another husband somewhere for herself, or go on earning her own livelihood, in maiden meditation fancy free, for the remaining term of her natural existence. Hugh could never help ending up a subject, however unpleasant, even in his own mind, with a poetical tag: it was a trick of manner his soul had caught from the wonted peroration of his political leaders in the first editorial column of that exalted print, the *Morning Telephone*. So he made up his mind; and he proposed to Winifred.

The girl's heart gave a sudden bound, and the red blood flushed her somewhat pallid cheek with hasty roses as she listened to Hugh's graceful and easy avowal of the profound and unfeigned love that he proffered her. She thought of the poem Hugh had read her aloud in his sonorous tones the evening before—much virtue in a judiciously selected passage of poetry, well marked in delivery:

'He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair:
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

That was how Hugh Massinger loved her, she was quite sure. Had he not trembled and hesitated to ask her? Her bosom fluttered with a delicious fluttering; but she cast her eyes down, and answered nothing for a brief space. Then her heart gave her courage to look up once more, and to murmur back, in answer to his pleading look: 'Hugh, I love you.' And Hugh, carried away not ungracefully by the impulse of the moment, felt his own heart thrill responsive to hers in real earnest, and in utter temporary forgetfulness of poor betrayed and abandoned Elsie. They walked back to the Hall together next minute, whispering low, in the fool's paradise of first young love—a fool's paradise, indeed, for those two poor lovers, whose wooing set out under such evil auspices.

But when Hugh had left his landed prey at

the front door of the square-built manor-house, and strolled off by himself towards the village inn, the difficulty about Elsie for the first time began to stare him openly in the face in all its real and horrid magnitude. He would have to confess and to explain to Elsie. Worse still, for a man of his mettle and his sensitiveness, he would have to apologise for and excuse his own conduct. That was unendurable—that was ignominious—that was even absurd. His virility kicked at it. There is something essentially insulting and degrading to one's manhood in having to tell a girl you've pretended to love, that you really and truly don't love her—that you only care for her in a sisterly fashion. It is practically to unsex one's self. A pretty girl appeals quite otherwise to the man that is in us. Hugh felt it bitterly and deeply—for himself, not for Elsie. He pitied his own sad plight most sincerely. But then, there was poor Elsie to think of too. No use in the world in blinking that. Elsie loved him very, very dearly. True, they had never been engaged to one another—so great is the love of consistency in man, that even alone in his own mind Hugh continued to hug that translucent fiction; but she had been very fond of him, undeniably fond of him, and he had perhaps from time to time, by overt acts, unduly encouraged the display of her fondness. It gratified his vanity and his sense of his own power over women to do so: he could make them love him—few men more easily—and he liked to exercise that dangerous faculty on every suitable subject that flitted across his changeful horizon. The man with a mere passion for making conquests affords no serious menace to the world's happiness; but the man with an innate gift for calling forth wherever he goes all the deepest and truest instincts of a woman's nature, is—when he abuses his power—the most deadly, terrible, and cruel creature known in our age to civilised humanity. And yet he is not always deliberately cruel; sometimes, as in Hugh Massinger's case, he almost believes himself to be good and innocent.

He had warned Winifred to whisper nothing for the present to Elsie about this engagement of theirs. Elsie was his cousin, he said—his only relation—and he would dearly like to tell her the secret of his heart himself in private. He would see her that evening and break the news to her. 'Why break it?' Winifred had asked in doubt, all unconscious. And Hugh, a strange suppressed smile playing uneasily about the corners of his thin lips, had answered with guileless alacrity of speech: 'Because Elsie's like a sister to me, you know, Winifred; and sisters always to some extent resent the bare idea of their brothers marrying.'

For as yet Elsie herself suspected nothing. It was best, Hugh thought, she should suspect nothing. That was a cardinal point in his easy-going practical philosophy of life. He never went half-way to meet trouble. Till Winifred had accepted him, why worry poor dear Elsie's gentle little soul with what was, after all, a mere remote chance, a contingent possibility? He would first make quite sure, by actual trial, where he stood with Winifred; and then—and then, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, he might let the whole truth burst in full force at once upon poor lonely

Elsie's devoted head. Meanwhile, with extraordinary cleverness and care, he continued to dissemble. He never made open love to Winifred before Elsie's face; on the contrary, he kept the whole small comedy of his relations with Winifred so skilfully concealed from her feminine eyes, that to the very last moment Elsie never even dreamt of her pretty pupil as a possible rival, or regarded her in any other conceivable light than as the nearest of friends and the dearest of sisters. Whenever Hugh spoke of Winifred to Elsie at all, he spoke of her lightly, almost slightly, as a nice little girl, in her childish way—though much too blue-eyed—with a sort of distant bread-and-butterish schoolroom approbation, which wholly misled and hoodwinked Elsie as to his real intentions. And whenever he spoke of Elsie to Winifred, he spoke of her jestingly, with a good-humoured, unmeaning, brotherly affection that made the very notion of his ever contemplating marriage with her seem simply ridiculous. She was to him indeed as the deceased wife's sister is in the eye of the law to the British widower. With his easy, off-hand London cleverness, he had baffled and deceived both those innocent, simple-minded, trustful women; and he stood face to face now with a general *éclaircissement* which could no longer be delayed, but whose ultimate consequences might perhaps prove fatal to all his little domestic arrangements.

Would Elsie in her anger set Winifred against him? Would Winifred, justly indignant at his conduct to Elsie, refuse, when she learned the whole truth, to marry him?

Nonsense—nonsense. No cause for alarm. He had never really been engaged to Elsie—he had said so to her face a thousand times. If Elsie chose to misinterpret his kind attentions, bestowed upon her solely as his one remaining cousin and kinswoman, the only other channel for the blood of the Massingers, surely Winifred would never be so foolish as to fall blindly into Elsie's self-imposed error, and to hold him to a bargain he had over and over again expressly repudiated. He was a barrister, and he knew his ground in these matters. Chitty on Contract lays it down as an established principle of English law that free consent of both parties forms a condition precedent and essential part of the very existence of a compact of marriage.

With such transparent internal sophisms did Hugh Massinger strive all day to stifle and smother his own conscience; for every man always at least pretends to keep up appearances in his private relations with that inexorable domestic censor. But as evening came on, cigarette in mouth, he strolled round after dinner, by special appointment, to meet Elsie at the big poplar. They often met there, these warm summer nights; and on this particular occasion, anticipating trouble, Hugh had definitely arranged with Elsie beforehand to come to him by eight at the accustomed trysting-place. The Meyseys and Winifred had gone out to dinner at a neighbouring vicarage; but Elsie had stopped at home on purpose, on the hasty plea of some slight passing headache. Hugh had specially asked her to wait and meet him. Better get it all over at once, he thought to himself, in his shortsighted wisdom—like the measles or the

chicken-pox—and know straight off exactly where he stood in his new position with these two women.

Women were the greatest nuisance in life. For his own part, now he came to look the thing squarely in the face, he really wished he was well quit of them all for good and ever.

He was early for his appointment; but by the tree he found Elsie, in her pretty white dress, already waiting for him. His heart gave a jump, a pleased jump, as he saw her sitting there before her time. Dear, dear Elsie; she was very, very fond of him! He would have given worlds to fling his arms tight around her then, and strain her to his bosom and kiss her tenderly. He would have given worlds, but not his reversionary chances in the Whitestrang property. Worlds don't count: the entire fee-simple of Mars and Jupiter would fetch nothing in the real-estate market. He was bound by contract to Winifred now, and he must do his best to break it gently to Elsie.

He stepped up and kissed her quietly on the forehead, and took her hand in his like a brother. Elsie let it lie in her own without remonstrance. They rose and walked in lovers' guise along the bank together. His heart sank within him at the hideous task he had next to perform—nothing less than to break poor Elsie's heart for her. If only he could have shuffled out of it sideways anyhow! But shuffling was impossible. He hated himself; and he loved Elsie. Never till that moment did he know how he loved her.

This would never do! He was feeling like a fool. He crushed down the love sternly in his heart, and began to talk about indifferent subjects—the wind, the river, the rose-show at the vicarage. But his voice trembled, betraying him still against his will; and he could not refrain from stealing sidelong looks at Elsie's dark eyes now and again, and observing how beautiful she was, after all, in a rare and exquisite type of beauty. Winifred's blue eyes and light brown hair, Winifred's small mouth and moulded nose, Winifred's insipid smile and bashful blush, were cheap as dirt in the matrimonial lottery. She had but a doll-like, Lowther Arcade style of prettiness. Maidenly as she looked, one twist more of her nose, one shade lighter in her hair, and she would become simply bar-maidenly. But Elsie's strong and powerful, earnest face, with its serious lips and its long black eyelashes, its profound pathos and its womanly dignity, its very irregularity and faultiness of outline, pleased him ten thousand times more than all your baby-faced beauties of the conventional, stereotyped, ballroom pattern. He looked at her long and sighed often. Must he really break her heart for her? At last he could restrain that unruly member, his tongue, no longer. 'Elsie,' he cried, eyeing her full in a genuine outburst of spontaneous admiration, 'I never in my life saw any one anywhere one-half so beautiful and graceful as you are!'

Elsie smiled a pleased smile. 'And yet,' she murmured, with a half-malicious, teasing tone of irony, 'we're not engaged, Hugh, after all, you remember.'

Her words came at the very wrong moment; they brought the hot blood at a rush into Hugh's cheek. 'No,' he answered coldly, with a sudden

revulsion and a spasmodic effort; 'we're not engaged—nor ever will be, Elsie!'

Elsie turned round upon him with sudden abruptness in blank bewilderment. She was not angry; she was not even astonished; she simply failed altogether to take in his meaning. It had always seemed to her so perfectly natural, so simply obvious that she and Hugh were sooner or later to marry one another; she had always regarded Hugh's frequent reminder that they were not engaged as such a mere playful warning against too much precipitancy; she had always taken it for granted so fully and unreservedly that whenever Hugh was rich enough to provide for a wife he would tell her so plainly, and carry out the implied engagement between them—that this sudden announcement of the exact opposite meant to her ears less than nothing. And now, when Hugh uttered those cruel, crushing, annihilating words, 'Nor ever will be, Elsie,' she couldn't possibly take in their reality at the first blush, or believe in her own heart that he really intended anything so wicked, so merciless, so unnatural.

'Nor ever will be!' she cried, incredulous. 'Why, Hugh, Hugh, I—I don't understand you.'

Hugh steeled his heart with a violent strain to answer back in one curt, killing sentence: 'I mean it, Elsie; I'm going to marry Winifred.'

Elsie gazed back at him in speechless surprise. 'Going to marry Winifred?' she echoed at last vaguely, after a long pause, as if the words conveyed no meaning to her mind. 'Going to marry Winifred? To marry Winifred!—Hugh, did you really and truly say you were going to marry Winifred?'

'I proposed to her this morning,' Hugh answered outright, with a choking throat and a glassy eye; 'and she accepted me, Elsie; so I mean to marry her.'

'Hugh!'

She uttered only that one short word, in a tone of awful and unspeakable agony. But her bent brows, her pallid face, her husky voice, her startled attitude, said more than a thousand words, however wild, could possibly have said for her. She took it in dimly and imperfectly now; she began to grasp what Hugh was talking about; but as yet she could not understand to the full all the man's profound and unfathomed infamy. She looked at him feebly for some word of explanation. Surely he must have some deep and subtle reason of his own for this astonishing act and fact of furtive treachery. Some horrible combination of adverse circumstances, about which she knew and could know nothing, must have driven him against his will to this incredible solution of an insoluble problem. He could not of his own mere motion have proposed to Winifred. She looked at him hard: he quailed before her scrutiny.

'I love you, Elsie,' he burst out with an irresistible impulse at last, as she gazed through and through him from her long black lashes.

Elsie laid her hand on his shoulder blindly. 'You love me,' she murmured. 'Hugh, Hugh, you still love me?'

'I always loved you, Elsie,' Hugh answered bitterly with a sudden pang of abject remorse; 'and as long as I live I shall always love you.'

'And yet—you are going to marry Winifred!'
'Elsie! You and I were never engaged.'

She turned round upon him fiercely with a burst of horror. He, to take refuge in that hollow excuse! 'Never engaged!' she cried, aghast. 'You mean it, Hugh?—you mean that mockery?—And I, who would have given up my life for love of you!'

He tried to assume a calm judicial tone. 'Let us be reasonable, Elsie,' he said, with an attempt at ease, 'and talk this matter over without sentiment or hysterics. You knew very well I was too poor to marry; you knew I always said we were only cousins; you knew I had my way in life to make. You could never have thought I really and seriously dreamt of marrying you.'

Elsie looked up at him with a scared white face. That Hugh should descend to such transparent futilities! 'This is all new to me,' she moaned out in a dazed voice. 'All, all—quite, quite new to me.'

'But, Elsie, I've said it over and over a thousand times before.'

She gazed back at him like a stone. 'Ah, yes; but till to-day,' she murmured slowly, 'you never, never, never meant it.'

He sat down, unmanned, on the grass by the bank. She seated herself by his side, mechanically as it were, with her hand on his arm, and looked straight in front of her with a vacant stare at the angry water. It was growing dark. The shore was dark, and the sea, and the river. Everything was dark and black and gloomy around her. She laid his hand one moment in her own. 'Hugh!' she cried, turning towards him with appealing pathos, 'you don't mean it now: you will never mean it. You're only saying it to try and prove me. Tell me it's that! You're yourself still. O Hugh, my darling, you can never mean it!'

Her words burnt into his brain like liquid fire; and the better self within him groaned and faltered; but he crushed it down with an iron heel. The demon of avarice held his sordid soul. 'My child,' he said, with a tender inflection in his voice as he said it, 'we must understand one another. I do seriously intend to marry Winifred Meysey.'

'Why?'

There was a terrible depth of suppressed earnestness in that sharp short *why*, wrung out of her by anguish, as of a woman who asks the reason of her death-warrant. Hugh Massinger answered it slowly and awkwardly with cumbersome, round-about, self-exculpating verbosity. As for Elsie, she sat like a statue and listened: rigid and immovable, she sat there still; while Hugh, for the very first time in her whole experience, revealed the actual man he really was before her appalled and horrified and speechless presence. He talked of his position, his prospects, his abilities. He talked of journalism, of the bar, of promotion. He talked of literature, of poetry, of fame. He talked of money, and its absolute need to man and woman in these latter days of ours. He talked of Winifred, of Whitestrand, and of the Meysey manor-house. 'It'll be best in the end for us both, you know, Elsie,' he said argumentatively, in his foolish rigmorole, mistaking her silence for something like unwilling acqui-

escence. 'Of course I shall still be very fond of you, as I've always been fond of you—like a cousin only—and I'll be a brother to you now as long as I live; and when Winifred and I are really married, and I live here at Whitestrand, I shall be able to do a great deal more for you, and help you by every means in my power, and introduce you freely into our own circle, on different terms, you know, where you'll have chances of meeting—well, suitable persons. You must see yourself it's the best thing for us both. The idea of two penniless people like you and me marrying one another in the present state of society is simply ridiculous.'

She heard him out to the bitter end, revealing the naked deformity of his inmost nature, though her brain reeled at it, without one passing word of reproach or dissent. Then she said in an icy tone of utter horror: 'Hugh!'

'Yes, Elsie.'

'Is that all?'

'That is all.'

'And you mean it?'

'I mean it.'

'Oh, for Heaven's sake, before you kill me outright, Hugh, Hugh! is it really true? Are you really like that? Do you really mean it?'

'I really mean to marry Winifred.'

Elsie clasped her two hands on either side of her head, as if to hold it together from bursting with her agony. 'Hugh,' she cried, 'it's foolish, I know, but I ask you once more, before it's too late, in sight of Heaven, I ask you solemnly, are you seriously in earnest? Is that what you're made of? Are you going to desert me? To desert and betray me?'

'I don't know what you mean,' Hugh answered stonily, rising as if to go—for he could stand it no longer. 'I've never been engaged to you. I always told you so. I owe you nothing. And now I mean to marry Winifred.'

With a cry of agony, she burst wildly away from him. She saw it all now; she understood to the full the cruelty and baseness of the man's innermost underlying nature. Fair outside; but false, false, false to the core! Yet even so, she could scarcely believe it. The faith of a lifetime fought hard for life in her. He, that Hugh she had so loved and trusted—he, the one Hugh in all the universe—he to cast her off with such callous selfishness! He to turn upon her now with his empty phrases! He to sell and betray her for a Winifred and a manor-house! Oh, the guilt and the sin of it! Her head reeled and swam round deliriously. She hardly knew what she felt or did. Mad with agony, love, and terror, she rushed away headlong from his polluted presence—not from Hugh, but from this fallen idol. He saw her white dress disappearing fast through the deep gloom in the direction of the poplar tree, and he groped his way after her, almost as mad as herself, struck dumb with remorse and awe and shame at the ruin he had visibly and instantly wrought in the fabric of that trustful girl's whole being.

One moment she fled and stumbled in the dark along the grassy path toward the roots of the poplar. Then he caught a glimpse of her for a second, dimly silhouetted in the faint starlight, a wan white figure with outstretched arms against the black horizon. She was poisoning, irresolute,

on the gnarled roots. It was but for the twinkling of an eye that he saw her; next instant, a splash, a gurgle, a shriek of terror, and he beheld her borne wildly away, a helpless burden, by that fierce current towards the breakers that glistened white and roared hoarsely in their savage joy on the bar of the river.

In her agony of disgrace, she had fallen, rather than thrown herself in. As she stood there, undecided, on the slippery roots, with all her soul burning within her, her head swimming and her eyes dim, a bruised, humiliated, hopeless creature, she had missed her foothold on the smooth worn stump, slimy with lichens, and raising her hands as if to balance herself, had thrown herself forward, half wittingly, half unconsciously, on the tender mercies of the rushing stream. When she returned for a moment, a little later, to life and thought, it was with a swirling sense of many waters, eddying and seething in mad conflict round her faint numb form. Strange roaring noises thundered in her ear. A choking sensation made her gasp for breath. What she drank in with her gasp was not air, but water—salt brackish water, an overwhelming flood of it. Then she sank again, and was dimly aware of the cold chill ocean floating around her on every side. She took a deep gulp, and with it sighed out her sense of life and action. Hugh was lost to her, and it was all over. She could die now. She had nothing to live for. There was no Hugh; and she had not killed herself.

Those two dim thoughts were the last she knew as her eyes closed in the rushing current: there had never been a Hugh; and she had fallen in by accident.

(To be continued.)

VOLAPÜK:

THE NEW LANGUAGE.

DURING the past three centuries the attention of many linguists, more especially those of France and Germany, has been turned to the possibility of constructing a language which shall serve as a means of international communication. Many attempts have been made in this direction, and some fifty different plans have been advocated for accomplishing this desirable object; but they have all been failures, and for the same reason that many other enterprises come to nought—namely, that they have not been suited to the comprehension of that large majority of persons who require the utmost simplicity in any matter which they are required to learn and understand. These linguists wrote not for the many, but for those whose minds were as cultivated and receptive as their own; hence they failed. Other suggested methods of accomplishing this international uniformity in speech and writing, when they came to be examined critically, were found to be little better than mutilated editions of existing tongues. And so the question rested until M. Schleyer of Constance took it up, and produced for the first time a scheme which gives some indications of being successful. This international language is called Volapük, that is, 'world-speech.'

In constructing this new language, M. Schleyer has aimed at extreme simplicity, and has laid existing European tongues under contribution.

More especially is this the case with English, and for the very good reason, that the English language is the mother-tongue of one hundred million persons. That is to say, there are nearly double the number of persons who speak English as compared with those who speak German, and more than double the number as compared with those whose native tongue is either French or Spanish. But while M. Schleyer gives this preference to English, the characteristic features of other languages have been freely adopted. The simple construction of the French language forms a model for the construction of Volapük; indeed, so simple in structure and design is this new tongue, that it is claimed by its adherents to be easily learned in a few weeks, provided that the learner is already a master of a Romanic language, such as French or Italian; or a Germanic one, such as English or German.

With regard to pronunciation, it may be objected that a universal system is an impossibility; but the objection is not a serious one, when it is remembered that no uniformity of pronunciation exists in any existing language. For instance, a Cornishman and his countryman from Lancashire are both supposed to speak the same language; but their actual speech is so different that they find it hard to understand one another. Two Frenchmen, one from the north and the other from the south of their native country, would find themselves in the same difficulty; and it is easy to see that instances such as these could be multiplied indefinitely, particularly when we remember that in the present day some eight hundred different languages are in use upon the earth.

The simplicity of Volapük is one of its most noteworthy features, and one which guarantees more than any other can do its probable success. Every letter has one and the same sound, and, moreover, each word is written exactly as it is pronounced. There are no such incongruities as 'through,' 'plough,' 'cough,' and 'enough,' which, although spelt in the same way, are sounded so differently; and the student who has once mastered the vowel sounds, which are much the same as in French, will have no difficulty whatever in reading Volapük; for the consonants, with one or two exceptions, are the same as they are in English. The average schoolboy will think well of Volapük when he hears that it has no artificial genders, and no irregular verbs like German and French, that it possesses but a single conjugation, and that it forms the plural simply by adding *s*. But let us give an instance of its simplicity of construction, and one which shows how the adjective and adverb are formed from the substantive, and how they have invariably the same termination. First, we will take the substantive *dol*, pain, the derivation of which is obvious. By adding the syllable *ik* to this word, we at once turn it into the adjective *dolik*, painful; while the simple addition to this adjective of the letter *o* gives us the adverb *doliko*, painfully. The verbs, too, are mainly formed from the substantive; for instance, *pük* is language, while *pükon* is to speak. Want of space forbids us to quote any more examples; nor is it necessary for us to do so; for those who wish to learn more concerning this interesting subject can obtain at small cost an abridged grammar of Volapük, which has been

adapted to English-speaking people by Professor Kerchhoffs. It is published by Messrs Hachette & Co., of Charing Cross, London, and we are indebted to it for much of the information contained in the present article.

It may naturally be asked, what prospects are there of the adoption of this international language? If we can judge from the number of its disciples, who are said to amount to many thousands in the different states of Europe, we must acknowledge that the progress made since the publication of M. Schleyer's works in 1881 is very wonderful. These books consist of a grammar and a German dictionary of nearly thirteen thousand words, and they are about to be translated into all the languages of Europe and of Asia; indeed, the English version of the dictionary will be ready, we believe, almost as soon as these words appear in print. In preparing these works, M. Schleyer has been assisted by some of the most eminent linguists. Beyond this means of promoting a widespread knowledge of Volapük, we must not omit to notice that the first Congress of its promoters was held in 1886 at Friedrichshaven, on the Lake of Constance, when three hundred members from all parts of Europe were present. Another Congress was held only a few months afterwards at Munich, which was equally well attended. But we shall be able to judge before long of the number of adherents which this new language has, for a great International Congress is to be held at Paris in the year 1889, on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition in that city. At this Congress, delegates from all the different Societies of Europe—which number no fewer than seventy—as well as delegates from certain Societies in America, will meet together, and we shall then have a means of finding out how far Volapük has advanced in public favour.

After all, this endeavour to weave together some community of expression from existing languages is, if what philologists tell us be true, merely a return to what must have prevailed in the long forgotten past. There are so many points of agreement between the various languages and dialects of Europe, as well as between certain important languages of Asia, that little doubt is entertained that they have had one common origin in a primitive Aryan mother-speech. Dissolved into a number of different tongues, it would seem an almost superhuman work once more to construct from them a vocabulary which can be common to all; and the difficulty is proved by the number of failures which have been recorded; until M. Schleyer, after many years of patient labour, invented Volapük.

There are many who have indulged in the dream that a universal language would be found in the beautiful art of music; and so it is to some extent; for we all know that various feelings and thoughts can be readily suggested by its influence. No one can tell us exactly why the delicate tracery of one of Chopin's mazurkas should affect us so differently from the weird strains of the Funeral March by the same composer. Each speaks to us eloquently, but no two hearers will receive exactly the same impression, and to many of course the sounds are utterly meaningless. M. Schleyer's Volapük is formed upon a more substantial basis; and we must

admit, that if not destined to become a universal language in the future, it is the best attempt at such a consummation which we have yet seen.

HELEN'S ESCAPE.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

HELEN's health became a subject of such anxiety to me, that I determined to remove her for a while from the neighbourhood of scenes fraught with such painful associations; so we closed our house and started on a prolonged foreign tour. We travelled for three months in Italy, Sicily, and the Riviera, and at the end of September arrived in Paris, where we proposed to remain a few days previous to returning home.

I am an old habitu   of Paris, and I have always remarked how, in the absence of any startling crime, the complaint rises of the lack of news. Politics are all very well, and serve to keep the *flâneurs* of the boulevards and a certain section of the people provided with topics for conversation and discussion; but the typical Monsieur Prudhomme likes nothing better than a good startling crime, with plenty of harrowing details, and a strong spice of mystery about it.

We were not very long in Paris before we found out that the all-absorbing topic of interest was 'l'affaire Arosa.' Wherever we went, we heard of nothing but 'l'affaire Arosa.' The hawkers cried it on the boulevards; in trams and omnibuses and trains it was the subject of conversation; the waiters at the hotel whispered about it during the intervals between the courses at the *table d'hôte*; the first part of the daily paper attacked was that which was headed 'l'affaire Arosa.'

The name Arosa seemed familiar to me; at any rate, I remembered to have heard it, but for the life of me, I could not recall when or under what circumstances; so I bought a *Gaulois* with the view of enlightening myself about 'l'affaire Arosa,' and on the chance that something therein might bring to my mind the circumstances with which, in my memory, the name Arosa was associated. I had not read half-a-dozen lines before I was carried back in imagination to the Rue de Douai during the seven days of the Commune, and was again face to face with the poor cowering wretch who had given his name to me as Dixon Rayne. The following is a free translation of what I read: 'It was elicited in the course of examination that the accused, who, although an Englishman by birth, is a cosmopolitan in crime, and speaks half-a-dozen European languages fairly well, had been the keeper of a well-known gambling saloon in the Rue de Provence for some years, and that he had been ruined during the siege. For some time previously he had been paying marked attentions to Madame Arosa, an invalid Spanish lady of great wealth, undoubtedly with the sole object of getting her money. It appears, however, that his suit was rejected, and that he was driven to the lowest depths of despair. On the night of May 27, 1871, when the Communist cause was making its last struggle, and the city was in indescribable confusion and panic, Madame Arosa, who was known to have withdrawn all her securities from the banking-house of Messrs Fould, ready for instant flight to Spain as soon as a safe passage could

be secured, was found murdered in her bedroom. Her strong-box had been violently broken open and rifled of its contents, and the means of escape employed by the murderer was quite evident, as a window of yellow-stained glass was found broken, and there were marks of feet on the leads below. In spite of the prevalent confusion—for there was severe fighting going on in all the streets around Madame Arosa's house in the Rue Blanche—the alarm was raised by some women who had witnessed the escape of the murderer, and he was pursued. In the confusion of the streets, however, he made good his escape, and contrived to get over to England. The property he stole amounted to a million francs, mostly invested in French and English railways. The President of the court paid a high tribute to the energy and intelligence of Detective Commissary De Bussy, who has for five years been engaged in following up this crime, and who has at last succeeded in bringing a diabolical criminal to justice.

'De Bussy!—Arosa!' I muttered to myself. 'I know both the names.—Ah! Now I remember!'

I rushed off to an old friend in the Embassy for the purpose of procuring a seat in the Palais de Justice; for I had had sufficient experience of French criminal courts to know that upon the occasions of great cases admittance thereto without an order is almost impossible. I had got half-way down the Rue de Rivoli, when some one coming down a by-street stumbled against me, and would have knocked me over but that he caught me in his arms. I looked. It was Monsieur Pontneuf!

I do not know what the loungers under the arcade must have thought was the matter with me, but at the sight of this man—the murderer of my neighbour and intended son-in-law; the wrecker of my child's happiness—at the sight of his cool, calm smile and of his brazen face, I fairly staggered and uttered a cry of amazement.

'Why,' he said, 'you seem surprised to see me. Haven't you had my letters? When I saw you, I made sure that you had come over in answer to them.—No?'

'Monsieur Pontneuf'—I began, in as dignified and scornful a tone as my horror and surprise would allow me to assume.

'No, no; that's all done with,' he interrupted. 'My name's De Bussy'—

'You—De Bussy—the great detective?' I stammered.

'Yes, yes.—I see you don't know anything about it. Look here. I'm in a great hurry, as the court opens at ten. Here's my card. Give that in at the door, and you will get in. Don't be late!—Au revoir!' And before I could collect my scattered senses, he was lost in the crowd. I examined the card; it had simply on it—'DE BUSSY, Dépôt de Police, Rue Mazas.'

What did it all mean? I had heard of the adage, 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' but never of 'Set a murderer to catch a murderer;' yet here was this man, who had clearly and unmistakably killed Jack Corner, posing as the industrious and intelligent representative of order and justice, and aiding in sending a fellow-creature into eternity. However, I had no time to stand speculating, as I must run back to the hotel and tell the ladies whither I was bound, and get to the Palais de Justice at a few minutes before ten.

The court was already crowded to overflowing, but De Bussy's card acted as an open sesame, and I was politely ushered to a seat near to the representatives of the press, close to the prisoner's dock. As the clock struck ten, the judge entered, followed by a crowd of barristers and lawyers, and the hum of general conversation was immediately stopped. Presently the hum arose again for a moment, and all that sea of anxious faces was turned towards a small door at the side of the court. Through this entered, attended on either side by fierce-looking gendarmes, the prisoner. Imagine my amazement when I recognised at once, in spite of shaved beard and whiskers, Jack Corner! At this distance of time, I can hardly tell what feelings were uppermost within me at this extraordinary *denouement*. Perhaps better than by any description of mine they can be realised by any one who can imagine an old and trusted friend, lamented as the victim of a fiendish outrage, suddenly proved to be a villain of the deepest dye; and a man long suspected and sought after as a murderer, standing forth as the champion of justice and right. My gaze was riveted on the prisoner, who seemed to be perfectly indifferent to his awful position; and presently, in the course of his almost defiant glance around the court, his eyes met mine, and, with a wave of his hand, he nodded me a greeting.

The case, which had already lasted a week, proceeded; but it was impossible to pay much attention to it, so occupied was I with running over the incidents of my acquaintance with the man who now stood before me on trial for his life; and so full of thankfulness was I that my poor Helen had been spared union in holy wedlock with such a man. A sudden silence in court diverted my attention to what was going on around me, and I heard sentence of death pronounced upon the murderer of Madame Arosa, my quondam intimate, John Corner. Then the crowd hurried away chattering and laughing, as from a play-house; but I waited for De Bussy.

'Come and dine with me to-night,' I said, 'and then you can tell us quietly all that has taken place since we last sat at table together.'

He accepted the invitation; and I hastened to the hotel to inform my wife and Helen of what had taken place—news which, I need scarcely say, was received by them with astonishment and thankfulness as great as was mine.

De Bussy dined with us, and afterwards told us as follows:

'I need not detail to you the troubles and difficulties with which I had to cope before I could fairly persuade myself that I was on the track of the right man. Even after I had lived with you for some time as professor of French, I was not sure enough of my man to feel justified in making a *coup*; and had it not been that as a French officer of police I was enabled to terrorise, so to speak, the girl Gabrielle, and to extort information about Mr Rayne's movements?—

I caught at the name Rayne, and said: 'About whose movements?'

'Rayne's—Dixon Rayne's.—Why, dear me, I was going to omit to tell you as curious a thing as there is in the whole affair. You may perhaps remember, when you told me of your adventure during the Commune, how interested I was. Well,

no wonder, considering that I was after none other than Mr Dixon Rayne.'

'Then, do you mean to say that the man who took refuge in my room in Paris, and the murderer of Madame Arosa, and Mr John Corner are one and the same?' I said, more astonished than ever.

'Certainly I do,' replied the officer; 'and I'm not astonished at your not being able to recognise him, when he has baffled the most clever detectives of Europe during these five years. His hands were yet hot with the murder of the poor old lady, when he claimed your protection.—But to my own story. As I was saying, Gabrielle gave me a lot of information concerning our friend's movements, or I verily believe he would have escaped again. As it was, directly he found out that I was in the habit of meeting the girl on the quiet, he smelt a rat; and we have since found out that his pretended visit to Switzerland meant that he had arranged for flight at a moment's notice. Well, I dined with you that evening, and you left us alone, if you remember. We talked, and each knew that the other was trying to sound him. At length, Corner suggested that we should go out for a stroll. I acceded; and we went out into the garden, I still keeping the conversation fixed upon the murder of Madame Arosa, for, although I was pretty sure of my man, I felt that I might convince myself thoroughly before I made the final pounce. Well, as we reached the path by the stream, he suddenly sprang at me, struck me several times with a sharp instrument, which, however, only wounded me, as I always wear a steel protector under my outer garments; then he stunned me with a final blow, and when I recovered consciousness, I was lying on my back half in and half out of the stream. Wounded and exhausted with loss of blood as I was, I made all the haste I could, went to my lodgings, changed my clothes, and then hurried on to the Cedars, not quite expecting to see my man, although I thought it possible that, in the full belief that he had killed me, he might remain until the morrow. So I was not surprised to find him not there. Knowing that he could not get out of the country at any rate that night, I determined not to waste a minute, and luckily falling in with a carrier's cart, got up to London. I kept the matter quite quiet, not even informing Scotland Yard of the matter, for I made pretty sure of the capture. But he gave me the slip, he and his precious aunt, for all that; and it was only six weeks back that I nailed my gentleman quietly reading his paper in a restaurant on the boulevards. I was on him like a cat, in spite of his assumption of outraged innocence; and next Thursday he makes his last appearance in public on the Place de la Roquette.—By the way, I must have left a pocket-book at my lodgings with valuable information in it of no use to any one but the owner.'

'I have it,' I replied; 'and you must come over and spend your first holiday with us, for I shall never know how to atone sufficiently for the terrible opinion of you which, through me, has been spread about.'

'Of me?' said the detective.

'Why, certainly,' I replied. 'At this moment, in and about Kensham you are believed to have

murdered Corner; and until this morning, we believed the same thing.'

'Circumstances certainly looked ugly against me,' said De Bussy; 'but you see the success of my movements depended entirely upon absolute secrecy.'

'Suppose you had been arrested?' I said.

'The freemasonry among our profession would have prevented that.'

Helen still remains at home, for she says that she can never give to another man the love she gave to Corner, although she is heartily thankful for her narrow escape from marrying him. De Bussy paid us his promised visit, and brought with him his wife and Miss Gabrielle, who renewed her abruptly broken-off acquaintance with Mr Corner's coachman, and married him.

THE POETRY OF TOAST LISTS AND MENU CARDS.

THE public-dinner season in provincial England commences early in October and ends in the middle of March. During that period, at the slightest provocation our countrymen are prepared to dine together, not with a desire of over-indulgence in eating, but to enjoy the pleasant company usually gathered round the festive board. It is an admitted fact that the men who are in the habit of attending banquets are generally most abstemious. Speech, story, and song form a pleasing part of the proceedings of literary-society dinners, masonic banquets, and the more homely but not less enjoyable suppers held in connection with the Burns Clubs. The toast lists and menu cards are often very interesting; they are frequently artistic in design, and enriched with quotations from the poets, which render them of more than passing interest. A few quotations from some of the best of these which have come under our notice are surely worth reproducing. The authors represented cover a wide field, ranging from Shakespeare to Tennyson. The former is the most quotable poet, and he is most frequently drawn upon. Burns, however, runs him very closely.

In turning over a pile of toast lists, the first to attract our attention is the one prepared for the Hull Shakespearean Festival. On the front page is a portrait of the bard and the familiar line of 'rare' Ben Jonson:

He was not of an age, but for all time.

Under the first toast—that of the Queen—are two lines from *Henry V.*:

God and his angels, guard your sacred throne,
And make you long become it!

The toast of the evening follows: 'The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare'—Dr Johnson's well-known verse beneath it:

Each change of many-coloured life he drew;
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new;
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.

The third speaker had for his topic 'Shakespeare's Universality,' with a motto from *Romeo and Juliet*:

Monarch of the universal earth.

Actors and actresses were next toasted under the heading of 'Shakespearean Exponents,' with a quotation from *Othello*:

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice.

The next theme was 'Shakespeare and Tragedy,' with a line from *Richard III.*:

I live to look upon their tragedy.

Then followed 'Shakespeare and Comedy,' with two lines from the *Taming of the Shrew*:

Frame your mind for mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms.

Under the sentiment of 'Shakespeare and History,' is a line from *Henry IV.* (Part II.):

There is a history in all men's lives.

Lastly, 'Shakespearean Women' were remembered, and under the toast are three lines as follow from the third part of *Henry VI.*:

'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;
'Tis modesty that makes them seem divine.

The programme of music is headed with a couple of lines from *Twelfth Night*:

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it.

At the foot of the card is printed 'Good Night,' and a quotation from *Macbeth*, as follows:

At once good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

The toast list of a local literary society contains some happy quotations from Shakespeare. The speakers are reminded at the commencement of the programme, in the words from *Hamlet*, that 'Brevity is the soul of wit.' The two lines under the toast of 'The Prince and Princess of Wales' are from *Pericles*:

As jewels lose their glory if neglected,
So princes their renown if not respected.

A line from *Richard III.*—

Arm, fight, and conquer for England's sake,

was the motto to the toast of 'The Army, Navy, and Auxiliary Forces.' Under the toast of 'The Officers of the Club' are words from *Othello*: 'We cannot all be masters.'

Two good lines from the *Taming of the Shrew* are given with the toast of 'Literature and Science':

My books and instruments shall be my company,
On them to look and practise by myself.

A line under the toast of 'The Press' says, in the words of the *Merchant of Venice*, 'There are some shrewd contents in your paper.'

We have seen on several menu cards:

A good digestion to you all, and once more
I shower a welcome on you—welcome all.

Henry VIII.

A more general quotation (from *Macbeth*) is:

Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both.

The bill of fare for the Tercentenary Banquet, held in 1864, at Stratford-on-Avon, in honour of

Shakespeare, is perhaps the best specimen of cuisine literature ever produced. The following are a few of the edibles and the quotations:

Roast turkeys:

Why, here comes swelling like a turkey-cock.

Henry V.

Roast fowls:

There is a fowl without a feather.

Comedy of Errors.

Ducks:

O dainty duck!—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Boar's head:

Like a full-acorned boar.—*Cymbeline.*

York hams:

Sweet stem from York's great stock.

Henry VI. (Part I.).

Tongues:

Silence is only commendable in a neat's tongue dried.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Mayonnaise of lamb:

Was never gentle lamb more mild.—*Richard II.*

Braised lamb and beef:

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

A dish that I love to feed upon.

Taming of the Shrew.

Roast lamb:

Come you to seek the lamb here?

Measure for Measure.

Lobster and mayonnaise salads:

Sallet was born to do me good.

Henry IV. (Part II.).

Dressed lobsters and crabs:

There's no meat like them; I could wish my best friend at such a feast.—*Timon of Athens.*

Dessert, cakes, jellies, and creams:

The queen of curds and cream.—*Winter's Tale.*

Dressed potatoes:

Let the sky rain potatoes.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Bitter ale:

And here's a pot of good double beer, neighbour:
Drink, and fear not your man.

Henry VI. (Part II.).

In addition to the foregoing, many interesting and well-chosen quotations appear on the famous bill of fare.

The birthday of Burns is celebrated in all parts of the world; wherever Scotchmen are located this bard is honoured. We have before us a number of Burns dinner toast lists, and several are headed 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot?' One opens with Burns's grace, as follows:

O Thou who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want,
We bless Thee, God of nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent;
And if it please Thee, Heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent,
But whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content.—Amen.

The following are from the toast lists of the Hull Burns Club. Under the toast of 'The Queen,' two lines appear:

In the field of proud honour, our swords in our hand,
Our Queen and our country to save.

To the toast of 'The Mayor, Sheriff, and Corporation' is this couplet:

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white.

The toast of the evening, 'The Memory of Burns,' has under it the following verse from *The Cotter's Saturday Night*:

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blessed with health, and peace, and sweet content.

We have seen inscribed with this toast a verse from one of Bennoch's beautiful poems:

With reverent silence we will fill
A cup when'er this day returns,
And pledge the memory of the Bard,
The Bard of Nature—Robert Burns,
Immortal Burns.

Appended to the toast of 'The Hull Burns Club' are the noble lines:

It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

'The Visitors,' 'Kindred Societies,' are included with suitable quotations. The verse under the toast of 'The Press' is a happy selection:

Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write,
There's nae e'er feared that the truth should be heard,
But they whom the truth would indite.

We have seen the following quoted several times with this toast:

A chield's amang you takin notes,
And faith he'll prent it.

The concluding toast, that of 'The Lassies,' has the familiar lines:

The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly loved the lassies, O!

This year, the toast list of the Hull Literary Club was enriched with quotations from the works of the Poet Laureate. An excerpt from *The Princess* on the first page says:

Hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!

Two lines from a poem, *To the Rev. F. D. Maurice*, head the list:

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine.

To the toast of 'The Queen' are four lines, as follow:

Her Court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.

Five lines from *The Battle of Brunanburgh* are given to the toast of 'Our Brave Defenders':

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their grandsires—
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies,

Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes.

Two quotations appear under the toast of 'Success to the Hull Literary Club':

We rub each other's angles down.—*In Memoriam*.

Work in noble brotherhood.—*Exhibition Ode*.

With the toast of 'Literature and the Arts' is the line:

Let knowledge grow from more to more.

Under 'The Press':

News from the humming city comes to it.

The line under the toast of 'The Ladies' is brief and graceful:

Made to be loved.

Other quotations are given; but we think we have reproduced sufficient to show the poetry of toast lists and menu cards.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

It will be a disappointment to many that in the interesting autobiography recently published by M. Lesseps, which covers forty years of his life, there is hardly any mention of the Panama Canal. It is true that he bases his hopes of the success of that great venture upon what he has already achieved at Suez; and he is perhaps justified in quoting the adverse opinions which the latter scheme evoked in its day, as resembling the present opposition to his scheme at Panama. But this will not satisfy the shareholders. In the meantime it is interesting to turn to Mr Froude's opinion of the works at Panama. He describes the scene of operations as a damp tropical jungle, intensely hot, swarming with mosquitoes, snakes, alligators, and other disagreeable inhabitants. He tells of costly machinery consumed by rust, lying idle, unfit for the work for which it was intended. He also speaks of the skeletons of labourers picked clean by vultures. Altogether, the picture is by no means a reassuring one. It is true that he does not speak from personal knowledge, but from hearsay, and so it may be hoped that the reality is not quite so bad as he has painted it.

The *Army and Navy Gazette*, in alluding to the custom, which has prevailed for some centuries, of naming a warship after the reigning sovereign, gives a list of five of such vessels, with the dates of their construction appended, as follows: first we have the *Great Harry*, built in 1488; next comes the *Elizabeth*, one hundred years later; next, the *James Royal*, at another interval of one hundred years; then comes the ill-fated *Royal George* in last century; and lastly, the *Victoria* of the present year. The difference in the cost of these ships is remarkable. The first-named was built for the sum of fourteen thousand pounds; and each ship of the five shows an increase to the last on the list, which has cost nearly three-fourths of a million of money, and it must be observed that this large sum does not include its armament.

The succession of gruesome fogs which have lately darkened London to a terrible extent has once more brought forward the subject of smoke prevention. Sir Douglas Galton has recently been lecturing upon the subject, and among other statements he said that experiments had proved that the air in fog contained four times as much carbonic acid as usual. He also pointed out that the blackness of these metropolitan fogs undoubtedly arose from smoke proceeding from incompletely

burnt fuel, and he lays most of the blame upon the domestic fire-grate. As a remedy he proposes the use of gas for cooking, and says that all his experience proves that the open fire must be given up. At the same time, he is not blind to the advantages which this genial form of heat affords. There is no doubt that the open fire warms by radiation the walls and furniture of the room, while it leaves the air cooler and more fit to breathe than any other system. It is the absence of these conditions which causes a room which is heated by hot air or water to appear close and oppressive to those who are used to open fires.

Another interesting lecture upon a kindred subject was recently delivered by Mr Alfred Wilson at Birmingham. He took for his subject, 'Water-gas for Heating and Illuminating.' He pointed out the simple method in which this gas is produced. Ordinary gas-coke is raised to an incandescent heat by means of a blast of air in a cupola-shaped furnace. When at a sufficiently high temperature, steam is passed through the mass, and is decomposed, the result being an inflammable gas which consists of hydrogen and carbonic oxide. The mixture after passing through a washing arrangement is conveyed to a gas-holder; and it can be burnt with the help of one of the new incandescent burners furnished with a magnesia mantle, the light given being far more intense than that of ordinary gas. The cost of the gas is sixpence per thousand cubic feet; but the maintenance of the magnesia mantles raises the price to about double that sum. This gas contains but a small proportion of that compound of sulphur and carbon which causes such destruction to books and pictures. But this small amount has the advantage of rendering the gas sufficiently odorous to enable an escape to be easily detected. It is stated that the water-gas system is in use in more than two hundred and fifty towns in America. It is particularly adapted to the needs of an isolated country-house.

According to *La Nature*, another kind of gas is being turned to a useful purpose in some coal-mines near Aix-la-Chapelle. By means of a system of piping, the fire-damp is carried to the surface of the ground and used for heating purposes. The system is said to be perfectly successful; and is not only interesting but of great importance when we remember that this gas is the cause of explosions in coal-mines. The new process is therefore something more than the mere utilisation of a waste product.

Some excitement has recently been caused at Brighton by the appearance of a dogcart driven by electricity. The electric motor is placed under the body of the vehicle, and acts upon one of the wheels by a chain from a counter-shaft, the power being provided by sixteen small electric accumulators which are placed under the seats. The speed of this novel vehicle depends upon the nature of the road. Upon asphalt it amounts to nine miles an hour; but on an ordinary soft Macadam road this speed is reduced to less than half. With two passengers, the dogcart will ascend a moderate incline without difficulty.

It is said that a French experimenter has succeeded in making an artificial silk. The basis of this material is a collodion made by dissolving

nitro-cellulose in a mixture of alcohol and ether. This mixture is placed in a reservoir which is furnished with a blowpipe, through which the viscid liquid is forced in a fine stream. The fluid thread is projected into another vessel filled with acidulated water, which has the property of hardening it, and bestowing upon it the appearance of true silk. It is then rapidly dried in a current of air, and is wound on a suitable reel. It is of a gray colour, and can be easily subjected to the action of different dyes.

It seems that the monkeys on a certain island off the coast of South Burma have discovered for themselves the edible excellence of the oyster. Mr Alfred Carpenter of Bombay states that he has seen these animals select stones from the sea-beach of a size which they can easily grasp, and open the oysters by striking the upper valve of the shell until it breaks; the operator then carefully extracts the oyster with finger and thumb, and apparently enjoys it.

The Eiffel Tower, which is to form such a noteworthy feature at the coming Paris Exhibition, has already been completed up to a height of about two hundred feet, being one-fifth of the altitude which it is ultimately to attain. Its total height will therefore be about two and a half times the height of St Paul's Cathedral; and from it a wonderful view of Paris will be presented. In addition to its use as a means of extracting money from visitors to the Exhibition, it is proposed to establish on the summit of this tower an observatory for scientific purposes.

Our readers will remember that, at the recent Colonies Exhibition in London, a large collection of fruits from the antipodes was shown. It was thus seen that it was possible to transport perishable fruits from one side of the earth to the other, and yet present them to consumers in first-rate condition. The idea has been further expanded recently, the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Thames* having brought to London a large consignment of Australian oranges. The experiment is a successful one, and reflects much credit on its originator, Dr Storer of Sydney. This gentleman has found that oranges can be kept for an almost indefinite period if packed in sawdust or in paper which has been soaked in some antiseptic preparation.

The much-discussed law relating to oleo-margarine came into force on the 1st of January, and already a number of traders have been prosecuted and fined for not observing its conditions. A curious test for distinguishing between these compounds and true butter comes from New Jersey. A gentleman there who was engaged in analysing several samples of oleo-margarine and butter left these samples in his laboratory for a night. The next morning he found that the mice had been busy at the dishes; but they had carefully avoided the false, and confined their attentions to the true butter. In case this should be due to mere chance, some other samples were the next evening spread out for their scrutiny, and again the oleo-margarine was left intact at the expense of the butter. On placing a dish of oleo-margarine in the same place but without any butter in its company, it was found that the mice had eaten of the compound very sparingly. It thus appears that the little animals can distinguish between butter and its imitation, and that they

will eat the latter, but not if they can get the true article.

Nelson's flagship the *Victory*, which for more than fifty years has been moored at Portsmouth, and has been visited by thousands of people, has recently been overhauled in consequence of a leak which placed the old vessel in some jeopardy. The condition of the ship is found to be very much better than was anticipated, most of the timbers being as firm as when the vessel was launched. The *Victory* is now to be renovated, and will once more be placed in its old position.

There is an erroneous notion which is very widely spread, that the ice which forms on water is free of any impurities which that water may contain, and there is little doubt that many cases of disease may be traced to the confidence which exists in the truth of this dogma. Some recent experiments have been made in the United States which show that the notion has no foundation in fact. Various substances were purposely dissolved in water, which water was then frozen, it being found that the ice forming upon the water contained rather more of the dissolved solids than a similar weight of the water itself. We need hardly point out that the use of ice is far more common in America than it is here, it being regarded as a necessary rather than a luxury. Several epidemics have been traced in that country to the use of impure ice.

Professor Bonney believes that in the future, when growth of population causes the Thames and the Lea to become too contaminated for potable uses, it may be necessary to establish a system of double supply; one of a pure description for drinking, and the other for more common uses. He prophesies that ultimately London will have to derive its water-supply from North Wales, a change of conditions which would involve a cost of about twelve millions sterling.

The vice-consul at La Rochelle has just published a Report in which he cautions British merchants against frauds which are becoming common in the French brandy trade. In his district, owing to the almost total extinction of the vineyards, a beverage called claret is made from steeping raisins and currants in water and mixing the compound with cheap Spanish wine. In other districts in France where the vineyards have suffered in the same way, brandy, so called, is made of a mixture of beetroot and cheap German spirit. This horrible compound is sent from Germany to Bordeaux or some other French port for what it really is, and is then re-marked and sent to London as cognac. In one case of fraud of this description, the offender was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a heavy fine. It is to be hoped that in future cases, the French government will publish the names of the correspondents of these rascally dealers in this country, so that consumers may know whom to avoid.

Some interesting particulars concerning the distillation of peppermint and lavender at one of the principal factories at Mitcham, London, a neighbourhood which has long been famous for these products, have recently appeared in the *Chemist and Druggist*. During the past year, three thousand pounds of the essential oil of peppermint were distilled at this one factory. A large portion of the mint is grown on land belonging

to the place; but a great deal is brought in by growers in the surrounding villages. The best oil is obtained from the white mint, and this sells at from forty-five to fifty shillings a pound. With regard to lavender, the past season has been the best for many years, and five hundred pounds of oil were produced at this distillery. Only the leaves of the plant are placed in the still, as admixture with the stems is found to be prejudicial to the flavour.

A strange instance of poetical license was alluded to by Sir Robert Ball, Royal Astronomer for Ireland, during a recent lecture at the Royal Institution on the Moon. After quoting Wolfe's celebrated poem, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, in which it will be remembered occur the words, 'by the struggling moonbeams' misty light,' he pointed out that Professor Naysmyth had proved conclusively by calculation that on the night that Sir John Moore was buried at Corunna, there could have been no moonlight at all. He also stated that some years ago, when he had mentioned this to the President of the Royal Irish Academy, that gentleman replied: 'It is all very well; but Wolfe's statement that there was moonlight on the night of the battle of Corunna will live long after all your astronomical calculations have been forgotten.'

Nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, Jonathan Swift wrote those oft-quoted lines to the effect that the flea has smaller fleas that on him prey, and that these have smaller still, and so on *ad infinitum*. We are reminded of these words in reading the appendix to Miss Ormerod's pamphlet on the Hessian Fly. It will be remembered that during last summer it was discovered that this dreaded fly was accompanied in its visit to this country by a parasite, which would probably help more in its extermination than any means which could be adopted by its human enemies. Miss Ormerod has succeeded in hatching out a number of these parasites, and seven distinct varieties have been already identified. It has further been proved that these parasites are all of Russian origin, and so the suspicion that the fly came originally from Russia is in this way confirmed.

A curious Museum is in course of arrangement at Paris, and a very handsome building for its accommodation has been erected near the Trocadero Palace. This building will contain a wonderful collection of idols and other objects formed by M. Guimet to illustrate the different religions of the world. Here will be found divinities from Egypt, Japan, China, India, Greece, Italy, and various other countries. In another part of the building there will be rooms for the use of students. This interesting Museum will be opened in a few months' time.

Again we have to chronicle the loss of a number of lives during the past year by mining explosions. The deaths from this cause amounted to one hundred and forty-two, or thirteen more than in the previous year; but as this number is considerably below the average for the ten years ending 1886, we cannot say that it is altogether unsatisfactory. Defective safety lamps and shot-firing are credited with most of these sad fatalities; but we may hope that the stringent measures which have now come into force under the new Mines Regulation Act will go far to

diminish them. In this connection, we may remark that we have recently seen some miners' safety lamps which seem to promise much for the future. These lamps are the outcome of Schanschiff's portable electric battery, and they seem to be simplicity itself. They are only a trifle heavier than the lamps now in use, are portable, will give a good light for eight hours without attention, at a cost of about one penny. When the battery solution is exhausted, it is simply turned out, and fresh solution poured in, a work which occupies only a few seconds, and can be done by an unskilled hand. There are two or three forms of this new lamp: the first gives four times the light of the old safety lamp; the second gives seven times that light; and there is a much larger form of lamp designed for special situations where three or four men can work together. In this case the battery is upon wheels, and the light is placed above it, and can be fixed at any convenient height.

A new method of preserving live fish, which seems to depend upon some phenomenon that it is at present difficult to explain, has been patented in America. The discoverer is Mr W. G. Murphy, of New York city, who found, from numerous experiments, that fish can be kept alive for a long time without either change of air or water, by placing them in a vessel partly filled with water, but hermetically sealed. Fish so placed in a closed jar were found alive and apparently in good health at the end of three weeks' confinement; while fish placed at the same time in an open jar of water all died within forty-eight hours. It was also found that when the air in the jar containing the fish and water was compressed, their life was still further prolonged. It has been suggested that the reason for these strange results lies in the fact that the water in the jar which is hermetically sealed does not undergo such rapid changes as water left in an open vessel. But the discovery is one which will be of very great use in the carriage and transportation of fish. Sportsmen, too, will appreciate a method which will permit them to carry live bait for an indefinite period.

UTILISATION OF WASTE PRODUCTS.

In a paper read before the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, Mr Alfred H. Allen, President of the Society of Public Analysts, said: 'Another waste product which is deservedly appreciated as a manure consists in the sweepings and combings from woollen manufactories, known as "shoddy." Formerly, this was applied to the land in the raw state. The grease with which it was saturated acted as a preservative, and therefore detracted from its value as a manure; but no one would now think of neglecting to extract the grease from the wool before employing it on the land. The recovered grease is now recognised as a valuable secondary product; and when purified, the stearin or solid portion makes its appearance in the form of night-lights, and the olein or liquid part goes back to the woollen manufacturers to be used again.

'In the manufacture of soap, glycerine is produced in enormous quantities as a secondary product. Of the two chief processes of treating

fats, one produces good glycerine but inferior soap, and the other produces good soap but inferior glycerine. The quantity of glycerine hitherto thrown away in the soap-lyes has been something enormous, but now much of it is recovered. Thus at the works of Messrs Gossage, at Widnes, the largest soap-works in the world, the soap-lyes are boiled down, the salt separated, and the concentrated liquid distilled, whereby glycerine is obtained, which receives an enormous application in the manufacture of nitroglycerine. This, when soaked up in one-third of its weight of a porous earth called *kieselguhr*, forms the well-known explosive dynamite, which is produced in one single works to the extent of several tons per day. The glycerine produced from the waste soap-lyes at Messrs Gossage's works was often found unsuitable for its intended purpose, in consequence of containing sulpho-cyanides and other cyanogen compounds. By a process patented by myself and Mr Benjamin Nickels, these products are wholly removed from the soap-lyes, and thus a glycerine can be obtained from the impure source employed at Widnes as good in quality as that of any other origin. Curiously enough, this process, which has been now successfully at work at Widnes for some time, will shortly become unnecessary, owing to the introduction of an improved process of preparing the alkali used for saponifying the fat. By this process, due to Mathieson and Hawliezek, it will be freed from the objectionable sulphur and cyanogen compounds which hitherto had passed into the glycerine. At the same time the cyanogen compounds are destroyed, they will be converted into the useful form of ammonia. Truly, "the whirligig of time brings round its revenges."

IF YOU WERE HERE.

If you were here, how pleasant life would be;
How sweet the twilight of the closing year;
The fire, how warm and bright, my heart how free,
If you were here!

Whate'er befell, I would not shed a tear,
So I might spend my life in ministry
On you, whom death has made so passing dear.

Do you e'er mourn the past, and think of me?
Alas! I would not need my heart to cheer
With hopes forlorn—nor from dark dreams to flee,
If you were here!

P. W. ROOSE.

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IN A TURKISH CITY.

FIRST PAPER.

THERE are still some places left in the world where a man may feel in exile. Railways, steamers, and telegraph lines have brought most parts of Europe within easy reach of the omnipresent travelling gentleman known to residents abroad as the T. G. There is an English society of one sort or another in most foreign towns; and where there is no society, there is a British merchant or two, or some one trying for a concession, or some one financing a railway. A man does not feel himself absolutely in exile when he can hear his own language spoken occasionally by residents or visitors; but here in Scutari—or Scodra, as it should properly be called—we so seldom see a T. G.'s face, or hear any English voices but our own, that we may fairly consider ourselves in exile. The place itself seems utterly ignored by the average Englishman. If I tell him I am going to Scodra, he says: 'O yes!' but his face shows that the name conveys no impression to his mind. If I say: 'It's generally called Scutari in Europe,' his face lights up, if he be a person of intelligence, and he replies: 'Oh, of course—where the Crimean cemeteries are.' Unfortunately, it is just where the Crimean cemeteries are not; but as people on the continent have resolved to call the capital of North Albania and the suburb of Constantinople by the same name, the mistake will naturally continue to occur. Not only is the place so difficult of access that it is almost impossible to reach it in less than ten days from England, but the post, that great solace of the exile, is extremely irregular. Letters come quickly enough as far as Trieste; but then they are put on board an Austrian Lloyd steamer, and spend nearly a week dawdling down the Adriatic, till they reach San Giovanni di Medua, which is one of the worst ports in European Turkey, and that is saying a very great deal. Scodra is about twenty miles from the sea-coast, and each con-

sulate possesses a postman, who takes it in his turn to ride down to the port to meet the steamer and bring back the mails. When the weather is bad, the boats do not touch at Medua, so the postman has the pleasure of seeing the Lloyd go by to Corfu, and of spending the time at fever-stricken Medua somehow or other till its return. Sometimes there is quite a collection of postmen, who have handed over their mail-bags to the Lloyd agent, and are waiting to receive the post when the steamer does touch. But supposing the gale to moderate sufficiently for this, the difficulties of the postmen are not over. We always talk of the 'road' to Medua, but it is only by courtesy, for, strictly speaking, there is not even a track for the greater part of the way.

In the summer, it is all plain sailing; the boats touch with commendable regularity; the river Drin is low, and the postman ambles along the level banks, or occasionally in the dried-up bed of the stream. But in winter it is a very different thing; the Drin has no respect for its banks, and not content with flooding all the plain, carves out new courses for itself now and then which puzzle the most experienced postman. Sometimes he has to wade, sometimes he has to borrow a *londra* or canoe and paddle across the river; and sometimes he gets intercepted for a week, and the precious mails for which we are longing with the impatience only known to exiles have to be stored in a damp hut, waiting until the rush of waters be past. The postal officials, too, in Europe have vague notions as to our whereabouts. A letter plainly addressed 'Albania' has been sent to America, and returned from Albany, N. Y., with the inscription, 'Try Europe;' and a parcel after having been despatched from England was no more heard of for months, until one fine day a Turkish postman arrived with it safe and sound. It had been sent to Constantinople by a clerk who was too sharp to pay attention to the address, and thence carried across the peninsula by a *zaptieh* at an enormous expense of time and trouble. It is such little *contre-*

temps as these that make us welcome so heartily the solemn face and long grizzled moustaches of Giovanni the postman as he jogs up the road from the bazaar with the mailbags swinging at his saddle-bow.

It is a queer land this : a land of upside-down ; where men wear petticoats and women trousers ; where women ride astride and men ride side-saddle ; where men air themselves in their best clothes, while women do the work and carry the burdens ; a land where justice is quite as blind as she is elsewhere, and quite as frequently pops the innocent man into prison and lets the real offender go free, although she does not disdain to raise a corner of the bandage over her eyes, when the right sort of oil is applied to allay the itching that troubles her palm. But here is a stout little gentleman in the Stambouli uniform, with his fez slightly on the back of his head, and his hands crossed behind him, twiddling a string of amber beads. He is a jovial-looking little man, although he does walk so slowly and solemnly, with his two secretaries or attendants behind him. He represents the blind goddess here, for he is, let us say, the supreme judge of the mercantile court. He is also a Greek, and therefore a plausible and unscrupulous rogue. With what a charming air of old-fashioned courtesy he salutes us ; how politely and even eloquently he discourses of indifferent topics of the day ! In his court he is just as polite ; but the suitors know that it is quite as well to have the judge on their side, and that his taste for antique and curious works of art is rather more expensive than his salary will permit him to gratify ; and so, somehow or other, before an important case comes on, valuable rugs or chased silver ornaments find their way to the judge's house as presents. Should Barbelushi and Skreli go to law, and should Barbelushi, foolishly relying on what he considers the justice of his cause, omit to play a counter-move to the gloriously patterned carpet that has mysteriously found its way from Skreli's house to the President's, he will inevitably lose his case ; the matter is too simple for a moment's doubt. But let us suppose that a friend of Barbelushi informs our little acquaintance that a pistol with a magnificently carved silver butt is awaiting his acceptance, and that only Barbelushi's native modesty has prevented him from offering it long since as a testimony of regard for so upright and learned a judge ; then the matter becomes more complicated, and it requires all the ingenuity and tact of a Greek to see that justice be done.

When the case comes on, the President of the court is even more courteous and affable than usual to the litigants ; he has weighed the matter over well, and has decided, we will say, that he has plenty of carpets for the present ; that Barbelushi's pistol is a very handsome specimen, and that perhaps, by judicious hints, the fellow to

it, which he knows is in existence, may be enticed from Barbelushi's house to his own. When the arguments have been heard, the President and his two colleagues confer over the matter before giving their judgment, and the former speaks very strongly in favour of the justice of Barbelushi's case—so strongly, in fact, that the two colleagues, seeing which way the wind is blowing, and being too wise in their generation to oppose their chief, give their votes for Barbelushi. Thereupon, the President plays a master-stroke, and gives his own vote for Skreli ; but being outvoted, judgment is given for Barbelushi. The latter, rejoiced at winning his suit, returns the judge his most grateful thanks for the eminent justice and skill in the law displayed by His Excellency ; and going home, at once despatches the second pistol as an earnest of his gratitude.

But poor Skreli is naturally much disappointed, and fancies that his carpet is lost for nothing. However, he is too good a fish to be thrown away, so the President takes the first opportunity of condoling with him on his misfortune, and assures him that it was entirely owing to the majority being on the other side ; for that, as the records of the court show, he himself voted for Skreli. And all this is said with so much apparent sympathy, and with so much sorrow that his efforts should have been unavailing, that the simple Skreli is almost consoled for his loss, and goes home resolving that before his next lawsuit a much better carpet shall have become the property of so worthy and upright a judge. And thus all parties are quite satisfied ; and the law, as in other parts of the world, gets the oyster, while the litigants get the shells.

But tricks however cunning get seen through at last, and the judge and his predecessors in office are no doubt largely responsible for that hole in the wall of the house opposite us. The owner of the house evidently does not think his white wall disfigured by the hole, for he has not taken the trouble to plaster it up, though it is probably plugged on the inside to keep out the draught. There are two kinds of justice in this country, and that bullet-hole will serve as the visible sign of one, as the President of the court does of the other. Long before the Ottomans were heard of, the law of the blood-feud and of the responsibility of the family for the misdeeds of all its members, was the only code known ; and as yet the Albanians have not become sufficiently civilised to perceive the advantages of the government method, and so those of them who have not mixed much with Europeans, draw their pistols when they meet an enemy, instead of dragging him before the court. The Mussulmans of the city and the Christians of the mountains go everywhere with pistols and yataghan in their belt ; only the Christians of the city carry no arms. The justice of the law-court is uncertain, expensive, and unsuited to a nation of warriors ; while the blood-feud is honourable, and costs no more than a charge of powder and a bullet, and so the streets and bazaar of Scodra continue to be enlivened by an interchange of shots, whenever the members of families which have blood between them encounter one another.

But the subject is too vast for consideration

at this moment; let us, before we go any further, try to realise what kind of a town it is we are in. For this purpose, the best thing to do is to ascend the low hill just under the castle, for from that point we shall be able to see the country all round us and the city at our feet. Looking out to the north-east, we see a wide plain hemmed in on all sides by lofty mountains; the great Lake of Scodra stretches away from the base of the castle rock to the mountains of Montenegro, the steep cliffs springing directly from the water on its western shore, but with a broad flat plain between the lake and the mountains to the east. Below us lies the city, the wide, low, red-tiled roofs of its houses half hidden by the thick foliage of its trees. Every house stands by itself, shut off from its neighbours by a high wall, and surrounded by its garden, except in the Christian quarter, where the houses are generally smaller, and in many instances without gardens. Here and there is an open space, dotted all over with white tombstones, carved at the top to represent a turban; and from among the trees the tall slender minarets of some thirty mosques shoot up into the air. Nearly in the centre of the town, a red flag marks the Konak or government house and barracks of the troops; while the other flagstaffs that appear above some of the houses near, distinguish the residences of the consuls. To our right, and on the outskirts of the city, stands a huge gaunt building, with no ornament or decoration on its plain plastered walls; this is the Roman Catholic cathedral; and on Sundays and holy-days it is crowded with mountaineers and Christian townsmen.

On a steep rock to our left is the ancient castle, now crumbling into ruin, and shorn of its strength by the proximity of Mount Tarabos, to which modern artillery has given the command of the key of North Albania; and beyond, the Boiana winds slowly through fat lowlands to the sea. Behind us to the south-west is the rich plain of the Zadrima, cut up in every direction by the erratic wanderings of the Drin; and then a range of hills, which hides the Adriatic from our view, and forms the port of San Giovanni di Medua by sending a spur out into the sea. Crushed in between the Boiana and the castle rock is the bazaar, a network of narrow streets, each one of which is devoted to a separate trade. The bazaar serves the men of Scodra instead of a club. Every man has his little shop whether he does any business or not, and there he sits and gossips with his friends, smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee till about half an hour before *Aksham*, when he rises, shuts up his shop, and returns to his house, leaving the bazaar and its wealth to the care of the night-watchers only.

They do things in leisurely fashion at Scodra. There are no startling advertisements, no flaming posters. If a merchant knows you, he will offer you coffee and cigarettes as a matter of course. If you press him, he will show you his goods, but he will not worry you to buy; nay, if he has nothing to your taste, he will tell you of a friend or neighbour who may perhaps be able to supply your wants. He never sells at an alarming sacrifice, nor even considerably under cost price; but what he does sell is thoroughly good, and well worth what he asks for it. It seems incredible at first to a visitor coming from Europe or from Greece;

but Albania is a land of surprises, and therefore, gentle reader, we will note things while they are fresh and strange, and before the novelty has had time to wear off.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

BY GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XI.—SINK OR SWIM?

HUGH was selfish, heartless, and unscrupulous; but he was not physically a coward, a cur, or a palterer. Without one second's thought, he rushed wildly down to the water's edge, and balancing himself for a plunge, with his hands above his head, on the roots of the big tree, he dived boldly into that wild current, against whose terrific force he had once already struggled so vainly on the morning of his first arrival at Whitestrand. Elsie had had but a few seconds' start of him; with his powerful arms to aid him in the quest, he must surely overtake and save her before she could drown, even in that mad and swirling tidal torrent. He flung himself on the water with all his force, and goaded by remorse, pity, and love—for, after all, he loved her, he loved her—he drew unwonted strength from the internal fires, as he pushed back the fierce flood on either side with arms and thighs of feverish energy. At each strong push, he moved forward apace with the gliding current, and in the course of a few stout strokes he was already many yards on his way seaward from the point at which he had originally started. But his boots and clothes clogged his movements terribly, and his sleeves in particular so impeded his arms that he could hardly use them to any sensible advantage. He felt conscious at once that, under such hampering conditions, it would be impossible to swim for many minutes at a stretch. He must find Elsie and save her almost immediately, or both must go down and drown together.

He wanted nothing more than to drown with her now. 'Elsie, Elsie, my darling Elsie!' he cried aloud on the top of the wave. To lose Elsie was to lose everything. The sea was running high as he neared the bar, and Elsie had disappeared as if by magic. Even in that dark black water on that moonless night he wondered he couldn't catch a single glimpse of her white dress by the reflected starlight. But the truth was, the current had sucked her under—sucked her under wildly with its irresistible force, only to fling her up again, a senseless burden, where sea and river met at last in fierce conflict among the roaring breakers that danced and shivered upon the shallow bar.

He swam about blindly, looking round him on every side through the thick darkness with eager eyes for some glimpse of Elsie's white dress in a stray gleam of starlight; but he saw not a trace of her presence anywhere. Gropping and feeling his way still with numbed limbs, that grew weary and stiff with the frantic effort, he battled on through the gurgling eddy till he reached the breakers on the bar itself. There, his strength proved of no avail—he might as well have tried to stem Niagara. The great waves, rolling their serried line against the stream

from the land, caught him and twisted him about resistlessly, raising him now aloft on their foaming crest, dashing him now down deep in their hollow trough, and then flinging him back again over some great curling mountain of water far on to the current from which he had just emerged with his stout endeavour. For ten minutes or more he struggled madly against those titanic enemies: then his courage and his muscle failed together, and he gave up the unequal contest out of sheer fatigue and physical inability to continue it longer. It was indeed an awful and appalling situation. Alone there in the dark, whirled about by a current that no man could stem, and confronted with a rearing wall of water that no man could face, he threw himself wearily back for a moment at full length, and looked up in his anguish from his floating couch to the cold stars overhead, whose faint light the spray every instant hid from his sight as it showered over him from the curling crests of the great billows beyond him. And it was to this that he had driven poor innocent, trustful, wronged Elsie! the one woman he had ever truly loved! the one woman who, with all the force of a profound nature—profounder ten thousand times than his own—had truly loved him!

Elsie was tossing up and down there just as hopelessly now, no doubt. But Elsie had no pangs of conscience added to torment her. *She* had only a broken heart to reckon with.

He let himself float idly where wind and waves might happen to bear him. There was no help for it: he could swim no farther. It was all over, all over now. Elsie was lost, and for all the rest he cared that moment less than nothing. Winifred! He scorned and hated her very name. He might drown at his ease, for anything he would ever do himself to prevent it. The waves broke over him again and again. He let them burst across his face or limbs, and floated on, without endeavouring to swim or guide himself at all. Would he never sink? Was he to float and float and float like this to all eternity?

Roar—roar—roar on the bar, each roar growing fainter and fainter in his ears. Clearly receding, receding still. The current was carrying him away from it now, and whirling him along in a back eddy, that set strongly south-westward towards the dike of the salt marshes.

He let himself drift wherever it might take him. It took him back, back, back, steadily, till he saw the white crest of the breakers on the ridge extend like a long gray line in the dim distance upon the sea beyond him. He was well into safer water by this time: the estuary was only very rough here. He might swim if he chose. But he did not choose. He cared nothing for life, since Elsie was gone. In a sudden revulsion of wild despair, a frantic burst of hopeless yearning, he knew, for the first time in his whole life, now it was too late, how truly and deeply and intensely he had loved her. As truly and deeply as he was capable of loving anybody or anything on earth except himself; and that, after all, was nothing much to boast of.

Still, it was enough to overwhelm him for the moment with agonies of remorse and regret and

pity, and to make him long just then and there for instant death, as the easiest escape from his own angry and accusing conscience. He wanted to die; he yearned and prayed for it. But death obstinately refused to come to his aid. He turned himself round on his face now, and striking out just once with his wearied thighs, gazed away blankly towards the foam on the bar, where Elsie's body must still be tossing in a horrible ghastly dance of death among the careering breakers.

As he looked, a gleam of ruddy light showed for a second from a masthead just beyond the bar. A smack—a smack! coming in to the river! The sight refilled him with a faint fresh hope. That hope was too like despair; but still it was something. He swam out once more with the spasmodic energy of utter despondency. The smack might still be in time to save Elsie! He would make his way out to it, though it ran him down; if it ran him down, so much the better! he would shout aloud at the top of his voice, to out-roar the breakers: 'A lady is drowning! Save her!—save her!'

He struck out again with mad haste through the back current. This time, he had to fight against it with his wearied limbs, and to plough his way by prodigious efforts. The current was stronger, now he came to face it, than he had at all imagined when he merely let himself drift on its surface. Battling with all his might against the fierce swirls, he hardly seemed to make any headway at all through the angry water. His strength was almost all used up now; he could scarcely last till he reached the smack.—Great heavens, what was this? She was turning!—she was turning! The surf was too much for her timbers to endure. She couldn't make the mouth of the creek. She was luffing seaward again, and it was all up, all up with Elsie.

It was Warren Relf's yawl, bearing down from Lowestoft, and trying for the first time to enter the river through the wall of breakers.

Oh, if only he had lain right in her path just then, as she rode over the waves, that she might run him down and sink him for ever, with his weight of infamy, beneath those curling billows! He could never endure to go ashore again—and to feel that he had virtually murdered Elsie.

Elsie, Elsie, poor murdered Elsie! He should hate to live, now he had murdered Elsie!

And then, as he battled still fiercely with the tide, in a flash of his nerves, he felt suddenly a wild spasm of pain seize on both his thighs, and an utter disablement affect his entire faculty of bodily motion. It was a paroxysm of cramp—overwhelming—inexpressible—and it left him in one second powerless to move or think or act or plan, a mere dead log, incapable of anything but a cry of pain, and helpless as a baby in the midst of that cruel and unheeding eddy.

He flung himself back for dead on the water once more. A choking sensation seized hold of his senses. The sea was pouring in at his nostrils and his ears. He knew he was going, and he was glad to know it. He would rather die than live with that burden of guilt upon his black soul. The waves washed over his face in serried ranks. He didn't mind: he didn't struggle; he didn't try for one instant to save himself. He

floated on, unconscious at last, back, slowly back, towards the bank of the salt marsh.

When Hugh Massinger next knew anything, he was dimly conscious of lying at full length on a very cold bed, and fumbling with his fingers to pull the bed-clothes closer around him. But there were no bed-clothes, and everything about was soaking wet. He must be stretched in a pool of water, he thought—so damp it was all round to the touch—with a soft mattress or couch spread beneath him. He put out his hands to feel the mattress. He came upon mud, mud, deep layers of mud; all cold and slimy in the dusk of night. And then with a flash he remembered all—Elsie dead! Elsie drowned!—and knew he was stranded by the ebbing tide on the edge of the embankment. No hope of helping Elsie now. With a violent effort, he roused himself to consciousness, and crawled feebly on his knees to the firm ground. It was difficult work, floundering through the mud, with his numb limbs; but he floundered on, upon hands and feet, till he reached the shore, and stood at last, dripping with brine and crusted with soft slimy tidal ooze, on the broad bank of the moated dike that hemmed in the salt marshes from the mud-bank of the estuary. It was still dark night, but the moon had risen. He could hardly say what the time might be, for his watch had stopped, of course, by immersion in the water; but he roughly guessed, by the look of the stars, it was somewhere about half-past ten. We have a vague sense of the lapse of time even during sleep or other unconscious states; and Hugh was certain he couldn't have been floating for much more than an hour or thereabouts.

He gazed around him vaguely at the misty meadows. He was a mile or more from the village inn. The estuary, with its acrid flats of mud, lay between him and the hard at White-strand. Sheets of white surf still shimmered dimly on the bar far out to sea. And Elsie was lost—lost to him irrevocably.

He sat down and pondered on the bank for a while. Those five minutes were the turning-point of his life. What should he do and how comport himself under these sudden and awful and unexpected circumstances? Dazed as he was, he saw even then the full horror of the dilemma that hedged him in. Awe and shame brought him back with a rush to reason. If he went home and told the whole horrid truth, everybody would say he was Elsie's murderer. Perhaps they would even suggest that he pushed her in—to get rid of her. He dared not tell it; he dared not face it. Should he fly the village—the county—the country?—That would be foolish and precipitate indeed, not to say wicked: a criminal surrender. All was not lost, though Elsie was lost to him. In his calmer mood, no longer heroic with the throes of despondency, sitting shivering there with cold in the keen breeze, between his dripping clothes, upon the bare swept bank, he said to himself many times over that all was not lost; he might still go back—and marry Winifred.

Hideous — horrible — ghastly — inhuman: he reckoned even so his chances with Winifred.

The shrewd wind blew chill upon his wet clothes. It bellowed and roared with hoarse

groans round the stakes on the dike-slucies. His head was whirling still with asphyxia and numbness. He felt hardly in a condition to think or reason. But this was a crisis, a life-and-death crisis. He must pull himself together like a man, and work it all out, his doubtful course for the next three hours, or else sink for ever in a sea of obloquy, remembered only as Elsie's murderer. Everything was at stake for him—live or die. Should he jump once more into the cold wild stream—or go home quietly like a sensible man, and play his hand out to marry Winifred?

If he meant to go, he must go at once. It was no use to think of delaying or shilly-shallying. By eleven o'clock, the inn would be closed. He must steal in, unperceived, by the open French windows before eleven, if he intended still to keep the game going. But he must have his plan of action definitely mapped out none the less beforehand; and to map it out, he must wait a moment still; he must sum up chances in this desperate emergency.

Life is a calculus of varying probabilities. Was it likely he had been perceived at the Hall that evening? Did anybody know he had been walking with Elsie?

He fancied not—he believed not.—He was certain not, now he came to think of it. Thank Heaven, he had made the appointment verbally. If he'd written a note, that damning evidence might have been produced against him at the coroner's inquest. Inquest? Unless they found the body—Elsie's body—pah! how horrible to think of—but still, a man must steel himself to face facts, however ghastly and however horrible. Unless they found the body, then, there would be no inquest; and if only things were managed well and cleverly, there needn't even be any inquiry. Unless they found the body—Elsie's body!—poor Elsie's body, whirled about by the waves!—But they would never find it—they would never find it. The current had sucked it under at once, and carried it away careering madly to the sea. It would toss and whirl on the breakers for a while, and then sink unseen to the fathomless abysses of the German Ocean.

He hated himself for thinking all this—with Elsie drowned—or not yet drowned even—and yet he thought it, because he was not man enough to face the alternative.

Had Elsie told any one she was going to meet him? No; she wouldn't even tell Winifred of that, he was sure. She met him there often by appointment, it was true, but always quietly: they kept their meetings a profound secret between them.

Had any one seen them that evening together? He couldn't remember noticing anybody.—How shrill the wind blew through his dripping clothes. It cut him in two; and his head reeled still.—No; nobody, nobody. He was quite safe upon that score at least. Nobody knew he was out with Elsie.

Could he go back, then, and keep it all quiet, saying nothing himself, but leaving the world to form its own conclusions? A sudden thought flashed in an intuitive moment across his brain. A Plan!—a Plan! How happy! A Policy! He saw his way out of it all at once. He could set everything right by a simple method. Yes, that would do. It was bold, but not risky. He

might go now : the scheme for the future was all matured. Nobody need ever suspect anything. A capital idea ! Honour was saved ; and he might still go back and marry Winifred.

Elsie dead ! Elsie drowned ! The world lost, and his life a blank ! But he might still go back and marry Winifred.

He rose, and shook himself in the wind like a dog. The Plan was growing more definite and rounded in his mind each moment. He turned his face slowly towards the lights at Whitestrand. The estuary spread between him and them with its wide mud-flats. Cold and tired as he was, he must make at all speed for the point where it narrowed into the running stream near Snade meadows. He must swim the river there, with what legs he had left, and cross to the village. There was no time to be lost. It was neck or nothing. At all hazards, he must do his best to reach the inn before the doors were shut and locked at eleven.

When he left the spot where he had been tossed ashore, his idea for the future was fully worked out. He ran along the bank with eager haste in the direction of Whitestrand. Once only did he turn and look behind him. A ship's light gleamed feebly in the offing across the angry sea. She was beating up against a headwind to catch the breeze outside towards Lowestoft or Yarmouth.

WALES AS A GOLD-FIELD.

THOUGH gold is well known to be a widely distributed metal, being found in greater or less abundance in almost every part of the globe, we have for so long been accustomed to look upon California, Australia, and the Transvaal as the principal countries in which it occurs in quantity, that when the announcement was made a few months ago that it existed plentifully within the limits of our own island, the statement was received with some amount of incredulity. Geologists have for some time been aware that Wales, like other parts of the United Kingdom, contained gold, and mines have from time to time been worked, but the fact that they were eventually abandoned, naturally led to the inference that no profit was derived from them. Hence the disbelief in the recent statement respecting the abundance of gold found there.

Without going so far as to say, as some have assumed, that the gold ornaments worn by the ancient Britons were manufactured from Welsh metal, and that the Romans wrought gold in the Principality, it is certain that in the sixteenth century Thomas Bushell rented royal mines of Charles I. both in Merionethshire and Cardiganshire ; and in 1636 he was permitted to erect a mint at Aberystwith, ostensibly for the purpose of coining his Cardiganshire silver. It is asserted that he lent his sovereign treasure equal to two million pounds ; and as he only accounted for little more than one two-hundredth part of this in silver coinage, the probabilities are that he worked up a large amount of gold found in the district ; and in support of this conjecture it may be mentioned that a number of silver and gold coins have been found in the neighbourhood of Dolgelly which bear the Welsh plume on the obverse, and frequently in triplicate on the reverse—a symbol

which might not only indicate where the coin was struck, but might denote that the metal was of Welsh origin, just as the letters 'SS' on some of the silver money of George I. signify that the metal came from the South Seas during the existence of the famous 'bubble.' We are thus forced to the almost inevitable conclusion that two centuries ago gold was worked in the Principality. For the past fifty years its existence there has been a matter of common knowledge, as in 1844 a paper on the subject was read before the British Association ; and since then, various scientists have dealt with the question of Wales as a gold-producing district, samples of quartz containing the precious metal have been exhibited, and mining has been undertaken. But hitherto, the bulk of the operations have not realised the expectations of their promoters, and the majority of them have been abandoned. That some of these workings were commenced under the most promising auspices, and for a time proved profitable, there can be no doubt ; for it is a fact that between 1860-65, the Yigra and Clogau Mine, which is situated in the neighbourhood of the recent discoveries, yielded some sixty thousand pounds-worth of gold, the greater portion of which was purchased by the Bank of England. But, nevertheless, these workings were eventually closed, though, whether this was due to lack of management in the method of carrying on the operations, or arose from the yield of produce decreasing until it was insufficient to compensate the shareholders for their outlay, is a moot question.

With these facts before them, it can hardly be wondered that the British public received with some degree of hesitancy the announcement made a little while ago that in Wales are gold-fields exceeding in richness those of Australia. The statement, however, appears to have been made in all sincerity ; and to Mr Pritchard Morgan, of Dolgelly, a gentleman who has had a long connection with gold-mining at the antipodes, must be accorded the credit of having made the discovery. The district in which the gold-bearing quartz has been found is the valley of the Mawddach, in that most mountainous of Welsh counties, Merionethshire, and is some fifty square miles in extent. To tourists it is well known by reason of its great picturesqueness. In this locality it is stated that hundreds of quartz lodes are cropping out at the surface, and most of them are auriferous. From stone already obtained by Mr Morgan and tested, the yield of gold varies from about two to six ounces per ton. Assuming that the quartz contains an average of two ounces per ton, it is quite clear that the profits must be enormous, because a mine producing only one-thirteenth of that quantity has been known to pay. In the colony of Victoria there were crushed 876,692 tons of quartz in 1884, and 843,251 tons in 1885, the average yield per ton of the former being 9 dwts. 21·07 grs. ; and of the latter, 10 dwts. 1·28 grs.

It would thus appear that the Welsh gold-field is four times as fruitful as that of Victoria. But before we accept this as a definite conclusion, we must bear in mind that though gold exists in many parts of Wales, it occurs in what are known as 'bunches ;' that is, it is not evenly distributed, and the quantity of metal obtained from one ton of quartz is no guide

as to what will be the yield of the next hundred tons; it is quite possible that they may be crushed and give practically no return. The result of assays of small samples of stone from various parts of the lode, it is therefore quite clear, can give no accurate idea of the general yield; and in large mining operations it is the average amount of produce which determines the success or failure of the undertaking. Now, as to the yield of Welsh mines, in some score of which gold has been found in past days. Of these workings it is alleged that only five were tested on a practical scale, and from them were obtained 12,137 tons of mineral, which produced 14,667 ounces of gold, or an average of an ounce and a quarter per ton. As to the prospect of the Merionethshire gold-fields, in a paper read by Mr T. A. Readwin, F.G.S., at a meeting of the Geologists' Association the other day, he said that for gold especially he had assayed more than a thousand specimens of mineral from the valley of the Mawddach, and only fourteen of them gave a negative result. In those samples in which gold was found, the amount varied from five pennyweights to as many ounces per ton; and he added, that to his own knowledge there were fifty places in the district where he could go and find gold visible to the naked eye.

If these figures and statements were relied upon alone, what a vast amount of wealth we should naturally be led to conclude lay buried in the Welsh hills—fifty square miles of gold-bearing quartz!—and that at a time when we hear complaints of trade depression and low wages on every hand. With such extensive riches in our own land, why, we are inclined to ask, should so great a proportion of our working-class population be compelled to emigrate, and why such complaining in our streets? Should not the obtaining of this golden treasure in the Principality afford employment to many of those who daily leave our shores to earn their livelihood on foreign soil? Stay; let us not too readily accept golden prospects! We must remember that some two decades ago large sums were expended in gold-mining in the very valley in which so much wealth is now said to lie. There was plenty of quartz, the assays of which gave yields of gold exceeding the average of some of the best paying mines in Australia and America. Everything pointed to success; but, alas, the assays proved quite delusive, and the brilliant hopes which had been indulged in respecting the future of Wales were ruthlessly shattered, for the whole thing turned out a complete failure. It was one more of those gloomy chapters so abundant in the history of gold-mining, and which we find furnished by countries where experience has proved, much more certainly than it has in the Principality at present, that gold exists in quantities which will pay for working it. We know that there is abundance of the precious metal in the Transvaal, and large amounts of it are found in Queensland; but in each country may be pointed out mines which were commenced with the most promising prospects and ended in failure.

Of course, we know that nothing is more uncertain than prospecting for the valuable metals, for instances of this we have had times out of number in the gold-digging history of California, Australia, and other countries. A person may

find gold, but in insufficient quantity to yield a remunerative return for the outlay, and after working for a time he abandons the task. A short distance away another individual may strike a lode which leads to a speedy fortune. It is just possible, therefore, that though the valley of the Mawddach has been more than once prospected for gold, but without any ultimate benefit, Mr Morgan may have had the good luck to find lodes whose existence has hitherto been unknown and whose yield of gold may pay for the working.

Within recent years, improvements have been effected in the methods adopted for extracting the precious metal from the ore, and it may happen that—notwithstanding the previous failures of the Welsh gold-field—should Mr Morgan's estimate of the average yield of metal per ton fall far short of his anticipations, these improvements may make all the difference between success and the reverse; for nowadays, as we have already shown, it is quite possible to derive a profit from a mine which produces only three pennyweights of gold to the ton. As Mr Morgan calculates that he will obtain an average yield of two ounces per ton, an ample margin is left for contingencies. And Mr Morgan is not the only gentleman who entertains sanguine views as to the future of gold-mining in the Principality. Mr Berger Spence, the well-known metallurgist, has procured and assayed samples of the ore from an area of twenty-five to thirty square miles, and the result is such that he sees no reason to doubt that, if the lodes are worked systematically and scientifically, the district may become one of the most important of its kind in the world, and give employment to a great number of people. Again, Mr Readwin in the paper already alluded to says: 'Allow me to express my great regret that the public have got into such a state of unrest about Welsh gold, and that so much rubbish has got into the newspapers thereupon. Of course, some people are more sagacious than others, and can see through a mountain as easily as spiritualists do, and can study a difficult district right well in a couple of hours or thereabouts, and report accordingly. But notwithstanding recent exaggerations as to the gold at Gwynfynydd, there certainly exists plenty of it; and I believe that old Yigra and Clogau, the Prince of Wales, Cefncoch, Bernllwydd, Cefndenddw, and other mines, are destined in the near future to yield on large quantities nearly an ounce of gold to the ton of mineral.' Opinions from gentlemen of so high standing are entitled to every consideration, and none will be found to hope other than that their expectations may be realised to the full. Should their anticipations be verified, Mr Morgan's discovery will become of national importance; for not only may we expect an immense revival of trade and contentment among the working classes, but he has promised, after providing for the wants of himself and family, to devote the surplus profits to the reduction of that burden on the state, the decreasing of which has proved such a bugbear to so many of our chancellors of the exchequer—the national debt.

Gold-fields have ever had an attraction for the human race, and signs are not wanting that the usual 'gold-fever' is setting in in Wales; but notwithstanding the rosy views which some are inclined to take, it would be well to remember

the past history of the Principality in this respect, and wait until the success of the new discovery is assured, before old mines are reopened and capital is sunk in boring the Welsh hills for what may prove only a phantom.

IN DANGER'S WAY: A TALE OF TWO HEROES.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

By THOMAS ST E. HAKE.

CHAPTER I.—PICKED UP AT SEA.

A LIGHT sailing-boat, with a young seaman in the stern, glided from behind a screen of rocks which formed the projecting angle of a tall cliff. A small black object immediately in the boat's course—an object that was sometimes hidden by the intervening waves—had attracted the sailor's attention; he was steering directly for the spot; and his sunburnt, muscular arm, bared to the elbow, was outstretched, ready for the plunge as he passed. Weather-beaten and broad-shouldered, this seaman had a slightly foreign appearance—something of the Dutchman in his square features; and yet it was a kindly face, though the mouth was a shade severe, and the eyes semi-savage in expression, dark, and searching as a heron's. It became apparent, before the boat was alongside, that the object was only a black bottle; but the sailor presently had it in his grasp, and was examining it with a puzzled look. It was seemingly empty, but tightly corked. He held it up between the dazzling sunlight and his keen bright eyes. No—not empty; something solid and opaque, like folds of paper, became visible in dark outline. He instantly knocked off the neck with his clasp-knife, and slowly drew out a parchment scroll. It was perfectly dry. The centre was tied round with a piece of tarred twine, and a rough seal secured each end. Turning it about with curiosity, the sailor noticed, written across the scroll in quaint characters: 'Cora Norland, Southsea Bay, England.'

He looked intently seaward, as if for some clue, and then again at the scroll. 'Why, it's—surely it must be—Abel Honywood's handwriting. His ship is lost, and he'—the sailor glanced about despairingly—'can he be drowned?' In his excitement he placed his hand upon the string, as if to loosen it; but he stopped abruptly. 'No; Max Von Roïn; it's not addressed to you.' He spoke to himself persuasively. 'It's to Cora Norland. Deliver it into her own pretty hands, and without delay, as in duty bound.'

No sooner said, than he placed the scroll in his breast-pocket, buttoned his pea-jacket emphatically round his broad chest, and then began to alter his course. He steered at an angle to seaward against wind and tide, and then again changed the direction, tacking with great dexterity towards the cliff; and his boat cut through the water with such a bend, now on its starboard, and now on its larboard side, that it appeared in imminent danger of being capsized.

In less than an hour's time, for the tide presently began to turn, Max Von Roïn came in sight of a small sandy bay. A town of considerable extent stood in the background; and on the cliff under which he was passing, there were

several handsome villas; some of them had irregular flights of steps cut in the limestone which led from gardens down to the beach. At the other end of the bay there was a harbour with a lighthouse on the jetty outside. The harbour was crowded with craft of all shapes and sizes; and the sailor, although keeping on his tacking course, was evidently steering for the entrance to this port.

There was something decidedly picturesque about the little bay, with its numerous fishing-boats lying high and dry upon the sand—boats newly painted, and boats from which all vestige of paint had been effaced by time and tide; and there was something cheering in the sight of children romping about on the beach, where their laughter found an accompaniment in every wave that broke at their feet. But could this be the sailor's only reason for gazing so intently towards the shore? This sandy bay had been his playground in boyhood; was that why he looked so lovingly towards it now?

Along the sand, at the edge of the waves, a young girl was advancing slowly towards the cliff. She apparently took no notice of Max Von Roïn's boat; she was too occupied with her own reflections for that. But she sometimes stopped to trace figures on the sand. Could she be unaware of the boat's proximity? No skiff ever laboured harder to attract attention. It was running headlong towards the shore, as if bent upon landing its occupant at the girl's feet. But suddenly, with a flutter of the sail, it altered its track, and turned directly seaward, as though driven away by despair.

When the sailor had reached the entrance to the harbour, he looked back. There was the girl standing on a flight of steps which led to one of the villas; she was watching the boat: nothing could be more evident to the keen-sighted seaman. But next moment the boat had run into the harbour, and the jetty intervening, hid the figure from sight.

The boat approached a bulky ship lying alongside the quay—one of that ancient type of wooden craft which have traded between England and the ports of the North Sea for centuries past. A little old mariner, with a wrinkled face and small twinkling eyes, walked up and down the broad deck. He was enveloped in a thick rough jacket—though it was a bright summer day—and he wore a fur cap, which was pulled down over his forehead until it almost touched his thick white eyebrows. He leaned over the bulwark as the sailor's boat approached, and looked down. 'Why, Max,' said he, 'what cheer, my lad?'

The sailor attached his boat to the ship's side and began to climb up the rope-ladder. 'I've changed my mind: I've business with—' with Mr Norland. It won't bear delay. So, captain, I've come back.'

The captain took another turn up and down the planks; then he stopped, beckoned to the sailor, and went below. 'Max Von Roïn,' said he, seating himself at the head of a long table in the centre of his cabin, 'sit down.'

The cabin, like many on board these vessels, closely resembled the cosy bar-parlour of an old inn. The sides and ceiling were panelled with polished oaken boards. Max Von Roïn

sat down on the locker between two round windows, like staring eyes, facing a horse-hair sofa which filled up a recess, and waited in silence for the mariner to speak. The captain lit a huge meerschau pipe, a pipe with a long wooden stem and a green silken tassel, and after one or two vigorous whiffs—'Max,' said he, 'I'm a man of few words. It's about Cora Norland—isn't it?'

Max Von Roïn, who was staring up at the skylight, where a large brass compass was hanging like a lamp, made no reply; he knit his brow and folded his arms defiantly.

The captain looked at him with a keen and severe eye. 'Don't forget, Max, that I'm your captain.'

The sailor's expression softened. 'I beg your pardon, Captain Satchell. But am I, because I'm mate on board your ship, bound to answer that question?'

'No,' said the captain promptly—'not if you think, my lad, that I ask out of idle curiosity—by no means.'

Max Von Roïn's manner changed. 'You're right, captain,' said he with frankness. 'Why shouldn't I tell you? It is about Cora Norland.'

'Ah! I thought nothing else could 'a brought you back,' said the captain, winking at the bowl of his meerschau. 'Now, look here, Max,' he continued. 'You take my advice; get back into your boat. The tide's on the turn, but the wind's to leeward. Ain't it?'

The young sailor looked perplexed. 'Not go to Mr Norland's?'

'No; not one step. You'll get into trouble, Von Roïn, if you do. You must know—or ought—that Mr Norland means to marry his daughter to Stephen Walsh. He's a gentleman'

'That's a matter of opinion,' interrupted Von Roïn.

'A gentleman, Max, by birth. And he's rich enough,' added the captain, 'to keep his yacht. He loves the girl'

'Loves Cora Norland? He loves her father's money.'

Captain Satchell stamped his foot impatiently. 'What business is that of yours? What I wish to convey is this,' he said with emphasis: 'you might as well ask Mr Norland for the full-moon as ask him to let you marry his daughter.—Now, do you understand?' And the captain blew great puffs of smoke from his lips, which almost hid him from sight.

A flash of passion shot from Max Von Roïn's dark eyes. 'Did I even hint that I had any intention of asking Mr Norland for his daughter?'

The wrinkles on the captain's face, as the cloud dispersed, gathered in laughter about his mouth. 'You're mighty mysterious,' said he.

The young sailor slowly unbuttoned his pea-jacket, took the scroll from his pocket, and handed it to the captain. 'This,' said he, 'is what has brought me back; and he explained how it had come into his possession.'

'Ay,' said the captain, after carefully examining the superscription, 'that's Abel Honeywood's handwriting sure enough! What can this be about?'

Max Von Roïn, after a thoughtful pause, said: 'He loved Cora Norland. You knew that?'

'Ay; but she never cared for him.'

'Did she—does she even now—care for any one?' said Max Von Roïn meditatively.

Captain Satchell handed him back the scroll. 'Take it to her; perhaps it's a talisman; and he looked keenly into the young sailor's face.

Von Roïn made no reply. He stepped quickly towards the cabin door. As he went out, he glanced back. The captain was puffing thoughtfully at his pipe and looking vacantly through the cabin window. There were tears in his eyes.

'He's thinking of Abel Honeywood,' said the young man as he leaped ashore.

Max Von Roïn hastened across the bay, at the edge of the sea, towards Mr Norland's villa; and as he went along, the impress of little heels and soles on the sand reminded him—if that were needed—of the pretty figure he had seen there half an hour ago. A resolute, almost dogged expression came into his face; he loved Cora Norland passionately, and he was determined to make her his wife.

He was conscious of great obstacles: they would have disheartened most men. Mr Norland was a wealthy shipowner; and Max Von Roïn, although qualified for taking the command of a vessel, had only a distant prospect of getting promoted. In the meantime his rich rival, Stephen Walsh, was constantly cruising in these waters. His yacht, with the flag fluttering at the mast-head, was lying in the harbour to-day; and Max Von Roïn made no doubt that the owner of this little craft was up at the villa, and probably courting the girl whose very footprints along the sandy bay he could not look upon without emotion.

Suddenly the young sailor stopped. At his feet, traced in the sand, was the simple word 'Cora.' It was the word which filled his heart, and he looked at it long and dreamily. Had she not written it there while he was tacking towards the harbour? It was as though the waves had whispered to her that her name was on his lips. And yet she had not looked up or given him the slightest sign that his presence was known to her. She had let him pass by unnoticed. Had she feared that a glance would bring his boat too near the beach? He gazed intently at the word, as if he thought that this simple action on the girl's part contained some hidden meaning; and while he gazed, a wave came dancing over other waves and broke noisily upon the sands. Next moment the word 'Cora' was blotted out.

On the terrace, in front of the villa, stood Cora Norland. The red glow of sunset, reflected over a wide area of sea and sky, lit up her face. Her eyes were turned with intense interest towards Max Von Roïn. She had seen him stop opposite her name and stare at it until the wave came and washed it away; and now she saw him mounting the rugged steps in the cliff which led through a gateway into the grounds. A generous impulse seized her. She had behaved rudely to the young sailor; she had turned her back upon him when he came towards the shore in his boat. Cora stepped forward, opened the gate and held out her hand, and said: 'Am I forgiven?'

Max Von Roïn looked perplexedly into her face; but he took the hand without hesitation. Was a prettier or softer hand, he thought, ever placed in a rough sunburnt hand like his?

'I saw your boat,' said the girl, 'though I pretended I didn't. I was angry,' and she knit her pretty brow and flashed her brown eyes at him pitilessly. She had never seemed to him so beautiful. She might knit her brow and flash her eyes as often as it pleased her, if she would only love him!

All that Max Von Roûn could answer was: 'Angry, Cora, with me?'

'Yes. You have not been to see us since the *Loadstar* came into port. Haven't you been here nearly a week?'

'Five days. We have been so busy unloading.'

Cora smiled incredulously. 'You found time for a sail this afternoon.'

'I was going to Shingle Point.'

'Then why,' was Cora's natural question—'why have you come back?'

Max Von Roûn looked at her earnestly and said: 'To see you.'

The colour spread over Cora's cheeks, and she bent her head. Was the girl a coquette, thought the sailor, or was this a genuine expression of embarrassment? He had known her since childhood; he had been her playmate in days gone by upon the sands of Southsea Bay. As her puzzling ways had distressed him then, so they distressed him now.

'Something strange,' said he, 'has happened. News has come—at last—from Captain Honywood.' And Max Von Roûn, while handing her the scroll, told her how he had chanced to come by it.

Cora's face became troubled. She looked up and said in an unsteady voice: 'Do you think his ship the *Cora* is really lost?'

Max Von Roûn bowed his head. 'Yes; I fear that Abel Honywood and all his crew are drowned.'

The girl turned the scroll over in her fingers hesitatingly. 'I dread to open it,' said she, in a hushed voice. 'I will take it to father; he shall break the seals.' And Cora ran across the terrace and disappeared through an open side-door.

Max Von Roûn sat down upon a garden-bench to await Cora's return.

Mr Norland, who was writing at his desk, looked up with surprise as Cora entered the study. The girl stopped, out of breath, at the door. She had forgotten in her haste that her father had given strict orders that when at work he should never be disturbed. 'Run away—I'm busy,' said he, and went on writing.

The shipowner had a stern face; and at a first glance, one would have pronounced him a character resentful when contradicted. He had an iron will—an energy and purpose that made him feared. Such men often conceal a fine heart, through a morbid dislike to sentiment, by their blunt manner. Mr Norland belonged to this type. He had begun life as a common sailor; but he had early become captain and part proprietor of a brig. He now owned—after nearly fifty years of hard work—a little fleet, which traded between Southsea Bay, Holland, and the north-west coast of France.

'Are you very busy?'

Again Mr Norland looked up; this time he threw down his pen angrily and leaned back in his chair. 'What's amiss?'

Cora's face was flushed and agitated. 'I've

heard bad news—at least, I'm afraid it's bad; something tells me it must be. Will you open this and see?'

'What's it all about?'

He took the scroll from her somewhat roughly. 'Dear me!' he cried, suddenly starting up from his seat; 'it's from Honywood.'

'Yes, father. That's what Max Von Roûn says.' And she told him how the young sailor had picked up the scroll and brought it to her. 'Will you open it?'

The shipowner scarcely needed asking. He hastily took a penknife from his desk, cut the string and broke the seals; then he flattened out the scroll and began to read. Cora stood by, with clasped hands, looking over his shoulder.

'When these lines reach you, dear Miss Cora, I shall be no more; for I will never part with this letter, which I am now writing to you, while there is hope. I am naturally superstitious, as you know; and I've got a terrible presentiment that this is to be my last voyage; so I take up my pen in order to confess something that I can never tell you by word of mouth. I love you—I love you—indeed, I do—as no one ever loved. Do you love me?—No. But you would, mark my words, had I steered safely into Southsea Bay. And I will now state, briefly, why I believe this. When I reached Rotterdam, I found a letter from a firm of lawyers at Riga. From this letter I learnt that my old godfather, the Russian officer, had been killed at Plevna, and that I was his heir; and that if I went to the Bank at Rotterdam, I should find a parcel addressed to me by him. This parcel, as I discovered upon opening it, contained a small tin box; and in this box I found a magnificent diamond, oval in shape, and as big as a split walnut. A document, placed beneath it in the box, informed me how it came into my godfather's possession. It was given to him by a Russian princess whose life he had saved; and she had told him that there was a tradition in her family that he who owned it could never fail to win the heart of the woman he loved.

ABEL HONYWOOD.'

That was all. There was no message to Mr Norland, to whom the *Cora* belonged. The letter was evidently written, as it implied, before any actual warning of danger had reached the captain. When the fatality occurred, there could have been no time—at least so the shipowner conjectured—for composing such a neat letter as this was.

'The *Cora* is lost,' said he confidently. 'This removes all doubt. They're all drowned. Poor fellows!' His face became deeply careworn. He began to pace up and down the study, as though he were on board ship; and the expression in his keen gray eyes suggested a vision of breakers ahead. The letter had dropped from his hand upon the floor. Cora picked it up without a word. She understood her father. His thoughts were far away with a doomed ship, out in the storm, where the planks strained and creaked and the wind whistled in the rigging; where the waves rolled high, flinging clouds of spray into the brave faces of desperate seamen! For Mr Norland knew from experience what it was to suffer shipwreck, and the news of any catastrophe at sea always roused his sympathy. He was a sailor to the backbone.

Cora went out, leaving her father to 'pace the

deck,' as she called it, and hurried to rejoin Max Von Rönin. As she came out upon the terrace she saw that he was not alone; seated on the gate, with his arms folded somewhat defiantly, was a young man in yachting costume. He had a handsome enough face and a fine athletic appearance; but there was an expression in his eyes, an evident distaste to look at any one steadfastly, that had the effect of prejudicing many against him.

'You look distressed, Miss Norland.' He sprang from the gate and stepped forward to greet her. 'No bad news, I hope?'

Cora glanced at Von Rönin. He was seated on the bench with his hands plunged into the pockets of his rough pea-jacket.

'Haven't you told Mr Walsh?'

'No,' said the sailor shortly.

'He merely mentioned,' said Walsh, 'that you had gone indoors to speak to your father.—Max Von Rönin,' the young fellow added with a laugh, 'takes after his captain. He's a man of few words.—Ain't you, Max?'

Von Rönin flashed an angry glance at the speaker. 'There are some men,' said he, 'that I would not talk to at all, if I had the choice.' And he got up, as though to take his leave.

'You are not going?' said Cora. 'Stay a moment. I want to show this to you—this letter from poor Abel Honeywood. You brought it to me; and it is only fair—for I've no wish to keep the contents a secret—that you should be among the first to read it.' So saying, she handed him the scroll, and they sat down side by side on the bench.

'Read it aloud,' added Cora in an earnest voice; 'I wish Mr Walsh to hear it too.'

Stephen Walsh resumed his place on the little three-bar gate. He looked somewhat disconcerted; and although he again folded his arms, there was no longer the same air of assurance in his manner. 'What is this about Abel Honeywood?' asked he. 'Listen,' replied Cora. 'This letter will explain.'

TO THE BOTTOM OF THE CHANNEL TUNNEL.

It was on a fine warm afternoon in July when my friend and I reached Dover, armed with the highly valued authority to pay a visit to the Channel Tunnel works on the following morning. The weather had been decidedly sultry, and London, as usual, was unpleasantly close and stuffy, so that the prospect of a couple of days of sea-air was in every way welcome; but when it also included the prospect of an adventure such as we were about to undertake, our feelings as geologists were particularly pleasing and happy ones.

Having fixed on our hotel, we sauntered on to the Admiralty Pier to watch the landing of passengers from the mail-packet which was rapidly approaching from Calais. Soon she came alongside, and with remarkable promptitude was secured and her passengers landed; indeed, there is perhaps no place in the world where such rapid transits of passengers and their effects take place as on this through-continental route. On this fine afternoon all was cheerful and bright, far different from what we had often seen, when

the boats could hardly get to their landing-stage, when not a dry plank could be seen, and when the unfortunate passengers had undergone an hour, or perhaps two, of as nasty a bit of tossing about as can be found round our coasts. As we watched the two trains slowly move off the pier Londonwards, we thought to ourselves, what will be the result if ever this Tunnel is completed? Will it draw two nations into closer unity, or will it give rise to unnecessary alarms and mistrust? Will it do away altogether with the splendid mail-packets which put to sea in weather that would almost wreck a rather less powerful boat? Or will it, after all, be such an unpleasant idea to travel twenty-six miles under the bed of the sea in a narrow tube, that most passengers will prefer the packet and fresh air in spite of seasickness?

After dinner we had a look round the town. Dover is always interesting with its pier and harbour, castle and heights. The Romans discovered the value of the site of Dover Castle, as the remains of their old *pharos* testify. No doubt we took the hint and built the castle close by. It is well worth a visit with its towers and armoury.—But we must return to our hotel, for we have a good day's work before us to-morrow.

Next morning we were up with the lark; and after breakfast, proceeded to the station and presented one of our letters of introduction, which produced for us a courteous request to wait a short time whilst an engine was being got ready to take us to the workings, if we did not object to that mode of travelling. Of course we did not, for there is nothing we enjoy better than travelling in this way, provided the weather be fine. In a few minutes our engine came up, and we mounted, and were soon off. As the works are situated on the Folkestone side of the celebrated Shakespeare Cliff, we had to go through the long tunnel which pierces it. The effect was most weird; we were in total darkness, whilst the roar of noise was so great that I could not make my friend hear, although I shouted as loudly as I could. Presently, the engine-driver—in order to produce a startling effect, I suppose—opened the stoke-hole door, and the lurid glare was just enough to show that there were still four of us on the engine. All around us was inky black; whilst we four looked more like demons than men as we stood in the fierce glow of the engine's fire. Once more we were in the light of day and running at a fine rate; but this did not last, as we were nearing our destination, where we soon pulled up, and descended, wishing our 'coachmen' good-day.

Between the railway and the sea we observed a great quantity of chalky rubble, various machinery, and a hut or two. This was evidently an external view of the Channel Tunnel. As we walked towards what seemed to be the headquarters, a man came forward, to whom we gave our other order. This he evidently had heard about beforehand, for, after hastily looking at our letter, he said: 'You ain't a-goin' down like that, are you?'—'Why not?' we replied.—'We had our usual tweed suits on, and did not imagine what we were in for.—'Well, if you do, you'll never be able to wear them clothes again,' said our new friend.—'What can we do, then?' we asked.—'Follow me,' was all the answer we got; so we obeyed,

and went into one of the huts, where our guide who was to be, opened a large box, from which he took some miners' clothes, some broad-brimmed hats, and some very big india-rubber jack-boots.

In these formidable but useful garments we arrayed ourselves; and when our toilet was complete, I do not think even our parents would have known us. Having fixed a candle into each of our hats, we began our exploration by entering a comparatively insignificant-looking hole, which sloped gently downwards for a little way, when we, by turning a bend, lost sight of daylight and began to look around us. We found that we were tramping in Indian file along an exceedingly dirty sort of passage, upon the bottom of which was laid a rough railway, on which the little trucks ran which brought the excavated chalk from the head of the boring. Presently, we stopped for a moment, and our guide told us we were coming to a wet spot; and sure enough we were. It was one of those fissures in the chalk which act as a sort of underground watercourse, and through this the water was streaming; not the sea-water, but the natural water which is always held by the chalk as a sort of natural reservoir and which forms the sources of our south-country water-supply. This water mixing with the finely ground chalk from the boring-machine, formed an oozy mud, through which we waded till we came to the end of our journey, where the drill stood against the heading, although, unfortunately, it was not then at work. As we stood there, neither of us uttered a word, and the intense stillness was only broken by the dripping of the water from the roof of the tunnel. Our tallow-candles shed a dim light around us, and we began to realise that we were at the end of a narrow passage deep down in the solid, or, to be correct, rather soft, lower chalk, but not quite beneath the sea. Having picked up a piece of chalk from the face of the heading and a nodule of iron pyrites, which glistened like gold in the rays of our 'dips,' we retraced our sloppy steps, and once more emerged into the light of day, after half an hour's walk in the heart of the chalk.

We then appreciated the value of the miners' costumes, for we were wet through with icy-cold water, and our boots were filled with chalky mud; so we had a swim in the now tepid sea, and once more resumed our normal clothing. A delightful though terribly hot walk along that wild and land-slipped coast soon brought us to Folkestone, whence we returned to Dover by train, having enjoyed the privilege of a walk to the bottom of the Channel Tunnel.

A CHANCE CHECKMATE.

THREE years ago I was a girl of sixteen, unemancipated from the schoolroom. My father was—and is—banker at Siston. The town lies in a valley, and by a great many people is thought unhealthy. Having a kinsman whom he can thoroughly trust as acting manager, papa these many years since has abandoned the Red House in Siston Broadway, and resided at the Manor, Walsley. This is, however, twelve miles from his place of business—eight by rail added to four by road. The Manor has one other drawback—it stands in a very isolated situation. Our nearest neighbours are our namesakes, the Escotts of

Walsley Cross; and Valentia Lodge, the country-seat of Captain Milne Escott, lies westward across the wilderness we call the Heath a good three miles.

The month when my story opens was that of February Fill-dike, and it was justifying its name. Of storms we seemed to have a ceaseless succession. Heavy rains and high winds had been for several weeks the prevailing meteorological conditions. Alice—my younger sister—and I were prisoners within doors; and we should have found time drag more heavily than it did but for the presence of Val. An only brother is always a girl's hero, and Val was ours. In age he came between us, and his proper place at this period of the year was Rugby. But he had met with an accident at Christmas, and was only just convalescent. Hence, his holidays had already lasted in excess a full fortnight of the working term. As perhaps Val may read this, I will be candid, and add that there were seasons when, owing to his teasing, we heartily wished him back in the Midlands. The Tuesday on which papa announced his urgent summons to Ferris Court was, however, not one of those occasions. Boreas was doing his best to bring the house about our ears. We could not possibly go out in the tempest. We were not ultra-enthusiastic readers; and fancy-work was ever Alice's *bête noire*; therefore, we must have settled into tame subjection to *ennui* but for Val. It was his business, as he put it, to make things lively; and he did.

I had ventured to demur to papa's going. Surely it was my place to care for him as mamma would have done had she lived, and his health had troubled me of late, thoughtless as I too frequently was.

'It is a dreadfully rough day, papa,' I said. 'Cannot Sir Hugo Ferris wait? It is such a distance, too, to Ferris Court; and all across country. You can't reach the place readily by rail.'

'No; I wish that I could,' papa answered. 'But the journey is quite imperative. Sir Hugo is one of our best patrons. He telegraphs that his departure for Algiers is fixed definitely for Thursday—an alteration of a week in his arrangements; and I have urgent matters to discuss with him. He insists—foolishly, but I cannot help it—on negotiating with the principal; he will have none of Mr Bellets.' I suppose my face was visibly lengthening, for before I could reply, papa added:—'Don't look so glum about it, Maggie. You'll be quite safe here in charge of Mrs Climber, our new housekeeper. I am convinced that, after many changes and mishaps, we have secured a treasure. I say this because it is uncertain if I shall return to-night.'

'Not return to-night!' I echoed helplessly.

'No,' he said. 'I have decided to take the horses the whole way; and as the roads are in a bad state, Spence will put the cattle up in the village and then drive me back the next morning. I shall be sure of comfortable quarters at Ferris Court.'

'Is it quite—safe?' I asked.

'For me, do you mean?'

'No-o; for us. This house is so lonely, and it is known that there are mamma's jewels—and the pictures—and the plate.'

Papa scoffed at my fears. 'We are too far from the track of the light-fingered prowler to receive his attentions,' he answered.

But it was an error.

Ever since that day, I have had a lurking belief in presentiments. I know very well that the confession will cause some superior persons, fortified in the lines of a sane common-sense, to smile with pity at my girlish weakness. I am somewhat disposed to smile with them; and yet it is not more certain that a plot existed to rifle the Manor, than that hour by hour after papa had gone I grew more and more vaguely but genuinely uneasy. I said nothing to either Val or Alice. What was there to say? Nor to Mrs Climber. Somehow, I had not taken to the fresh arrival so warmly as the others. I did not dispute that her recommendations were first-class; that her demeanour to each of us was precisely what it should be—neither over-deferential nor too familiar; that she was a skilled house-mistress and a paragon of order. Nevertheless, I had consciously frowned when papa praised her; and I was in no hurry to take her into confidence when a nameless oppression weighed upon my spirits. Alice had discovered my lack of enthusiasm long ago, and insisted that I was prejudiced because Mrs Climber was foreign-looking, and had an affected way of putting up an eyeglass, which, in the opinion of Val and myself, was totally useless to her. I allowed Alice to think as she pleased; the fact remained, that hitherto I was unconquered, and that Mrs Climber knew it.

Dusk thickened at last, and we had the approval of our consciences in closing blinds and drawing curtains to, and shutting out by every recognised expedient the driving cloud-rack, the desolate landscape, and the constant drip, drip of the complaining trees. And then Val accepted a stray challenge—mine or Alice's, I cannot now be sure; the point is immaterial—and proceeded, with a flow of boyish eloquence which promised well for his intended future at the bar, to vindicate his latest hobby, the science of graphiology. He had a notable little collection of autographs and specimens of caligraphy which he rummaged out of his hoard of treasures; and upon these he descanted with all the dogmatism of the professor and all the fervour of the disciple. As he was pointing out to half-sceptical critics and listeners an alleged resemblance between traits in the historical character of the Duke of Wellington and features in the great warrior's handwriting, he was interrupted. To the surprise of each of us, we heard the rumble of approaching wheels on the soaked avenue without.

'Can papa be back, after all, and as early as this?' Alice cried.

'Not he. That isn't our carriage. It's a brougham certainly; but Spence isn't driving it—the rattle's different,' Val answered, at the end of a short pause.

'Then who can it be?' I said with wonder and a recrudescence of anxiety.

Val crossed to the window and caught question and reply of visitor and coachman.

'Is this the place?' inquired the former.

'Yes; this be Mr Escott's o' t' Manor, Wainsey,' returned the latter.

Clang went the hall bell; and in another half-minute, Josephs, our butler, looking anything but

pleased at the interference with his session of enjoyment in the kitchen, opened our door and ponderously announced: 'Mr Lidlaw.'

The name was entirely unknown to me, as also the purport and occasion of the call. I debated for a second whether I should send Alice in search of Mrs Climber—who was, I believed, writing in her own room—or whether I should myself assume the responsibility of confronting the stranger. This question was decided for me. On the heels of the domestic advanced Mr Lidlaw; he, at least, appeared to have no doubts as to the course to follow. Under-sized, middle-aged, clean-shaven, gray—this is the best and fullest description which I could have given at the moment of the easy-going intruder, and it will suffice for my narrative.

'Ah, three of you!' he said. 'My old friend's daughters and son, I presume? I wasn't aware he was so favoured.'

The human voice is a wonderful instrument. In one case, it shall of itself convey suspicion; in another, reassurance. It was the latter here. A tyrannical imagination had painted before my mental vision with swift brush the portrait of a dangerous conspirator. The living enigma spoke, and however puzzling and mysterious his presence continued to be, my courage revived. The circumstance is as I state; the explanation I leave to others.

'My name is Escott; this is my brother—and my sister,' I stammeringly answered. 'But who—to what do we owe?'—I was a pitifully poor inquisitor. Before I had framed my query, I was stopped.

'Who am I?' the cheery stranger said. 'Well, I suppose one can't claim universal fame; but it certainly strikes me as curious that you should have to ask. As to my errand, that is just pleasure and the resuscitation of old memories. Your father and I used to be staunch friends.—You're not very like him, young gentleman.' The latter sentence was, of course, addressed to my brother Valentine.

'Indeed!' the boy said laconically.

The stranger's glance had fallen upon the strange medley that decorated our centre-table. 'Some one here is a collector of autographs, I see,' he went gaily on. 'May I inspect them?—Thank you. It is a pursuit of great interest to me; I sometimes have to study—ahem!—in a professional capacity contrast and likeness in penmanship.' He bent over Val's specimens, amongst which were included examples of the hand of nearly all the boy's acquaintances; for Val played havoc very impartially with characters ancient and modern, great and small, famous or obscure. And by-and-by I noticed a queer little start, seemingly of recognition. Mr Lidlaw looked up. 'Who wrote this?' he said. It was a couple of lines—a quotation from Tennyson—and beneath, the signature of Mrs Climber.

It was Alice who replied. 'That's the writing of our housekeeper,' she said wonderingly.—'Do you know Mrs Climber? She came to us from Leeds. I like her hand—it is so neat and pretty.'

'And it bespeaks a strong will, decision, and perhaps *finesse*,' said Val sententially, quite in the style of the lecturer.

But I felt that it was time to know more of

the visitor, who seemed to be taking his footing in our midst so much for granted. I broke in with a direct demand. 'I have never heard papa speak of you, so far as I can recollect, Mr Lidlaw, and he is not at home. Did he expect you to-night?'

Mr Lidlaw awoke as from a reverie. 'Captain Escott not at home!' he repeated. 'Expect me! I am here in response to his pressing invitation.'

Val and I had the clue to the riddle simultaneously.

'You are wanting Valentia Lodge, Walsey Cross,' I said.

'It is Mr John Escott who lives here; there's been a mistake,' cried Val.

Mr Lidlaw stood as though paralysed by the revelation of his blunder; then a shadow of intense vexation passed over his features; and this in turn yielded to a smile at his own expense. 'Whew! This comes of not being sufficiently precise in investigation; a lesson I hardly ought to need to learn, after all these years,' he grimly soliloquised. Then he bowed deprecatingly to us, and proceeded: 'The storm was raging so fiercely, that I was content in the station-yard with little delay and few words. I asked the coachman who was handiest if he could drive me to Captain Escott's, Walsey, and he said "Yes." I suppose he did not catch more than the surname; and I was ignorant that Walsey and Walsey Cross are not identical places.'

'They are three miles apart,' said Val.

'I was uncertain of my train, or Captain Escott would have sent to meet me. I begged him not to do that. The question now is, how to get away, for the driver—he was none too sober—is gone, and my luggage is in your hall. It is most unfortunate and absurd, and wholly my fault, for I remember remarking that the fellow called your home "the Manor"—which was not a familiar name for it—both at Daleford Station and here on arrival. I tender a thousand apologies.'

Forthwith, our group of four resolved itself into a committee for dealing with this singular emergency. Our debate had but a lame issue. If papa had been here, and had become convinced of the *bona fides* of his uninvited guest, he would have sent Spence with Mr Lidlaw to Captain Escott's. But both papa and the man were absent. Josephs was old, and often ailing; I hesitated to suggest any scheme that should involve his going out into the tempest. And certainly Val must not venture any such exposure.

Mr Lidlaw carefully inquired his way, and announced that he should walk. He asked too—very oddly, as I thought, with a new twinge of doubt—the nearest route back to Daleford village. Val's directions were clear and full; and if the stranger obeyed them, he could not possibly go astray in either direction. It seemed inhospitable to permit him to turn out unattended into the night; but I could perceive no alternative; and I have reason to think that he would have overruled any and every objection.

Mrs Climber had not appeared. This struck us afterwards as strange. However busy she might be with her correspondence, it was curious that she should have heard nothing of the arrival, or that, hearing, she should have kept away. Some twenty minutes after Mr Lidlaw had left,

she entered the drawing-room and listened to our joint narrative of what had happened. I fancied that she was preoccupied, until Alice casually referred to the visitor's inspection of her handwriting, and that then her manner changed, and she listened with more interest—even anxiety—than she cared for us to observe. From this fact—if such it were—I was, however, at a loss to draw any particular deduction.

I pass over the hours that elapsed between this episode and midnight. We had retired early, and the house ought to have been as dark and still as if uninhabited. Older friends tell me that it is the privilege of healthy girlhood to sleep soundly and with ease. I do not doubt that they are right. But on this occasion I continued obstinately awake. The day had not wanted in agitations and surprises, and they had affected my spirit with unusual restlessness. Perhaps I am nervous by temperament, and it was this quality which filled the darkness with shapes of terror, and my brain with inchoate fears of some stealthily on-creeping evil. It is likely enough to be the true and ample explanation of my mental condition. Certainly, I could not rest. How vainly I wished that I had proposed to Alice that we should occupy to-night the same room. She would have consented instantly, although I had no reason to suppose that Alice shared my tremors. But it would be a confession of cowardice of which I should not soon hear the last to go to her now, even if the situation of her room, at the end of a long, silent corridor and across a mid-landing, was an insufficient deterrent. No; I must toss and turn and wait for the tardy morning.

Suddenly, a chill shot through my veins; I sat up amongst the pillows, rigid, and, I doubt not, blanched almost to their own whiteness. I listened in a very agony of attention. From the depths below there had echoed distinctly upwards—or my faculties were playing me false—the sound of the sullen yielding of a bolt. My apartment was immediately over the plate-closet, and adjacent to the partition which closed in the second flight of stairs. This accounted for the transmission of the noise. But the noise was an ominous disclosure. In the dead of night, it was surely illegitimate, and spoke of crime.

The veriest craven will sometimes obtain an access of courage as mysterious in its source as, generally, transient in its sway. I am not calling myself hard names. Indeed, I should be sorry to believe that I absolutely belong to the class whose badge is a white feather. But I have owned to trepidation; and now I mastered for at least a few minutes the first paralysis of fright. I pressed my throbbing temples hard against the wainscot, and found that the wood was a faithful conductor of sound. A rumbling and grating that could have no honest and satisfactory cause, jarred upon my highly strung nerves. I was not the victim of delusion. Assured of this, I began to dress, with quaking, fumbling fingers and in the dark. Plan I had none as yet, and my actuating purpose was merely to reach and alarm the rest of the household. It was just blind instinct, for I did not pause to ask what effectual resistance to a gang of robbers could be offered by a pack of scared women, an invalid boy, and one tottering old man.

I thought first of Miss Turpin, our governess, and Mrs Climber, and in this order. They both occupied rooms on the same floor as myself, but far in the rear of the building. It was an ugly venture to get to them. As I was debating, I remembered my mother's jewels. These were deposited in a dressing-case locked into a wardrobe strong-box in papa's room. Had they escaped the thieves? Would they escape? By almost a mechanical impulse, I unfastened and opened my door, and stepped lightly the five or six paces to that of the vast cavern-like chamber in which, the fable goes, a queen once slept. There was a light within other than that of the wan young moon, which glimmered feebly through lozenge-shaped panes in a window high over my head. I sucked in my breath with a well-nigh audible gasp, and shivered; but it was as though a subtle fascination drew me nearer in spite of the peril. I crept to the tell-tale crack through which the pencilled line of light fell. A single peep, and I knew the worst: we were betrayed. Kneeling before the receptacle of my mother's family heirlooms was a woman, holding a lamp for the guidance of a male confederate, who busied himself with a file at the wardrobe lock. They seemed equally absorbed in their nefarious task. The man I had never before seen; the woman was Mrs Climber. I believe I was nigher to swooning than on any previous or subsequent occasion. Luckily, with a supreme effort I was able to recover the self-possession wrested from me by the double shock. I dare not think what might have been the denouement, in the contrary event.

How papa had been deceived! and all of us, for, though I had vaguely disliked the newcomer, no suspicion of her fidelity had entered my mind; yet my eyes had testified that she was an accomplice in a sinister plot. Very possibly she was its originator.

It gave me intense anxiety to decide upon my next step. A daring suggestion flew to my brain; but I dismissed it, not so much as impracticable as useless. It was to lock the two thieves in. This was possible if managed with adroitness, for the key cast a shadow on the polished floor. Mrs Climber had locked the door of papa's room with hypocritical care, as we retired that night, saying that housemaids were curious, and had been known to walk in their sleep, and that it was not well to trust them to excess. And now the adventuress had left the key on the outside. But what would the countermove avail? There were villains below making away with the plate; I had heard them: they would come to the rescue, and I had no means of successfully following up the temporary advantage. Yet my fingers itched to drag to that door and imprison my foes.

Clang! clatter! all our bells seemed to be ringing at once, and Mrs Climber's precious confederates would not have given the alarm; it must mean for them interruption and discomfort. And in a trice I had acted on my wild idea. The great oak door was fast—fast! I had the key, and with it I fled to my own room. There I cowered as children do under the bed-clothes, and suffered paroxysm after paroxysm of helpless abject terror. Every

vestige of bravery, deliberate or fortuitous, had forsaken me. But I was not molested.

What happened on the other side of my fortress can be simply and succinctly related in the words with which on the morrow, our friend and benefactor, Mr Lidlaw, enlightened papa. It will be needful to resume from the point of his recognition of Mrs Climber's handwriting when chatting in our drawing-room.

'You see, I am an expert in these matters,' he said. 'Probably you may have seen my name in the newspapers in connection with some trial, civil or criminal, in which the identification of handwriting has formed a leading feature in the proceedings?'

'I have,' papa answered.

'Exactly. And two months ago I had to make a professional study of various documents and signatures in a north-country case of systematic and long-continued fraud. I am prepared to swear that the specimen of Mrs Climber's, alias Mrs Clegg's hand shown me by your son is the fac-simile of a large number of those forged papers. The writer is the same. And now that I have seen her—she had a most valid reason for keeping in the background yesterday evening—I recognise the woman too. She only escaped a long term of penal servitude through the plea that she was her husband's tool. And another thing made me startled and suspicious. It was this: at Daleford, a man left the same train, whom I identified, in spite of his wrappings, as the brother of the condemned Long Firm swindler who stood in the dock with Mrs Clegg. He'll soon follow him into a convict cell. He was involved in the Manchester case, though there was a flaw in the evidence, and he eluded the grasp of justice.'

'But Mrs Climber's testimonials—they were most excellent,' murmured papa.

'Forged, my dear sir; I entertain no doubt of it,' replied Mr Lidlaw. 'These people saw your advertisement, and application and references were all parts of rather a clever "plant." But the female trickster carried her daring a step too far, and will pay the penalty. When I was confronted with that couplet, in the hand I had so much reason to know, I got an inkling of the game that was afoot. And instead of going on to Walsley Cross, I returned to Daleford and interviewed a sergeant of police. It seemed that he was in possession of an official warning that tended in the like direction of watchfulness. We both had a suspicion that you might have been lured out of the way by a bogus message.'

'No; there was no stratagem there,' put in my father.

'Then events conspired so far with the gang of rogues. Well, we came up to the Manor to make sure that all was right, and we found an open window and moving lights. We were five in number and armed. The sergeant and two of his men entered by the same road as the burglars, and at a signal from the officer I aroused the household. One thief was taken in the act of selecting the choicest specimens of your old-fashioned silver; and, to our infinite bewilderment, we discovered later that your clever house-keeper and a second confederate were caught like rats in a trap. That was the work of Miss Maggie here. As soon as we learned this, we

applied to the young lady, got the key, and entered. We were only just in time to thwart an attempt to escape by the window. But for the height and the awkwardness of the descent, the man at least would have escaped. But the three are in Siston jail.'

'And I have to thank you,' said papa, 'for the protection of my property, Mr Lidlaw; I am sincerely grateful.'

'And I am glad to have been of service,' answered our friend.

My story is almost at its close. One point which was cleared up at the trial at Siston assizes was that of the choice of the occasion for the attempt. It came out that a fictitious letter had been compiled which would equally have taken papa from home that stormy February night; but this part of the scheme was rendered superfluous by the genial message of Sir Hugo Ferris, and the resolve to which papa subsequently came.

Mrs Climber—boasting many other names equally convenient for a month or a year—was this time punished by a heavy sentence, her two associates being treated with the like severity.

Val believes more than ever in graphiology.

We lost a housekeeper, but gained a permanent friend. Mr Lidlaw comes now as frequently to Walmsey as to Walmsey Cross. And may I not confess that there is more behind? I have special reason to remember with thankfulness the deliverance from that dark peril. To these events I owe an introduction to Harry Lidlaw, Mr Lidlaw's nephew. He, too, is our friend; and I have promised that one day I will let him assume a still dearer title. It is unnecessary to be more explicit; any loving girl's heart will read the meaning into the riddle.

A NEW DEPARTURE IN BRAZING AND WELDING.

Mr Thomas Fletcher, Warrington, writes to us as follows: The cheapening of oxygen by Brin's process of manufacture has put into the hands of metal-workers a new power. I have recently made a few experiments with the compressed oxygen and coal-gas, and found that with a half-inch gas supply, a joint could be brazed in a two-inch wrought-iron pipe in about one minute, the heat being very short, the redness not extending over one inch on each side of the joint. The appearance of the surface after brazing led me to experiment further with welding, a process which is not possible with ordinary coal-gas and air, owing to the formation of magnetic oxide on the surfaces. Contrary to my expectation, a good weld was obtained on an iron wire one-eighth inch in diameter, with a very small blowpipe, having an air-jet about one-thirty-second of an inch in diameter. This matter requires to be taken up and tried on a large scale for such work as welding boiler-plates, which, it appears to me, can be done perfectly with far less trouble than would be required to braze an ordinary joint. The great advantage of this would be that the boilers would require no handling, but could be welded with an ordinary large blowpipe in position, and with about one-tenth the labour at present necessary.

The cost of the oxygen is trifling, and it is evident, from the results obtained in brazing, that

the consumption of gas would be considerably less than one-fourth that necessary with an air-blast, irrespective of the fact that welding is possible with an oxygen blast, whereas it is not possible if air is used. The surface of iron heated to welding-heat by this means comes out singularly clean and free from scale; and a small bottle of compressed oxygen with a blowpipe and a moderate gas supply would make the repairs of machinery, boilers, brewing-coppers, and other unwieldy apparatus a very simple matter. The trouble and difficulty of making good boiler-crowns, which so frequently 'come down,' would be very small indeed, when the workman has an unlimited source of heat at command under perfect and instant control.

AT LAST.

Warte nur—bald
Ruhest du auch!—GOETHE.

Long and weary is the road;
Falls no sunlight through the day;
One by one, beneath his load
Has each loved one sunk away.
Friends are fled—their wearied eyes
Closed in sleep, and stilled each breast.
Here and there, a shadow lies
Where they sank to rest.
Faint not, O pilgrim!
Life's noon is past;
But to each traveller
Home comes at last!

Winds are wailing round thy way;
Heavy is thy load to bear;
With the waning of the day,
Fades each joyous thing and fair.
Where is now thy dauntless force?
Where thy ardour full and free?
All thy strength has run its course—
Nought is left to thee!
Hope on, hope aye;
Heed not the blast,
For to each day
Night comes at last!

Faint not yet, but struggle on
Till the weary way is o'er;
Soon thy long day's work is done;
Soon thine eyes shall weep no more.
Bright the rising day may be;
Glorious was thy morning-star;
But the dawn that waits for thee
Fairer is by far!
See! the red sun
Sinks in the sea;
Labour is done,
Pain o'er for thee.
Fled is the day;
Sunset is past.
Pause on thy way,
And rest thee—at last!

ELEANOR GRAHAM.

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SOCIETY.

ADDISON tells us that 'there is a sort of economy in providence that one shall excel where another is defective, in order to make men more useful to each other and mix them in Society.' That Society in these days is a mixture, and a most extraordinary one, is an undoubted fact; but the mixture is hardly in the sense Addison meant when he wrote of the utility of cleverness and mediocrity being blended, so that the one might counteract the other. Now, the word Society does not mean a number of more or less clever people meeting together, being of mutual advantage to each other, and constituting a tolerably unanimous whole; but merely signifies a certain 'clique' or 'set' to which we belong, possibly just a trifle above what would by right be considered our own proper sphere. Mutual advantage is lost sight of in personal advancement—not advancement for any really good end, but simply 'to be in Society.' To be asked here, to be asked there, to meet Lady B, or to have the honour of treading on Lady C's train. To have the last fashionable and run-after actress to assist at our 'At Homes,' or to sell things, cigars with the ends bitten off, white kittens, or button-holes, at our charitable bazaars. To stand in a crowd on the staircase of a well-visited house at one of the best parties of the season, miserably packed in amidst a cross multitude of other victims, without even seeing your hostess, with your temper ruffled and your dress torn, but your name proudly figuring in the *Court Journal* the next morning. To lounge away your mornings in the Row, your afternoons at garden-parties or five-o'clock teas, and your evenings in a scramble from dinner-parties to possibly two or three balls in succession. To talk Art and the ruling topics of the season, whatever these may be: the weather, the last new story about the favourite actress, the cookery schools, lawn-tennis, and *the Beauty* of the season. Society of this order may be regarded as frivolous; that of a loftier kind would probably be heavy; we say probably, because just at this

stage such Society—that is, with a certain and definite aim—does not exist; and people with objects and decided aims in life are looked on in the light of general nuisances, to be snubbed and avoided.

Real workers often look on 'going into Society' as a recreation, a relief from the dull routine of workaday toil; an hour or two of butterfly-life to be indulged in now and then, but sparingly, and made up for by harder work in Grub Street afterwards. The real steady worker holds Society but lightly, because he or she has a definite end in view, of which the mere ephemeral insect scarcely dreams. Such can hardly be deemed denizens of the world of fashion; they are only flutterers outside of it, not attracted even by its false glare, but esteeming it as merely 'a means to an end'—the end to them being the return to labour refreshed by the passing glance, and participation in a totally different society from that with which their work brings them in contact.

To the butterflies, however, Society-life wears an entirely different aspect; they live the whole year through in one incessant round of endless gaiety, which after a time becomes as tedious as the daily round of work—more so, for no ultimate object, no desired goal lies before them. Winters in country-houses filled with the same set; seasons in town, with the fashionable seaside places, Brighton or Scarborough, as a 'pick-me-up' during the period over which they extend; and a fitting to some German waters when they are finally at an end, again to drink in the health on which heated rooms, late hours, and the ceaseless round of dissipation have done their work.

In our day, manner and style—slangily termed 'form'—rank before mind. If a person in Society is well read and well informed, his or her object is more to hide such knowledge, for fear of being looked on in the light of a 'bore' or a nuisance, than to impart it by agreeable conversation to others. Many people who are really clever, and from whom much useful information might be obtained, conceal it, from a feeling that those around them will say: 'O yes; So-

and-so is clever undoubtedly; but I can't stand people talking "shop." And so, really sensible conversation is pooh-poohed, that place may be given to the inane, frothy babble which does duty too frequently as conversation in Society. The freshest news of the latest scandal, the last *on dit* of the clubs, a new piece of gossip—such are the most acceptable topics in general Society talk. We have no wish to be severe by writing in this strain, and we can do little more than draw attention to it, for, unfortunately, we see no remedy which can be generally applied to stop the evil, which the popular 'Society' journals of the day do all they can to foster.

Madame de Staël writes of the delicate distinction between 'Society' and 'the world.' This distinction would now seem to be lost, for to be in the one constitutes our greatest claim—socially speaking—on the other. Perhaps a line is drawn by some; but so fine is it, that it is next to invisible—merely a cordon stretched only in the depths of our 'inner consciousness,' of no good, not even apparent to the outside world, and but faintly recognised by ourselves, too often coming under the head of a 'make-believe,' a sort of salve to our own consciences only, and of no possible use in stemming the current of worldliness raging around us, because it is not a real heartfelt feeling, and therefore powerless.

After a time, Society such as we have described, the eternal round of endless visiting and gaiety, palls; but yet it is continued, though ennui has entered and spoilt the zest with which we pursued it. Horace Walpole translates the word ennui to mean literally, 'what is called "entertaining people" and "doing the honours;" that is, you sit an hour with somebody you don't know and don't care for, talk about the wind and the weather, and ask a thousand foolish questions, which all begin with, "I think you live a good deal in the country;" or, "I think you don't love this thing or that." Oh, 'tis dreadful!'

Such conversation, though inexpressibly tedious, would be harmless. We do not now confine ourselves to wind and weather, town and country, likes and dislikes, but drag in our neighbours and their affairs, let the ball of scandal gather as it rolls past us, until a mountain is made out of a molehill. We still suffer from ennui, the same as Walpole did; the calling, the receiving of visits, the afternoon teas, the long dreary dinners, the crushing 'At Homes,' are all so many daily troubles, daily trials to be gone through with as duties—save the mark!—with nothing to show for them beyond impaired bloom and beauty—too often artificially renewed—injured health, and a large circle of acquaintances not to be dignified by the name of friends.

There are many central figures in Society. The cynosure in particular of this nineteenth century appears to be 'the Beauty'—the lady, usually a married one, whose name is on every one's lips; all whose doings are chronicled in the 'Society papers'—how she looked; what she wore; whom she danced with; what bazaar she attended, what she sold, and whom she sold it to; what she bought; where she is going for the summer; where she came from; who has taken her best photograph—and so on. The interest taken in

her movements is truly wonderful; she is mobbed, rudely stared at wherever she goes, and, until a fresh beauty appears, reigns supreme. There are other special attractions—but 'Beauty' ranks first. The pet actress, the most fashionable artist, the most run-after literary lion, the most sensational female novelist—these all have their own special circle of admirers, who retail their latest sayings and doings, and are asked about everywhere with the object of their worship.

All the several cliques go to make up one imposing whole, termed collectively Society; with the addition of the numerous unattached butterflies of both sexes, idlers about town, young and old, well born and *nouveaux riches*, hangers-on to Society, clinging as it were to her fringes—all pushing and striving more or less. And so the crowd whirls on, those outside the magic circle moving heaven and earth to get within the pale; those within it dragging on the same millwheel round, trying to believe they are enjoying it, and deadening the higher, better feelings, which many of them must possess, in one incessant bustle; longing, perhaps, inwardly for something else, some real aim for their lives to live up to, but yet bound down to the treadmill of fashionable life. *Cui bono?* Ay, here's the question; but who feels equal to answering it? Do those who are in the world and move in the highest rank of Society really gain anything by it? They have reached, as it were, the acme of their ambition, and have it in their power to hold out finger-tips to the jostling outer crowd still striving to be considered as members of the mystic circle. Do they still care for the sweets—if there are any—in their self-chosen path? or have these all turned into wormwood and gall, and something else has yet to be striven and fought for? The outsiders, the mixed multitude who are striving for they know not what, consider that when once they have firmly established themselves, got 'all the best people' to attend their entertainments, and are asked in return to their houses, that then, blissful thought! they will be really in Society, and no more will be required of them. But when they get so far, they are insensibly pushed farther, until they find they cannot stop, and their whole lives are given up to the game of follow-my-leader.

The false aims and false desires of Society are too frequently followed to the total extinction of all the best feelings and hopes of the soul. They lead to a thoroughly selfish existence. Self alone is the motto of too many. Higher, nobler feelings are cast on one side, as not worth a thought. The brightness of the hour, the social triumph, 'the mark made in Society,' the flattery of the million, are the only things worth living for. Self-indulgence is more alluring than self-sacrifice. Personal ease and personal gratification come before thought for others or desire to help them. Really honest, true, and maybe noble natures quickly become perverted and spoilt in the fashionable race. 'Self' is Society's watchword. But if once the eyes are really opened to the folly of those things, till now held dear, then the cure soon follows. Many will be found to help us along; those once perhaps despised by us as 'not being in our set,' as mere 'goody, preaching people, who mean very well, no doubt, but'—will

now be found real helpers to us in our new and, at first, uphill road. When thoroughly out of heart, and sick with the frivolities, the shams, the 'make-believes' of the world's true followers—when our eyes are really opened to the vanity, the heartlessness, the downright folly of a life so lived—then we shall not be long before we find a fresh path, a better one, open up for us. Then we shall see the untruths, so little thought of before, in their right light; we shall break through the web of selfishness in which we have woven ourselves; learning to judge our actions by a higher standard, and forbearing to judge those of others.

THIS MORTAL COIL

CHAPTER XII.—THE PLAN IN EXECUTION.

HUGH hurried along the dike that bounded the salt-marsh meadows seaward, till he reached the point in his march up where the river narrowed abruptly into a mere third-class upland stream. There he jumped in, and swam across, as well as he was able in the cold dark water, to the opposite bank. Once over, he had still to straggle as best he might through two or three swampy fields, and to climb a thickset hedge or so—regular bullfinches—before he fairly gained the belated little high-road. His head swam. Wet and cold and miserable without, he was torn within by conflicting passions; but he walked firm and erect now along the winding road in the deep gloom, fortunately never meeting a soul in the half-mile or so of lonely way that lay between the point where he had crossed the stream and the *Fisherman's Rest* by the bank at Whitestrand. He was glad of that, for it was his cue now to escape observation. In his own mind, he felt himself a murderer; and every flicker of the wind among the honeysuckle in the hedge, every rustle of the leaves on the trees overhead, every splash of the waves upon the distant shore, made his heart flutter, and his breath stop short in response, though he gave no outer sign of fear or compunction in his even tread and erect bearing—the even tread and erect bearing of a proud, self-confident, English gentleman.

How lucky that his rooms at the inn happened to be placed on the ground-floor, and that they opened by French windows down to the ground on to the little garden! How lucky, too, that they lay on the hither side of the door and the taproom, where men were sitting late over their mug of beer, singing and rollicking in vulgar mirth with their loud half-Danish, East-Anglian merriment! He stole through the garden on tiptoe, unperceived, and glided like a ghost into the tiny sitting-room. The lamp burned brightly on the parlour table, as it had burnt all evening, in readiness for his arrival. He slipped quietly, on tiptoe still, into the bedroom behind, tossed off a stiff glassful of brandy-and-water cold, and changed his clothes from head to foot with as

much speed and noiselessness as circumstances permitted. Then, treading more easily, he went out once more with a bold front into the other room, flung himself down at his ease in the big armchair, took up a book, pretending to read, and rang the bell with ostentatious clamour for the good landlady. His Plan was mature; he would proceed to put it into execution.

The landlady, a plentiful body of about fifty, came in with evident surprise and hesitation. 'Lord, sir,' she cried aloud in a slight flurry, 'to think of that now! I took it you was out; an' them men a-singing an' ballyin' like that over there in the bar-room! Stannaway he'll be downright angry when he finds you've come in an' all that noise goin' on in the 'ouse, as is 'ardly respectable. We never heerd you, nor knowed you was in. I 'ope you'll excuse them, sir, bein' the fishermen from Snade, enjoyin' theirselves their own way in the cool o' the evenin'.'

Hugh made a manful effort to appear unconcerned. 'I came in an hour ago or more,' he replied, smiling—a sugar-of-lead smile.—'But pray, don't interfere with these good people's merriment for worlds, I beg of you. I should be sorry, indeed, if I thought I put a stopper upon anybody's innocent amusement anywhere. I don't want to be considered a regular kill-joy.—I rang the bell, Mrs Stannaway, for a bottle of seltzer.'

It was a simple way of letting them know he was really there; and though the lie about the length of time he had been home was a fairly audacious one—for somebody might have come in meanwhile to trim the lamp, or look if he was about, and so detect the falsehood—he saw at once, by Mrs Stannaway's face, that it passed muster without rousing the slightest suspicion.

'Why, William,' he heard her say when she went out, in a hushed voice to her husband in the taproom, 'Mr Massinger, he's bin in his own room all this time, an' them men a-shoutin' an' swearin' out 'ere like a pack of savages.'

Then, they hadn't noticed his absence, at any-rate! That was well. He was so far safe. If the rest of his plan held water equally, all might yet come right—and he might yet succeed in marrying Winifred.

To save appearances—and marry Winifred! With Elsie still tossing on the breakers of the bar, he had it in his mind to marry Winifred!

When Mrs Stannaway brought in the seltzer, Hugh Massinger merely looked up from the book he was reading with a pleasant nod and a murmured 'Thank you.' 'Twas the most he dared. His teeth chattered so he could hardly trust himself to speak any further; but he tried with an agonised effort within to look as comfortable under the circumstances as possible. As soon as she was gone, however, he opened the seltzer, and pouring himself out a second strong dose of brandy, tossed it off at a gulp, almost neat, to steady his nerves for serious business. Then he opened his blotting-book, with a furtive glance to right and left, and took out a few stray sheets of paper—to write a letter. The first sheet had some stanzas of verse scribbled loosely upon it, with many corrections. Hugh's eyes uncon-

sciously fell upon one of them. It read to him just then like an act of accusation. They were some simple lines describing some ideal utopian world—a dream of the future—and the stanza on which his glance had lighted so carelessly ran thus :

But, fairer and purer still,
True love is there to behold ;
And none may fetter his will
With law or with gold :
And none may sully his wings
With the deadly taint of lust ;
But freest of all free things
He soars from the dust.

'With law or with gold,' indeed ! Fool ! Idiot ! Jackanapes ! He crumpled the verses angrily in his hand as he looked, and flung them with clenched teeth into the empty fireplace. His own words rose up in solemn judgment against him, and condemned him remorselessly by anticipation. He had sold Elsie for Winifred's gold, and the Nemesis of his crime was already pursuing him like a deadly phantom through all his waking moments.

With a set cold look on his handsome dark face, he selected another sheet of clean white notepaper from the morocco-covered blotting-book, and then pulled a bundle of old, worn-edged letters from his breast-pocket—a bundle of letters in a girl's handwriting, secured by an elastic india-rubber band, and carefully numbered with red ink from one to seventy, in the order they were received in. Hugh was nothing, indeed, if not methodical. In his own way, he had loved Elsie, as well as he was capable of loving anybody : he had kept every word she ever wrote to him ; and now that she was gone—dead and gone for ever—her letters were all he had left that belonged to her. He laid one down on the table before him, and yielding to a momentary impulse of ecstasy, he kissed it first with reverent tenderness. It was Elsie's letter—poor dead Elsie's.—Elsie dead ! He could hardly realise it.—His brain whirled and swam with the manifold emotions of that eventful evening. But he must brace himself up for his part like a man. He *must* not be weak. There was work to do ; he must make haste to do it.

He took a broad-nibbed pen carefully from his desk—the broadest he could find—and fitted it with pains to his ivory holder. Elsie always used a broad nib—poor drowned Elsie—dear, martyred Elsie ! Then, glancing sideways at her last letter, he wrote on the sheet, in a large flowing angular hand, deep and black, most unlike his own, which was neat and small and cramped and rounded, the two solitary words, 'My darling.' He gazed at them when done with evident complacency. They would do very well : an excellent imitation !

Was he going, then, to copy Elsie's letter ? No ; for its first words read plainly, 'My own darling Hugh.' He had allowed her to address him in such terms as that ; but still, he muttered to himself even now, he was never engaged to her—never engaged to her. In copying, he omitted the word 'own.' That, he thought, would probably be considered quite too affectionate for any reasonable probability. Even in emergencies he was cool and collected. But 'My darling' was just about the proper mean. Girls are always

stupidly gushing in their expression of feeling to one another. No doubt Elsie herself would have begun, 'My darling.'

After that, he turned over the letters with careful scrutiny, as if looking down the pages one by one for some particular phrase or word he wanted. At last he came upon the exact thing : 'Mrs Meysey and Winifred are going out to-morrow.'—'That'll do,' he said in his soul to himself : 'a curl to the *v*'—and laying the blank sheet once more before him, he wrote down boldly, in the same free hand, with thick black down-strokes, 'My darling Winifred.'

The Plan was shaping itself clearly in his mind now. Word by word he fitted in so, copying each direct from Elsie's letters, and dovetailing the whole with skilled literary craftsmanship into a curious cento of her pet phrases, till at last, after an hour's hard and anxious work, round drops of sweat standing meanwhile cold and clammy upon his hot forehead, he read it over with unmixed approbation to himself—an excellent letter both in design and execution.

WHITESTRAND HALL, September 17.

MY DARLING WINIFRED—I can hardly make up my mind to write you this letter ; and yet I must : I can no longer avoid it. I know you will think me so wicked, so ungrateful : I know Mrs Meysey will never forgive me ; but I can't help it. Circumstances are too strong for me. By the time this reaches you, I shall have left Whitestrand, I fear for ever. Why I am leaving, I can never, never, never tell you. If you try to find out, you won't succeed in discovering it. I know what you'll think ; but you're quite mistaken. It's something about which you have never heard ; something that I've told to nobody anywhere ; something I can never, never tell, even to you, darling. I've written a line to explain to Hugh ; but it's no use either of you trying to trace me. I shall write to you some day again to let you know how I'm getting on—but never my whereabouts.—Darling, for Heaven's sake, do try to hush this up as much as you can. To have myself discussed by half the county would drive me mad with despair and shame. Get Mrs Meysey to say I've been called away suddenly by private business, and will not return. If only you knew all, you would forgive me everything.—Good-bye, darling. Don't think too harshly of me.—Ever your affectionate, but heart-broken
ELSIE.

His soul approved the style and the matter. Would it answer his purpose ? he wondered, half tremulously. Would they really believe Elsie had written it, and Elsie was gone ? How account for her never having been seen to quit the grounds of the Hall ? For her not having been observed at Almundham Station ? For no trace being left of her by rail or road, by sea or river ? It was a desperate card to play, he knew, but he held no other ; and fortune often favours the brave. How often at loo had he stood against all precedent upon a hopeless hand, and swept the board in the end by some audacious stroke of inspired good play, or some strange turn of the favouring chances ! He would stand to win now in the same spirit on the forged letter. It was his one good card. Nobody could ever prove

he wrote it. And perhaps, with the unthinking readiness of the world at large, they would all accept it without further question.

If ever Elsie's body were recovered! Ah, yes: true: that would indeed be fatal. But then, the chances were enormously against it. The deep sea holds its own: it yields up its dead only to patient and careful search; and who would ever dream of searching for Elsie? Except himself, she had no one to search for her. The letter was vague and uncertain, to be sure; but its very vagueness was infinitely better than the most definite lie: it left open the door to so much width of conjecture. Every man could invent his own solution. If he had tried to tell a plausible story, it might have broken down when confronted with the inconvenient detail of stern reality: but he had trusted everything to imagination. And imagination is such a charmingly elastic faculty! The Meyseys might put their own construction upon it. Each, no doubt, would put a different one; and each would be convinced that his own was the truest.

He folded it up and thrust it into an envelope. Then he addressed the face boldly, in the same free black hand as the letter itself, to 'Miss Meysey, The Hall, Whitestrand.' In the corner he stuck the identical little monogram, E. C., written with the strokes crossing each other, that Elsie put on all her letters. His power of imitating the minutest details of any autograph stood him here in good stead. It was a perfect fac-simile, letter and address: and tortured as he was in his own mind by remorse and fear, he smiled to himself an approving smile as he gazed at the absolutely undetectable forgery. No expert on earth could ever detect it. 'That'll clinch all,' he thought serenely. 'They'll never for a moment doubt that it comes from Elsie.'

He knew the Meyseys had gone out to dinner at the vicarage that evening, and would not return until after the hour at which Elsie usually retired. As soon as they got back, they would take it for granted she had gone to bed, as she always did, and would in all probability never inquire for her. If so, nothing would be known till to-morrow at breakfast. He must drop the letter into the box unperceived to-night, and then it would be delivered at Whitestrand Hall in due course by the first post to-morrow.

He shut the front window, put out the lamp, and stole quietly into the bedroom behind. That done, he opened the little lattice into the back garden, and slipped out, closing the window loosely after him, and blowing out the candle. The post-office lay just beyond the church. He walked there fast, dropped his letter in safety into the box, and turned, unseen, into the high-road once more in the dusky moonlight.

Wearied and faint and half delirious as he was after his long immersion, he couldn't even now go back to the inn to rest quietly. Elsie's image haunted him still. A strange fascination led him across the fields and through the lane to the Hall—to Elsie's last dwelling-place. He walked in by the little side-gate, the way he usually came to visit Elsie, and prowled guiltily to the back of the house. The family had evidently returned, and suspected nothing: no sign of bustle or commotion or disturbance betrayed itself anywhere: not a light showed from a single window: all

was dark and still from end to end, as if poor dead Elsie were sleeping calmly in her own little bedroom in the main building. It was close on one in the morning now. Hugh skulked and prowled around the east wing on cautious tiptoe, like a convicted burglar.

As he passed Elsie's room, all dark and empty, a mad desire seized upon him all at once to look in at the window and see how everything lay within there. At first, he had no more reason for the act in his head than that: the Plan only developed itself further as he thought of it. It wouldn't be difficult to climb to the sill by the aid of the porch and the clambering wistaria. He hesitated a moment; then remorse and curiosity finally conquered. The romantic suggestion came to him, like a dream, in his fevered and almost delirious condition: like a dream, he carried it at once into effect. Groping and feeling his way with numb fingers, dim eyes, and head that still reeled and swam in terrible giddiness from his long spell of continued asphyxia, he raised himself cautiously to the level of the sill, and prised the window open with his dead white hand. The lamp on the table, though turned down so low that he hadn't observed its glimmer from outside, was still alight and burning faintly. He turned it up just far enough to see through the gloom his way about the bedroom. The door was closed, but not locked. He twisted the key noiselessly with dexterous pressure, so as to leave it fastened from the inside.—That was a clever touch!—They would think Elsie had climbed out of the window.

A few letters and things lay loose about the room. The devil within him was revelling now in hideous suggestions. Why not make everything clear behind him? He gathered them up and stuck them in his pocket. Elsie's small black leather bag stood on a wooden frame in the far corner. He pushed into it hastily the nightdress on the bed, the brush and comb, and a few selected articles of underclothing from the chest of drawers by the tiled fireplace. The drawers themselves he left sedulously open. It argued haste. If you choose to play for a high stake, you must play boldly, but you must play well. Hugh never for a moment concealed from himself the fact that the adversary against whom he was playing now was the public hangman, and that his own neck was the stake at issue.

If ever it was discovered that Elsie was drowned, all the world, including the enlightened British jury—twelve butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers, selected at random from the Whitestrand rabble, he said to himself angrily—would draw the inevitable inference for themselves that Hugh had murdered her. His own neck was the stake at issue—his own neck, and honour and honesty.

He glanced around the room with an approving eye once more. It was capital! Splendid! Everything was indeed in most admired disorder. The very spot it looked, in truth, from which a girl had escaped in a breathless hurry. He left the lamp still burning at half-height: that fitted well; lowered the bag by a piece of tape to the garden below; littered a few stray handkerchiefs and lace bodices loosely on the floor; and crawling out of the window with anxious care, tried to let himself down hand over hand by a branch

of the wistaria. The branch snapped short with an ugly crack; and Hugh found himself one second later on the shrubbery below, bruised and shaken.

SCOTCH BANKING AS A PROFESSION.

BANK CLERKS.

WHEN a young man has left school and is about to enter the world, his parents or guardians ask themselves the anxious question: 'What is the most suitable occupation he can follow?' Assuming that they have decided in favour of the banking profession, as it is termed, we propose to give some practical notanda which may be of use to those who purpose entering the service of a bank.

In glancing around at the different fields for employment, we cannot but observe how severe is the struggle for subsistence, and how every trade and every occupation is overrun by competitors. Co-operative Associations are seriously injuring traders' establishments, and the middleman is being pushed out of the way, the consumer preferring to deal directly with the producer. The greater the number of persons seeking employment, the smaller will be the amount of remuneration for their labour; and in estimating the value of banking as a profession, we have to bear in mind that clerks form a very numerous class in the community, and that they are day by day becoming more numerous, being now largely recruited from the working and trades classes, who are naturally striving to reap the benefits of the liberal education which is being bestowed on their families. Dr Johnson says that it is 'the dignity of danger' which gives to the profession of arms its charm. In the case of banking, it is the responsibility attached to money-dealing which elevates it above the traffic in less valuable materials, though the labour itself may not demand in many cases much skill. Mr John Stuart Mill does not rate highly the commercial value of a clerk's work, judged by the quality of the work itself, or the demands it makes on the skill of the individual. He says: 'The higher rate of a clerk's remuneration must be partly ascribed to monopoly, the small degree of education required being not yet so generally diffused as to call forth the natural number of competitors; and partly to the remaining influences of an ancient custom, which requires that clerks should maintain the dress and appearance of a more highly-paid class.' And he adds: 'It is usual to pay greatly beyond the market-price of their labour all persons in whom the employer wishes to place peculiar trust, or from whom he requires something besides their mere services. Similar feelings operate in the minds of men in business with respect to their clerks.'

What Mr Mill has said as to the limitation of clerks from the non-diffusion of education cannot hold good in our day. The market for clerks is largely overstocked, and the occupation itself, from the light nature of its duties, lends itself readily to a glut of competitors. Moreover, the female element has now come into play in the struggle for life, and threatens to become a most potent factor in the field of employment. That this has to be reckoned with in the future of banking may be inferred from what the President

of the Institute of Bankers in Scotland stated some years ago in a public lecture to that body, that since female clerks were now employed in the post-offices of the government, he did not see why they should not be employed in banks as well. The employment of female clerks has the recommendation of cheapness; and, other things being equal, in days of economy it may come to be utilised.

Having stated these few general considerations, we shall now regard the subject more closely and practically.

So far as the Scotch banks are concerned, they seem to prefer young men of about sixteen years of age, without physical defect, and of good character. They must be recommended by some one known to, and of influence with, the bank. The name of the applicant is inserted in a book to await his turn for a vacancy. When this turn arrives, he is usually subjected to an examination in arithmetic and writing to dictation. The present examination is not severe; but we believe it is proposed to extend it to four subjects—arithmetic, algebra, geography, and English composition, which are the four educational non-banking subjects on which competitors are examined for the degree of Associate in the Institute of Bankers in Scotland. Good writing is a great requisite for success in banking, as it brings its possessor a better class of work. Unfortunately, speed is often demanded, especially in big branches, and this tends to injure the penmanship. An applicant will do well, then, to study to have a clear caligraphy and to be able to sum well. On admission to the service of some of the banks, one is obliged to give them security, either personal or by bond of the bank's or other Guarantee Association, for which a payment of twenty shillings per cent. is exacted in annual instalments.

The period of apprenticeship with the Scotch banks is usually three years, a small consideration being given therefor. At the end of that term, the apprentice naturally expects to fledge into a clerk; but we believe the practice is coming into vogue of allowing the apprentice to remain as such until there is a vacant clerkship for him to fill. Should he not give promise during his apprenticeship of proving to be a serviceable clerk, he will not be retained.

The best place to begin banking is a country branch, where one is allowed to take up in turn every department of branch banking and to see everything with one's own eyes. In a head office, a youth is apt to be kept at one particular kind of work for a year or more, and thus very little comes under his observation. The branch-bred clerks are the best trained and the best fitted to fill those vacancies in foreign banks for which the home banks are so often put in requisition.

To make a mark early in banking, one should go abroad as soon after the period of apprenticeship as possible, and then, health remaining good, it is simply a matter of a little time to rise in the profession. In the foreign field, especially in China, the East and West Indies, the climate is so trying that contingencies may arise in which a bank clerk is called upon at short notice to replace his comrade, of whom he hears that 'he was dining with a friend last night, but is dead and buried this morning.' This is only too true of many

who fall victims partly to the climate and partly to indiscretion; for in the East, heavy penalties are exacted for neglect of nature's laws. But we mention this rather to show how a banker has a better chance abroad of rising in his profession by reason of these frequently recurring climatic casualties, than to deter those who would seek to gain distinction in the service of foreign banks.

In India, a junior clerk may, after passing a medical and preliminary knowledge examination—the latter is often not insisted on where the clerk is known favourably in his own bank—expect a salary beginning with two hundred and fifty pounds along with free apartments and free passage out. When he arrives there, he will find banking conditions altered. His 'masters' treat him differently from those in Old Scotland; they joke with him, and allow full scope to his individuality by consulting him as a friend rather than as a subordinate. The reason for this is, perhaps, partly the increased intercommunity of feeling engendered by the fact of both being fellow-countrymen in a strange land. Be this as it may, they seem in India to have bridged that gulf which in a great Scottish banking institution separates the chief from the underling.

In Canada, a large field opens out to the bank clerk, and an initial salary of two hundred odd pounds is often allowed along with a free passage. One advantage is, that a banker may obtain a partnership in a wealthy commercial business from the repute he enjoys as a banker, and so exchange his limited emoluments for unlimited gains. In British South Africa, there is room for the bank clerk; but as affairs there have not been in a prosperous state through native wars, Boer difficulties, colonial embarrassments, &c., it does not present so good a field. South African bankers have been wisely retrenching till times improve. Posts in Africa were lately offered to clerks from Scotch banks for a term of from three to five years. Although the engagement was thus limited, the clerks expected, from the hopes held out to them on admission, that the bank might retain their services at the expiry of the period. Unfortunately, in many cases the bank was obliged to give them notice to quit; and any one who knows the difficulty of finding work in Africa for those who, in Lamb's words, 'suck their sustenance through a quill,' will understand the nature of the hardships undergone by such in their quest for employment.

But to revert to Scotch banking, which we only quitted to point out the foreign fields which lie open to the bank clerk, and which lead more quickly and more directly to distinction than the home field. The number of bank employees in Scotland is roughly reckoned at six thousand five hundred. Of these, one large bank alone possesses more than one-ninth. The clerks of course are by far the most numerous class, standing in the ratio of about five to one to the official body. As to salaries allowed by the banks, the tendency has been lately to retrench, as money has not been earning so much as it did. The percentage of profits from deposits in 1865 was twenty-three shillings and elevenpence, whereas it was only fifteen shillings and fourpence in 1886. This shows the need for an all-round economy in the charges of a bank; for salaries form by far the largest proportion of the entire expenses. More-

over, salaries are permanent charges, which, if raised, cannot easily be cut down; and banks can only give effect to economy on the death of the holder of a lucrative office, or by the transfer from one post to another, or by the stoppage of additions to salaries. Some of them have adopted a system of grades, similar to that which obtains in government circles, and have assorted their clerks into three distinct grades, the relegation to a grade entitling the 'graded' to a fixed advance every one or two years, as the case may be. There are exceptions made in special cases where the responsibility is greater and the work more onerous than usual. Bank tellers, from the nature of their duties, are allotted to a special grade. Several banks exact payment for a teller's losses, while others allow him an annual sum to provide against all such, which sum he may pocket if his intromissions have not been on the losing side. But the rise of any one in a bank, whether there be grades or not, is mainly dependent on the man himself. Influence may put him in a position to help himself; but he alone must find the intelligence, the fidelity, and the zeal, if he would rise in his profession. As a good work to study, 'Gilbart' has been highly recommended to young bankers, since it gives the best account of the theory and practice of banking.

If a Scotch bank clerk would excel his neighbour, he would do well to qualify himself for the degrees of the Bankers' Institute, which are alike tests of his general and professional knowledge. The subjects for the Associate's degree in the Bankers' Institute are—arithmetic, algebra (up to and including quadratic equations), geography, English composition, book-keeping and bank books, exchange and clearing-house system and rules, note circulation, interest and charges, negotiation of bills and cheques, history and present position of banking in Scotland. For admission as members, the subjects are—principles of political economy, stocks and Stock Exchange transactions, history and principles of banking and currency, theory and practice of the foreign exchanges, principles of Scots law and conveyancing, law of bankruptcy, mercantile law, law of bills, cheques, and receipts, &c. And in practical banking the following subjects: correspondence, branch supervision and advances. The total value of a candidate's answers must be not less than sixty per cent. of the value of such questions. To obtain a degree with honours, the candidate has to submit to a further examination in French or German, British history, British constitution and government, English literature, and outlines of general history, and to make sixty marks in each of these subjects.

These, it must be confessed, form a pretty severe test of a candidate's scholastic and professional proficiency, and so it may be asked: Are these certificates of service to a bank clerk? Are they recognised by his superiors? It is not easy to answer these questions categorically, or to define the precise value which is attached by the different banks to the holding of these diplomas. In estimating the general fitness of a clerk when promotion is in prospect, it is not at all likely that the bank would ignore the possession of such a voucher of knowledge. They will take it into account; and it may be that it will turn the scales against contending competitors

who have gained no such distinction. Whatever may be its home value, there is no doubt that in the colonies the diplomas of the Bankers' Institute are highly prized, and have secured for their holders bank appointments on various occasions. In addition, Bankers' Institutes are being launched in the antipodes, with a view to promote the education of the banking employees there. The certificated clerk who finds his degree fail him at home, must fall back on the reflection that 'knowledge is its own reward.'

One great benefit to be obtained by being in the service of some of the banks arises from the connection which is formed with the 'Widows' Funds,' which provide, by way of annuity, for the widows and families of bank officials on the fund. This connection is with some banks compulsory, with others voluntary. The payments made by contributors are small, indeed, as compared with the benefits which accrue in the form of annuities, ranging as these do from forty to a hundred pounds. These funds represent the accumulations of years, and they have been wisely fostered and administered by the banks for the behoof of those for whom the funds exist, as the banks have found the annuities to prove a powerful supplement to the pensions which they pay after long service to the retired members of their staff. This leads us to the subject of bank pensions, which are now being granted very much on the lines laid down by the government in the Civil Service Department—namely, the two-thirds principle for full retirement allowances.

If it be asked, what is the main advantage to be gained by being in a bank? we would reply, that it does not consist in the extent of remuneration or the rate of promotion, for the first is small, and the second slow—but in the tenure of office, which is a life one, being practically *ad vitam aut culpam*. It should, however, be stated that there is no legal obligation on the part of the bank to retain any one in their service on such a tenure, though, as yet, they have shown no disposition to cut adrift any member of their staff who is at all fit for his work. This life-tenure has lately fled the School Boards, and so there is no saying what banks in the future may have to do. Another advantage lies in the opportunity afforded a bank clerk of rising to the pinnacle of his profession. What was said of the French soldier in Napoleon's time applies to him—that 'he carries in his knapsack the baton of a field-marshal.' This assertion is amply attested by the fact that many of the highest officials in Edinburgh banks have passed through all the ranks from apprentice upwards to their present honourable and responsible position. There is no post, therefore, to which a clerk may not aspire, or from which he will be excluded, if he but show the necessary fitness both on the moral and intellectual side of things.

As to the nature of bank-work, we would remark that there is a vast amount of routine in the 'trivial round, the common task,' which tends to intellectual monotony and takes away the incentive to thought. This is particularly the case with the clerk who keeps the same ledger year after year and balances the same class of accounts. Notwithstanding, whatever be the class of work a bank clerk has to perform, he should learn to regard nothing in the way of duty as

'common or unclean;' for if any part of his work be incorrect, it may throw out of gear the whole machinery of the bank.

As to bank hours, they are certainly short, being from half-past nine to four—in 1823 they were from nine to three, and six to eight evening—but these do not represent the entire working time. They leave, however, to those so minded, ample leisure and sufficient scope for the cultivation of such hobbies as music, painting, sketching, photography, &c. We should like, when on the subject of bank hours, to state, by way of *caveat*, that the banks on this matter, as well as on other matters, are becoming more commercially minded. One bank has adopted the following plan: At one of their largest offices they have divided the staff into sections. When any member or members of a section are absent, the remaining members of that section must assume the duties and perform the work of the absent members, whether or not it entail coming back at night to overtake the arrears of work caused by such absences. It is well, then, to bear in mind that things may not always be as they have been, and that even conservatively disposed banks may change their ways.

To those desirous of entering a bank, we would say: Weigh well all the *pros* and *cons*; bear in mind that promotion is necessarily slow, the work unexciting and often monotonous; and that the great objections to banking as a field for employment and emolument are these: (1) It has very few posts at its disposal, and for these there is always a disproportionate and daily increasing number of candidates; and (2) it offers a very limited amount of remuneration, not as compared with the pay of clerks generally, but considered relatively to the superior social status which, by popular consensus, has been accorded to all those in whom a bank has confided its trust.

IN DANGER'S WAY: A TALE OF TWO HEROES.

CHAPTER II.—RIVALRY.

THE sun had set; the clear sky grew bright with stars, as the night began to creep over the sea and land. The wind had fallen, but a breeze still blew across the cliff.

Max Von Rôin began to read in a low, distinct voice: 'When these lines reach you, dear Miss Cora, I shall be no more.' And at the passage describing the diamond 'as big as a split walnut,' he caught his breath and his voice faltered; and when he had finished the letter and was handing it back to Cora, she observed a look on his face that puzzled her—a look of keen determination.

'Where did this come from?' said Stephen Walsh, approaching Cora, and taking the letter from her and looking at it suspiciously.

'Max Von Rôin picked it up at sea,' said the girl, 'this afternoon;' and she related the details; for the young sailor remained silent and lost in thought.

'It was this, then,' said Walsh, glancing at Von Rôin, 'that brought you back? I saw you enter the harbour; I was on board my yacht. I was wondering what motive'—

'None other than this;' and Max Von Rönin flashed a look at his rival.—'And now,' he added, 'I'll start again for Shingle Point.'

'To-night?' said Cora. 'It is getting dark.'

'There'll be moonlight in an hour's time. Good-night.'

As the young sailor passed out at the gate and reached the top of the steps, he could not refrain from glancing back. Stephen Walsh had thrown himself down on the bench at Cora's side, where Max had been seated a moment before. Max stopped no longer; he went down the steps with great precipitation, and ran across the sands towards the harbour. He did not slacken his pace until he reached the quay and came alongside the *Loadstar*. It had now grown dusk. As he stepped on deck, he noticed a light in Captain Satchell's cabin. He hurried below.

'Why Max, my lad, you're winded. What now?' said the captain. He was seated at supper. He put down his knife and fork, and stared inquiringly at the first-mate.

Max Von Rönin was too much out of breath to speak.

'Drink a drop of water;' and the captain pointed to a large bottle on the table before him, 'and take your time. Something's upset you.'

The young sailor obeyed, and soon recovered speech. 'Captain,' said he, 'I've read it—every word!'

Satchell nodded. Max related the substance of Honywood's letter to Cora. 'And now, captain,' he added, 'I've a favour to ask you.'

Captain Satchell's face wrinkled with prophetic smiles. 'I think I know what's in the wind. You want to go in search of this wreck. Ain't that it?'

'I want a week's leave,' said Von Rönin evasively. 'I want you, if you'll be so kind,' he added, 'to let it be supposed that I've gone to stay at Shingle Point. I wouldn't have it thought!'

'Ay, ay,' said the captain with a knowing look. 'When do you want to start?'

'Now.'

'Without your supper?'

'I'm not hungry.'

'You will be. Put some rations on board,' said Captain Satchell.—'You'll not reach Shingle Point much afore midnight. The tide's on the turn, and the wind's not rising.—Well, good-bye, my lad, and good-luck to you.'

Once more Max Von Rönin's light skiff, passing between the walls of the jetty, reached the open sea. It was now night; but the western sky was shimmering with faint indications of moonlight. The wind had fallen almost to a dead calm; and the young sailor, who in his impatience would have preferred a gale to the faint breeze that was now blowing, needed all the fortitude he could muster in order to endure the creeping pace at which his boat advanced with the tide. It would be worse presently, he reflected, when the current changed; and unless the wind stiffened, he even feared that it would be nearly impossible to make any headway at all. There was a ground-swell; and the sound of the waves breaking upon the beach almost maddened him; and he began to steer farther to seaward, to get out of earshot of what appeared like mocking laughter—the

laughter of Stephen Walsh. Even the red light which had begun its revolutions at the jetty head irritated Max Von Rönin, when he glanced in that direction and found that it was not growing so dim in the distance as he would wish.

Presently, the moon began to rise into the clear sky, and Max, sailing in the glimmering path of light—a path that might have been formed on the waves by the tread of angels' feet—felt that a breath of wind was springing up and slowly improving his speed in spite of the tide, which was now flowing fast. His spirits rose with every leap of the boat; his look of resolution increased. He would not rest until he had learnt upon what coast Abel Honywood's ship the *Cora* had been wrecked: it had been surmised that the vessel had gone down at some rocky point off the Channel Islands in no very great depth of sea; and the young sailor, reflecting over this, determined to find his way to the captain's locker and get possession of this diamond, that might win for him the heart of Cora Norland.

Looking back towards the harbour, after a long interval—to measure his distance once more from the red light—he suddenly caught his breath like one who has received a keen stab. He uttered a fierce cry, and almost let the rudder fall from his grasp.

Stephen Walsh had realised for the first time, while seated beside Cora, that Max Von Rönin was a serious rival. Hitherto, he had looked upon him as a common sailor in the ship-owner's employ, who had been 'noticed' by the family since childhood. But this afternoon something in Cora's manner, as well as Von Rönin's, had roused his suspicions; and a feeling of hatred sprang up within him—hatred awakened by jealousy—towards the mate of the *Loadstar*, and he shook with suppressed anger. Cora must have remarked the change in his face—for even his lips had grown livid—had not Abel Honywood's letter, which she still held in her hand, absorbed her attention. It was beginning to dawn upon Walsh, though vaguely as yet, that this letter would sooner or later be the cause of some catastrophe—a catastrophe which it would be out of any one's power to avert.

Presently, Cora spoke, but without lifting her head: 'Are you superstitious?'

'No,' he answered, with a quick glance at her face.—'Are you?'

'Yes. I believe in this tradition. I like to believe in it. It's romantic; it pleases me.'

'About this diamond? Why, it's lost, Miss Norland,' said Walsh. 'It's beyond any one's reach.'

The girl raised her eyes suddenly to his face: 'How do you know that?'

Walsh made no reply: he feared to betray his anger; for her manner convinced him that she was thinking, when she spoke of the tradition, about Von Rönin; and as she sat there motionless, looking fixedly before her into the gathering twilight, he raised his hand expressively, as though he longed to clutch Honywood's letter and fling it over the cliff and into the sea, whence it had so lately come.

Suddenly Cora rose from the bench. 'Don't let us talk about this any more at present. I

must go in now; father will be expecting me.—Won't you stay,' the girl hastened to add, 'and take some supper with us?'

Stephen Walsh's face brightened: he gladly accepted the invitation; for his one object for months past, while cruising about the waters of Southsea Bay, had been to gain Cora's affections. He had inherited some property in the neighbourhood, worth a few hundred pounds a year; and being a man of luxurious and lazy habits, he had determined to make life still easier by forming a good match. At a regatta, last season, he had made Cora's acquaintance; and he had fallen in love upon hearing that she was the daughter of a rich ship-owner; and it soon became obvious to Walsh that if Cora did not greatly encourage his attentions, Mr Norland would by no means oppose him. Stephen Walsh belonged to a good family; and he shrewdly conjectured that the ship-owner, like most parvenus, would be flattered at the prospect of becoming connected by marriage with the landed gentry. Mr Norland, as he knew, had lately purchased an estate along the coast; for with all his love of the sea—as his friends facetiously remarked—he never 'lost sight of land,' when a favourable opportunity of purchasing presented itself.

The ship-owner and Stephen Walsh had seated themselves on the terrace outside the dining-room window, when supper was over; and Cora had wandered out into the grounds, leaving them to chat over their cigars. Mr Norland was still in a depressed and restless mood; he rose frequently from his chair, paced up and down, and then again threw himself into his seat with a word of apology. 'The fact is, Mr Walsh, the loss of the *Cora* has terribly upset me. I had a great liking for Abel Honeywood. And,' he added, 'excepting old Satchell, he was the best captain I ever had.—You saw his letter to my daughter; he added abruptly—'the one Von Roïn picked up off the coast?'

'I've read it.—What's your opinion, Mr Norland, about this diamond? *My* opinion is,' continued Walsh, 'that it's better where it is—under the sea.'

'Is it, though?' said the ship-owner with a look of surprise. 'Why?'

'Better there,' answered Walsh in a meaning tone, 'than in bad hands.—Not that I intend by that,' he hastened to add, 'to refer to Abel Honeywood; quite the contrary. Did you suspect, before this letter was picked up, that Honeywood loved your daughter?'

'No. How should I?—Poor fellow,' said the shipowner. 'He—— Why do you ask the question?'

'Because,' said Stephen Walsh with assurance, 'this affair—and one other little incident—have made me fear that if I delay speaking to you on a matter that very nearly concerns my happiness, I shall be too late.'

'Eh?'

'I love your daughter, Mr Norland, and I would ask your leave to speak to her,' said Walsh. 'I need scarcely tell you, sir, that my position'—

'Tut, tut! Do you suppose that I should have invited you to my house, my dear boy, if I had any objection to your courting my daughter?—Give me your hand!—And now,' said the ship-

owner heartily, 'go and ask Cora what she has to say. You have my full consent.'

Walsh pressed the hand held out to him and muttered his thanks. As he was turning away to join Cora, Mr Norland called him back.

'Stay. I want to ask you a question. What did you mean when you spoke just now about bad hands?'

'Bad? I meant dangerous. It's my duty to warn you,' said Walsh significantly. 'Some one else—at least so I suspect—loves your daughter. And if that diamond, which Honeywood speaks of, gets into that fellow's hands'—

'Whose? Name the man.'

'Max Von Roïn.'

The ship-owner stared incredulously at Stephen Walsh; the announcement seemed to take his breath away.

'Von Roïn! Are you serious?'

'Serious, Mr Norland? I never was more serious in my life.'

Mr Norland's broad shoulders began to shake with laughter. 'No, no; it's your fancy.—Von Roïn in love with my daughter? You're jealous—you're unreasonable. Max Von Roïn is an able seaman—I admit that—a brave, honest fellow. But he would never presume to make love to Cora. He knows his position better, I should hope, than to do that.'

Did Mr Norland forget that he had been a mate himself and as poor as Max Von Roïn? Possibly not. But a self-made man is apt to try to hide from others what he cannot hide from himself—that he once knew days of poverty, days when he had thoughts not less ambitious.

Meanwhile, Cora, leaning against the low fence, looked intently seaward. It was at the moment when the boat, with Max Von Roïn in the stern, passed out of the harbour. The girl was watching with eagerness its difficult manœuvres. Her face at first expressed impatience; but her eyes began to brighten when the young seaman steered away from the shore, out of the calm and sheltering bay, and got some wind into his sail. Could she have guessed Von Roïn's project already?

Coming across the lawn from his talk with Mr Norland, Stephen Walsh comprehended the situation at a glance. It was as he had dreaded: his suspicions were as good as confirmed. He stopped as if transfixed, with clenched hands and flashing eyes. Max Von Roïn had outwitted him; he had better understood Cora's impulsive mood, her superstitious mind, and her romantic belief in this senseless tradition. He had started on his search after the shipwreck to please this girl; and she knew of his intention as surely as if he had spoken at the moment of leaving her after the reading of Honeywood's letter. These thoughts, passing rapidly through Walsh's mind, almost maddened him. He had always had his own way in life; and this opposition—this tacit rivalry on the part of one whom he hated and despised—was more goading than if he had received an open insult. But he quickly mastered his passion, and reached Cora's side: he kept his face always in shadow, lest it should betray him. He then spoke to her in a low voice: 'Miss Norland—Cora: I love you.'

She did not look round; she kept her eyes bent upon the boat; and but for the quivering

lips and the quickened breathing, he might have doubted whether she had heard him.

'I have spoken; I have gained your father's leave to ask you to be my wife,' continued Stephen Walsh desperately. 'I have longed to tell you for months past that there is nothing I would not do to gain your love.'

'Nothing?' and Cora glanced swiftly into his face. 'That is a bold assertion.'

'Then let me repeat'—

'No! If you are in earnest, listen to me.'

Stephen Walsh stood silent, waiting for her to speak.

'Do you see that boat?' said the girl.

Did he see it? With what difficulty he suppressed the angry words that rose to his lips! Restraining himself by a painful effort, he answered: 'Yes. It belongs to Max Von Roïn.'

The wind was rising; and as Stephen Walsh spoke, the skiff passed swiftly through the broad path of moonlight, and Von Roïn's figure was distinctly visible at the helm, energetic in expression, the head and shoulders bent forward.

'Something whispers to me,' said Cora musingly—'shall we call it the spirit of Abel Honywood?—something assures me that Max Von Roïn will not rest until he has found the wreck.'

'You mean the diamond,' said Walsh, choking with passion.

'I mean that Von Roïn has some romance in his nature. Prove that you have too. A woman's love cannot be won without it.—Where is your yacht?'

'You know. She is lying'—

'At anchor? She should be there;' and Cora pointed towards the sea, beyond Von Roïn's boat.

'Would not that show you wished, by deeds, not words, to win my love?'

'Are you serious?'

'I was never more so. Good-night.' In a moment she was gone.

Stephen Walsh turned away and went down the steps and along the bay, as Max Von Roïn had done. His rage was ungovernable now. She had spoken of Von Roïn as her possible lover; she had named him, as she pointed out his boat, while he, Stephen Walsh, was asking her to be his wife! He stopped suddenly and cast a threatening look towards Von Roïn's skiff: it was sailing along rapidly between him and the horizon. He even sprang with a menacing gesture to the very edge of the sea, where an incoming wave lifted up its foaming crest and forced him to step quickly backwards. The sea shivered in the moonlight, and the wave broke with a hissing whisper as he turned and went hastily on his way towards the harbour.

On the staircase, Cora met her father.

'Well, my dear,' said he, 'what has Mr Walsh been talking about so earnestly?'

'He has asked me, father, to be his wife.'

'Come! That's indeed an honour. The young man belongs to a very respectable and highly connected family.'

'He is a man of good birth: his proposal is of course very flattering,' said the girl.

'Did you tell him so?'

'I told him,' said Cora—'I led him at least to believe—that he might hope.'

The ship-owner smiled and patted his daughter's

cheek. He did not appear quite satisfied; but he simply said: 'Well, well. A very pretty commencement. You must give him a little gold anchor, my dear, to wear on his chain.'

'Yes, father. If he finds the diamond, I will.'

'What is that?'

'Please, don't question me now. He will tell you; he understands what I mean.'

When Cora reached her own room—the room in which she had since childhood listened to the sound of the waves below the cliff, and marvelled often at the perils and dangers of the deep sea—she began to reflect upon all that she had been saying to Stephen Walsh. What reason had she to surmise that Max Von Roïn had gone in search of the wreck? His mother lived at Shingle Point, and he had gone to visit her. And yet something had whispered—she had called it the spirit of Abel Honywood—that Von Roïn loved her, and would never return unless he found the diamond. The fancy clung to her; she could not cast it off.

If he found it—and the thought brought a blush to her cheek—could she refuse, if he asked her to be his wife? And yet she had encouraged Stephen Walsh. But would he, a man without an atom of romance in his nature, go on this perilous errand, even in the hope of winning her love?

Presently Cora ran to the window, drew the curtains aside and looked out upon the broad surface of moonlit sea. She opened the window wide; the wind blew roughly in her face; the sea was covered with white restless breakers. Max Von Roïn's sail was still in sight—a tiny speck, that any but an accustomed eye would have mistaken for a wave. But close at hand—passing swiftly by the cliff below her window—was a trimly built yacht, and Stephen Walsh was on board; she saw him distinctly at the helm; and a strong wind was carrying the yacht rapidly along in the direction of Shingle Point.

Cora's heart beat painfully with a vague sense of dread at what she had done. She hastily closed the window and drew the curtain, to shut out the moonlit night. But she could not shut out the sound of the wind, and of the waves breaking below the cliff; and in the whisper that still came from the sea, she knew that it would be her destiny to wed the man who found the diamond, should he ask her to be his wife.

COMPOSITE PHOTOGRAPHS.

WE have constant evidence that the applications of the beautiful art of photography are increasing; and we may broadly state that there is now hardly any branch of science or art in which it is not made use of to some extent. Indeed, it is often said that photography is the handmaid to science; and the more we consider the matter, the more do we see the aptness of this description. The astronomer now depends on photography to make star maps of far greater accuracy than is possible by the human hand, for the simple reason, that the photographic lens is able to depict stars so distant that their light cannot be appreciated by the human eye even when aided by the most powerful telescope. The microscopist also uses photography to a great extent; and here again this wonderful art of sun-

painting is more exact than the work of the most careful draughtsman. In times gone by, when it became necessary to draw a microscopic object, the man who undertook the work was sure to confer upon his drawing that individuality from which no artist is exempt; so that, supposing that two different hands were detailed to make a drawing of the same object, the pictures would be essentially different in treatment and general appearance. We know that this is not the case with photography. We may take a dozen different photographs of the same object, and each one will be an exact reproduction of its fellow. Photography is also coming into use for the illustration of books and newspapers, and in this field of labour it has had an unfortunate effect of acting as a powerful rival to the engraver. The photographic camera has of late years enabled the man of science to study the movements of animals in a way that our forefathers would have deemed impossible. In a word, photography is throwing a flood of light upon various things and phenomena, scientific and artistic, and has been successful in detecting certain operations of nature that without its aid would perhaps have remained for ever unknown.

It is now ten years since Mr Francis Galton pointed out a new application of photography. In his address to the British Association in 1877, he first proposed the taking of what are called composite photographs; and it will be best if we explain in his own words the rough groundwork of the process which he originated: 'Having obtained drawings or photographs of several persons alike in most respects, but differing in minor details, what sure method is there of extracting the typical characteristic from them? I may mention a plan which had occurred both to Mr Herbert Spencer and myself, the principle of which is to superimpose optically the various drawings and to accept the aggregate result. Mr Spencer suggested to me in conversation that the drawings reduced to the same scale might be traced on separate pieces of transparent paper, and secured one upon another, and then held between the eye and the light. I have attempted this with some success. My own idea was to throw faint images of the several portraits in succession upon the same sensitised photographic plate.'

In order that we may better understand the advantage of this method of procuring type-pictures from different individuals, let us suppose that a competent artist were commissioned to stand in a main thoroughfare of any large town or city, and that he were instructed to procure a type-portrait of the different persons whom he saw passing to and fro in front of him. We venture to say that in standing at a crowded spot he would see hundreds of different types of face, and he would be sure to notice, what most of us have noticed over and over again, that although the human face is arranged on the same pattern in each individual—that is to say, that each one has two eyes, a nose, and a mouth—Dame Nature has arranged these simple materials in such varied forms, and has given such wonderfully different expression to them, that no two persons are ever precisely alike. So our artist would soon see the futility of attempting a general type of all the faces that passed him, and he would probably

throw up his commission in despair. But suppose that we call a photographer in to do this work, the whole aspect of the case is at once changed; for by simple mechanical means he can procure individual portraits of suitable subjects, and then by blending these portraits together, he can obtain a kind of average result from the entire number. Such is a 'composite photograph.'

There are two or three different methods by which this result can be attained; for instance, we may take a number of paper portraits of public characters, such as one may purchase at any shop, and we can photograph these successively on the same photographic surface, so as to obtain on that surface a mixed portrait, to which all the individuals have contributed. There is a certain disadvantage in adopting this method, for the reason that one would have great difficulty in obtaining portraits of the same size and of the same pose. A better plan, therefore, is, if possible, to take photographs of the different individuals for the purpose of making a composite from them. The method which it is best to adopt is as follows: We will suppose that it is desired to obtain a composite photograph of a family of persons consisting of the father and mother and, say, six children. Our first duty will be to calculate exactly for how long a time the sensitive plate in the camera must be exposed to the action of light for each individual. If the sensitive plate will under ordinary circumstances require an exposure of, say, sixteen seconds for one portrait, then this time must be divided by eight, the number of individuals who are to compose our composite photograph, and therefore each individual must be photographed for two seconds only. The ordinary camera is used; and upon the ground-glass screen at its back upon which objects are focused, certain lines must be drawn with a pencil as a preliminary operation. One line will be vertical, marking the position of the nose; and there will be two horizontal lines crossing this one; the upper one indicating the position of the eyes, and the lower one that of the mouth. We may now proceed to the work in hand. Each sitter in turn sits upon a music-stool in front of the camera, this seat being chosen because it can readily be raised or lowered on its screw, so as to suit the different heights of the sitters, whose eyes must always be brought exactly to the same height from the ground. A simple form of head-rest, consisting of a vertical rod with a horizontal piece at the top, must be at hand, so that the top of each person's head may be brought to exactly the same altitude. Sitter number one is now placed before the camera and focused accurately to the pencil-marks on the ground-glass screen. The camera is uncapped for two seconds, when the lens is again covered. The second sitter now takes his or her place on the music-stool, which is screwed up or down to the required height, as the case may be, and once more the lens is uncapped for two seconds. And so on until all the eight sitters have successively sat in front of the camera and have contributed their two seconds of attention to the sensitive plate within. This plate is now taken to the photographer's dark room and is developed in the usual way so as to produce a negative. But what a curiosity this negative is: it represents a

picture of a being that really does not exist as an individual at all, but the component parts of whose features are found in eight different human beings. Such a negative can, when finished, be made to furnish as many positive prints on paper as may be required.

A very curious point in photographs so obtained is, that almost invariably this combined picture is that of a better-looking person than any of the individuals who have contributed to it. Some of these photographs now lie before us. Here is one which has been taken from a number of criminals, and, as we have just indicated, the picture is much better favoured than the various low-browed, coarse-mouthed individuals who have contributed to make it up. Another picture we may call attention to as being a great contrast to the last; this is a group of ten girls who are the members of a literary club. The picture is that of a bright-looking intellectual girl of about nineteen years of age. The face is thoughtful, and the shape of the head indicates great intellectual power. The same observations are applicable to another photograph which is before us, to which several scientific men have contributed each his share. Two more composite photographs which we have are not so good as the others, because they have been taken from portraits of political characters whose pictures it would have been impossible to obtain for the purpose to which these have been put. The pictures therefore suffer to some extent from the difference of position and size, a difficulty to which we have already alluded. The photographer who took these portraits informed us that his first idea was to divide the politicians into Conservatives and Liberals; but he found that in the present state of affairs this was a task far beyond his powers or the powers of anybody else. He therefore divided them into Gladstonian Liberals and Unionists; and in order that we may not be considered partial critics of either, we may at once say that neither of these composite political portraits gives a result upon which the politicians can be complimented; still, they are very curious productions.

It may now be asked, what is the use of this new application of photography? Mr Galton, who originated it, believes that it might be turned to great practical use in producing types of different tribes or races, and we are disposed to think that very useful work might be done in this way. A book upon the subject has lately been published in France, in which certain examples are given, showing how well the general features of different tribes of persons are averaged by means of these composite photographs. There is another field of work in which it might be useful. We know that portraits and sculptures of eminent men who lived in ages long gone by have been preserved to us; but we cannot tell how far these different portraits have been affected by that individuality to which every artist is prone, and to which we have already adverted. Would it not be possible to collect these different portraits, say, for example, those of Julius Cæsar, and to combine them by means of this composite method? We venture to assert, from what has been done in this comparatively new art of composite photography, that we should be likely to obtain by such means a truer portrait of the man than has yet been

seen. The whole subject is full of interest, and there is no doubt that in the near future a great many workers will be attracted to it, and that as a result it will improve and grow in usefulness.

A PARSON'S FIXES.

HERE is the first pastoral fix I was ever in. One wintry Sunday evening I was officiating, for the first time, at a mission church in an outlying part of the parish. The building had been a dissenting chapel. The pulpit, a formidable but rickety structure, was approached by a high and shaky flight of steps, and was illuminated by two tallow candles in tin sconces, on either side of the preacher. I had observed some slight unsteadiness on the part of the friendly dips, and accordingly had at first moved about as little as possible. However, as the sermon went on, caution was forgotten, and warming with my subject, I began to indulge in a little oratorical action. Reaching a climax in my discourse, I lifted both my arms, and brought them suddenly down upon the deal book-board with a sharp blow. The result was that the dips bounced neatly out of the sconces, performed swift somersaults, and disappeared down below, among some females, if one might judge by the noises that ensued. By the unfeigned laugh with which my exploit was received, I presume there must have been something ridiculous in the sudden ejection and fall of the candles. However, I failed to see any humour in the situation, for I was left in the dark, and being accustomed to the written sermon, was for the moment nonplussed. I durst not look over the pulpit or ask for the candles, and my rustic audience were so lost in the fun of the incident as to forget how necessary light is to a man's teaching. I made a brief effort at extempore preaching, and then an early and ignominious exit.

My next fix occurred in a large and ugly town church where I was conducting a week-evening service. It was summer-time, and the church doors were open. I was standing at the lectern reading the lessons, when my eye caught through the doorway the figure of Carlo, a large black spaniel, with which I was on friendly terms. The recognition was mutual. My acquaintance trotted up the aisle, and brought himself to anchor a few feet in front of where I was standing. He watched me with close attention, evidently wondering at my unfamiliar garb and estranged manner, but in doubt whether to manifest recognition by jumping up alongside me, or by indulging in friendly barks from a distance. However, he compromised matters by thumping audibly with his tail on the church floor, to the amusement of some of the younger members of the congregation, who eyed him with infinite glee over the ends of their pews.

The sexton all this time was serenely watching some children playing in the churchyard—watching, with the instinct of his tribe, for the youngsters to commit some offence for which he might exact summary vengeance. He was aroused to the awkwardness of my position by a special messenger, and thereupon ensued dignified but ridiculous efforts to eject the intruder. The dog

dodged the sexton up and down the aisles, rejected his allurements and decently subdued chirrupings, now and again rolling an appealing eye upon me to stop this ridiculous trifling and come down and pat him. Finally, when the 'ssistant beadle' had joined in the chase, the creature made a bolt up the gallery stairs, and was lost to view amid the lonely waste of benches.

But the incident was not at an end. I had dismissed from my mind the imprudence of my canine friend, and the service had proceeded peacefully as far as sermon-time. Scarcely had I begun my discourse, when it became evident that some stronger attraction was engaging the attention of my audience. Lifting my eye from the manuscript, I beheld the head of the dreadful dog looking wistfully over the gallery within a few yards; and from the expression of his countenance, it was but too evident that he was calculating the nearest point from which he could reach the pulpit. No sooner did he perceive my recognition of him, than he leaped up on the seat and planted his fore-legs on the front edge of the gallery. He was triumphantly waving his tail, apparently balancing himself for the spring, when the heads of the sexton and clerk bobbed up beyond the gallery stairs. Cajolings, menacings, and subdued adjectives were heard; the dog hesitated, turned his head, took in the situation, and fled. Finally, to my intense relief, but apparently to the great regret of the juvenile element in the congregation, the 'ssistant beadle,' effecting a flank movement, seized Carlo by the tail and dragged him down the gallery stairs, to be ignominiously driven forth among the dogs of the street.

This incident reminds me of a somewhat similar one related to me by a brother clergyman. He was engaged in preaching in a country church on a hot summer afternoon, and could with difficulty keep his rustic hearers from resigning themselves to slumber. It was in a poor outlying hamlet, and the congregation had been gathered from a wide area. Many had journeyed in donkey-carts and gigs; and during service-time the animals were wont to be tethered on the adjacent village common. On a sudden the drowsy stream of the preacher's sermon was interrupted by a racket outside the building. Presently, a young donkey hobbled up the steps of the church, and nimbly trotting along the aisle, faced round, and took up a position immediately under the pulpit. Before a couple of florid farmers could be roused from their accustomed Sunday afternoon nap to drive forth the invader, another donkey, dragging a cart, lumbered up the steps to join his relative. When he had succeeded in forcing his way through the porch till the shafts and body of the cart were wedged between the pillars, finding his future passage barred, he expressed his surprise and annoyance by discharging that peculiar, reduplicated and resonant sound, which, whatever may be its meaning in animal language, seems always provocative of laughter among human beings. Like the ass which disconcerted John Gilpin, he 'sang most loud and clear;' while his salutation was responded to by the animal within the building, and heartily chorused by the congregation of asses outside. What self-composure could stand against such an attack?

I asked my friend how he comported himself

under such circumstances. He replied, that he could do nothing but lean forward upon the cushion, and looking down upon the lively scene, bide his time in silence till the unmannerly visitants had been removed, and the congregation had sobered down into a red-faced and precarious silence.

That was also an unpleasant fix in which I found myself one Sunday, some twenty years ago. I had left home rather hurriedly that morning, and just before leaving I had seized from the pocket-handkerchief box a folded square of linen, of the usual shape, size, and texture, and had transferred it to my cassock pocket. In the earlier part of my discourse, becoming conscious of an impending sneeze, and being unwilling to interrupt the even tenor of my oratory, I fished out my handkerchief with one hand, and then, in the little elegant way that most persons have, with both hands gave it a shake to release it from its folds. Having staved off the sneeze by its application, I laid it on the edge of the pulpit, when the passing of an indefinable shade of expression across the upturned faces of my nearest hearers, caused me to dart a glance towards my handkerchief, imagining that it might be slipping over the edge. My eye caught sight of a hole at one side of it which had apparently been imperfectly repaired with some lace, and I gave the thing another shake, to conceal the defect. To my dismay and confusion, two tiny sleeves and a frilled neck appeared on the confines of my 'handkerchief' and a cold thrill passed over me when I recognised the little object as being a stray part of the attire of my infant daughter. As I crammed the garment into the recesses of my pocket I thought I had never been in such a fix before; for I well knew the keenness of the feminine eye, as well as the readiness of the feminine mind to enjoy such an incident.

A story told, if I mistake not, by Dean Ramsay, had an exact counterpart in the experience of a friend who was doing duty in a little church secluded among the Wiltshire downs. As he was going into the pulpit, the churchwarden, a big burly farmer, took him aside and said: 'Measter, if 'ee doan't mind, perhaps 'ee wouldn't stomp about in the pulpit. I ha' set a turkey-hen there on thirteen eggs. Ye zee, zur, it be the quietest place in the village.'

My friend, a man of infinite humour, used to tell of his bad half-hour in that pulpit. So long as he kept his distance, the turkey-hen was peaceable enough; but whenever his legs drew too near, an angry peck would admonish him to sheer off. On the Sunday following this occurrence it fell to my lot to occupy the same pulpit. Having laughed over the incident during the week, one of my first questions was, whether the interesting bird still held her ground. To my relief, I found that the hatching had meanwhile taken place, and the coast was clear.

I was once nearly disconcerted in a like way by a cat. During the sermon I heard some faint sounds, but could not divine whence they proceeded. The congregation may not have heard them; certainly, they did not heed them. Reassured by this, I held on my oratorical way till I unfortunately moved the footstool, when there was a loud and simultaneous outcry which must have been audible throughout the building.

Looking down, I saw protruding, in an appealing fashion, three or four feeble, knobby, pink heads, followed by the maternal head, saying as plainly as feline language could speak: 'Please, do not move about in that unpleasant fashion.' Pussy had, I suppose, likewise found out that the pulpit of the parish church was one of the quietest places in the village. However, we continued very good friends till I evacuated the position.

Although not involving any particular fix, I may be allowed to say that I once knew a cat with an extraordinary fondness for funerals. One day, in a suburban cemetery, it was my duty to officiate at one of these solemn functions. Habited in my surplice, I met the body at the cemetery gates, and faced about to head the procession to the chapel. From among the bushes near the lodge, a tabby cat came forth, gravely rubbed her head against my trousers, and then marched by my side, waited at the mortuary chapel door till the procession was again formed, and accompanied us to the grave. During the service, it sat on the mound of upturned earth, or silently and stealthily crept among the mourners, purring or rubbing its sides against their garments, as if offering its dumb sympathy. At the conclusion of the ceremony it would quickly disappear in the lilac thickets hard by. My duty led me to the cemetery perhaps four or five times a week, and on nearly every occasion the cat was present. The cemetery keeper knew nothing about the animal further than that it lived in the bushes upon birds and mice, and rarely appeared except upon the occasion of funerals.

A curious case of the pursuit of preaching under difficulties came under my notice. In a country church in the remote districts of the west of England, a swarm of bees had taken up their quarters in the oaken woodwork at the back of the pulpit, to the dismay and discomfort of the weekly occupant of that structure. During the discharge of his peculiar function, he was not only annoyed with the busy sullen roar of the hive, but his fear of arousing their animosity by the loud challenge of his tones, or by the vibration of the pulpit, was stimulated by the light skirmishers which used to come out and perform all sorts of minatory manoeuvres within measurable distance of his nose. The annoyance at length became intolerable, and orders were given to smoke out the bees. This was effectually done; but, unfortunately, the clerk in smoking out the bees set fire to the church, and it was burnt to the ground.

Here notice may be taken of the dangerous mental trick of metathesis—the transposition of letters in a word—which is apt to cover with confusion even those who consider themselves perfectly safe. A writer in a late number of the *Spectator* adduced some curious examples of this pernicious habit. He cites the case of a clergyman who, wishing to say that 'we all knew what it was to have a half-formed wish in our hearts,' astonished his hearers by announcing 'that we all knew what it was to have a half-warmed fish in our hearts;' and of another, who, having 'started out' to say that 'we should not bow the knee to an idol,' arrived at the conclusion 'that we should not bow the eye to a needle.'

I can well believe these anecdotes true, for

the following instance of the failing came under my own personal observation. A fellow-student, a sensitive-minded man, who had a horror of such mistakes in public, was jokingly telling one day of a mistake which he had heard made by an illiterate man in extempore prayer. The poor fellow was praying for backsliders, but, in the earnestness of his devotion, and quite regardless of the feelings of his hearers, fell to invoking blessings upon 'black-spiders!' This tale was sufficiently amusing. But what followed? That evening, we both attended a mission meeting, and my friend took part in the devotions. He had what is called 'a gift' in extempore prayer, and, borne along upon his ardour, he seemed entirely to have forgotten the subject of the morning's conversation. An irreverent recollection did once flash upon my mind, but only to be instantly dismissed. What was my astonishment, however, to hear him, deliberately, and in a tone of confidence, make use of the very expression which he had that morning quoted, earnestly and feelingly praying for the speedy restoration and strengthening of the favoured *Arachnids*! I was sure from his manner that he was unconscious of his mistake; and nothing could exceed his mortification when he was subsequently told of it.

It was customary, some years ago—in certain districts the practice still lingers—for the minister, upon giving out the hymn, to read the first verse. I remember once hearing a young curate give out, in a very lachrymose and sentimental tone, the verse of a well-known hymn which ends with the words, 'And wipe my weeping eyes.' The pathos was sadly spoiled and the gravity of his hearers tested by his rendering it, 'And weep my wiping eyes.' He was immediately conscious of his mistake, and his confusion only made matters worse. Experience has no doubt since taught him that it is wiser, under such circumstances, to go boldly forward, trusting to successive thoughts to obliterate a little error, rather than to call attention to it by endeavouring to rectify his mistake at the time. The truth is, that unless an audience is on the *qui vive* for mistakes, the bulk of the people are much more ready to doubt whether they have heard correctly than to believe that the speaker has spoken incorrectly.

The blindness of congregations is curiously illustrated by an incident which befell me some years back. It was at a time when the question of wearing the surplice in the pulpit was much more keenly debated than it is at present. I was taking temporary duty in a midland town where the strongest Protestant spirit prevailed, and where the black gown was invested with a quasi-sanctity. One day I was talking with a leading layman connected with the parish church, a perivivid opponent of ritualism. He spoke in the strongest terms of dislike for this new-fangled idea of preaching in the surplice, and said that not only would he himself march out of church, but he believed that the majority of the congregation would follow him, if a minister were to venture to appear in the parish pulpit habited in a surplice. The remark was not made defiantly, or with the slightest *soupeçon* of suspicion as to my loyalty. The worthy man knew perfectly well that I would not needlessly wound the feelings or prejudices of my people, and that I was far more concerned with the

message of the preacher, than with the cut, colour, or material of his dress.

Little did either of us dream that an opportunity would so soon present itself to test the truth of his affirmations. Upon the very next Sunday, the mayor and corporation attended in state, and the church was crowded. The first part of the service glided by without anything calling for remark; and when I went in due course to the vestry to change my vestments, the old clerk drew back the red baize curtains, and lifting his hands, with a startled look said: 'Dear, dear, what is to be done? You've got no gown!' I remembered at once the state of the case. During the preceding week, there had been a funeral, and according to the custom of the district, I had attended in my gown, leaving this vestment afterwards at my residence, more than a mile away from the church.

What was I to do? I heard the full voice of the congregation in the church singing the hymn, measured in my mind the distance to my house, and the time it would take to sing the remaining verses. No; there was no escape for me. The surplice must be worn. When I got into the pulpit, habited in white, one of the first faces I recognised in the congregation was that of the gentleman above referred to. He looked much as usual; if anything, rather more pleasant. I addressed myself to my task; gave out the 'bidding prayer;' and, without any embarrassment or apology, announced my text, and proceeded with the sermon. No one rose to leave the church; no one seemed to have observed anything strange. The morning service ended, and although it was the first time the surplice had been worn in the pulpit, nobody appeared conscious of any deviation from the usual custom. During the following week, I fully expected to hear some mutterings of a gathering storm. I called upon my friend, found him very affable, but all unconscious of my backsliding. We chatted about the Sunday morning service. He was pleased to express his high satisfaction with the sermon. I asked him if he had observed anything strange in my manner. No; he had not observed anything different.

'Why,' said I, 'last Sunday morning I preached in my surplice.'

'Preached in your surplice!' he screamed out. 'Impossible!'

I explained matters; and he was too sensible a man and too good a Christian to say anything more about the matter. It reminded me of the well-known answer of the Cambridge Professor, who having married, continued, in defiance of the statute, to hold his fellowship for fourteen years, who when asked how he could possibly have done such a thing, replied sagely: 'You can hold anything if you can hold your tongue.'

The last fix I was in was the following. One day, when seated near the stern of a Thames steamboat, I was aroused by a loud cry from the forward part of the boat and a rushing of the passengers to one side. I rose from my seat, and turning to the man at the wheel, asked him what was the matter. With his eyes fixed on something in the water, he replied: 'Please, sir, hold this a minute!'

I mounted the step, and had scarcely taken hold of the wheel, when the man leaped upon

the bulwark and sprang overboard. The cause of all this commotion then appeared. A man who had taken his wife and children out upon the Thames in a boat, had endeavoured to attach his skiff to a passing tug ahead of us, and, incautiously holding to the tow-rope, had been jerked into the water, where he was now drowning before our eyes. The helmsman of our boat had jumped over, in the hope of rescuing him. I caught a glimpse of the drowning man battling for life, and heard the screams of his wife and children above all the shouting and turmoil. But what of myself? The steamboat was crowded; the river was at swift ebb and full of vessels; and I, entirely ignorant of steering, was responsible for the safety of hundreds. However, I recalled as much as possible my boat-lore of early days, and headed the vessel to the centre of one of the arches of a bridge, towards which we were rapidly drifting. I remember the sense of relief with which I heard the captain shout 'Stop her!' and for some minutes the vessel was poised against the current in the middle of the river, while I held on to the wheel. The drowning man was never recovered; and we took on board of our steamboat his wife and children, in a condition of terror and bewildered grief which may readily be imagined. But never did I more readily escape from any of my fixes than when a new steersman came aft and assumed the charge of the wheel. It was a curious position for a clergyman to find himself suddenly steering a Thames steamboat, but 'One man in his time plays many parts.'

SPRING IS COMING.

I.

'SPRING is coming! Oh, Spring is coming!'

A whisper is flying all down the wood;
Primrose and daffodil softly calling,
Calling each dainty leaflet and bud!
Through the hedgerow, and by the coppice,
Far and wide over mead and hill,
A breath of life is secretly stealing
Among the trees, at its own sweet will.
Under the moss on the giant beeches,
Down to the carpet of leaves below,
Where the ant and the beetle as yet are sleeping,
And the dormouse hides from the wintry snow;
They know full well the voice that is calling,
And, all along by the ferny brake,
Where'er there is life the whisper is flying,
'Oh, Spring is coming! Awake, awake!'

II.

High up in the elm the rooks are busy,
As if icy Winter had really fled;
The finches and starlings are preening their feathers,
And the robin's breast is growing more red.
They hear the whisper, and sing to the South Wind
The sweetest song that a bird can sing:
'Oh, the season of sunshine and love is coming,
The bonnie days of the bonnie Spring.'

B. G. JOHNS.

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BOOK-LOVERS IN THE MONASTIC AGE.

EXTREME antiquity gives birth to a certain feeling of divinity, which finds a home in the most callous breast. Pacing slowly through an old village church, the mind instinctively turns back through long ages to the beginning of the Christian era. Wandering into the musty, worm-eaten pews, and opening the old tattered Bibles, one yields to the irresistible fascination of looking at their dates, and reading their homely inscriptions and entries of births, deaths, and marriages. The mind thoughtfully ponders on the old inscriptions which 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet' have handed down to posterity; and loses itself in vague wonderings, as it notes the iron clamp by which the Book of Life was chained in bygone days to the massive Gothic pillar. The congregation who listened with rapt attention to the sacred words are now sleeping peacefully under the heaving turf outside. Some of the stones, worn, gray, and crumbling, dip over the grassy graves. The butterflies flit overhead, and the swallows still return in summer; only the human beings are changed and gone. Are there any persons who can hold the crackling parchments of monastic days in their hands without feeling an intense interest in the solemn scribes who penned those ancient folios? Are there any human beings who cannot revel in a library rich in ancient literature and relics of the past? Who can look unmoved upon a newly discovered coin that was current when immortal Socrates was propounding his doctrines to the people of Greece?

The passion for book-hunting flourished as far back as the dark ages of cobwebbed parchments and musty records—when the Anglo-Saxon minstrel seeking a night's shelter within the quiet cloisters, sung to the cowed monks, when their day's work was done, of their dead heroes and their glorious lives, and roused their quiet hearts to enthusiasm with his lays of ancient conquerors and their noble deeds. No true book-lover but looks back with intense gratitude and interest to the cloistered bibliophiles, who were so enthu-

siastic in their book-collecting—the time and infinite labour they bestowed on a single manuscript; the exquisite illuminations with which they decorated their work; the mathematical precision of their even lines, and well-formed perpendicular letters.

A manuscript of the eighth century lies before us. The binding is gorgeous with gold and silver and precious stones. The 'feel' of the book seems to answer to the Greek word *hieros* (sacred)—to spiritualise and waft one back to the quiet calm of the Benedictine monastery, before the Danes bore down upon it with fire and bloodshed. Let us push open the heavy oaken door, studded with huge nails, and glance in upon the grave-browed old Saxon who sits in his cell, or *scriptorium*, transcribing busily. The apartment is utterly bare, having only a hard straight-backed chair and wooden table. The floor is uncarpeted, the walls are cold stone, not a picture to grace the chilly bareness of the arched apartment. Yet the use of the cell was deemed a great honour, and was granted only to those who were distinguished for piety and learning. Here the old cowed Saxon scribe labours, and the summer air comes in through the open window upon his shaven crown. A gorgeous sunset flames in the west, and glows upon the rich monastic lands stretching away to the horizon. There are no sounds of human life; but the painted butterflies flit dreamily past, and the birds hop in and out of the casement with a fearlessness which betokens the bond betwixt the old scribe and nature. He labours on till the stars come out and night veils the scene; then he goes to his midnight prayers in the silent cloisters. Time passes dreamily on, with the even tenor of strict monastic life, yet sweetened by the silent companionship of books. Year after year the cloistered bibliophile labours; through the intense cold of winter, when he freezes in his cell, and his numbed fingers can scarcely guide the *stilus* to form the Old English perpendicular strokes on the cold parchment stretched before him. But the uniformity of the caligraphy is maintained throughout. The

large capital letters remain to this day brilliant with illuminations of pure gold, crimson, and purple. The designs are chaste; the delicate manipulation of the colouring, the double-columned folio pages, and the richly illuminated pictures of the saints, are exquisite.

It is intense pleasure to look upon and touch with our fingers so wonderful a work of art—one of the earliest attempts to transcribe the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue; to be carried back to the earliest ages of the Christian era, when the quiet abbeys sheltered bibliomaniacs of no small pretensions, and ecclesiastical illuminators who were adepts at their intricate art. It is vain to try to describe the beauties of those works of art which have been handed down to us, each page of the missal an embroidery of gorgeous colouring, the sacred names transcribed in gold, the exquisite patterns executed in the *scriptorium* of some ancient and now ruined abbey.

One of the curiosities of early days is the floral directory, which assigns to each flower a particular saint and day on which to bloom. Thus, the sunflower is dedicated to St Barnabas, and the immaculate lily to the Virgin; deadly monkshood belongs to St Dunstan, and the sensitive plant to St Vitus; whilst the gaudy rhododendron is appropriated by St Augustine. We can imagine the early Egyptian going by his rice-fields, bowing down before the stately lotus, which rose out of the water at the dawn, and sunk again at sunset. There was also a clock of flowers. And many were the deadly poisons and marvellous cures distilled from the herbs and flowers blossoming around the monastery walls.

To possess a library was the first great aim of monastic life. Not only books upon ecclesiastical subjects—not only lives of saints and martyrs, and homilies, but such standard works as Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal, Horace, and Æsop adorned their shelves, showing how rapidly they covered vellum. Indeed, for classic learning the monks of old stand out pre-eminently. Their libraries were under the care of the 'armarian,' and it was his duty to catalogue all the works under his charge and keep them carefully preserved. Their mode of cataloguing was different from ours; they aimed more at identifying a book than describing its contents. Many armarians noted down the last few words on the second-last page, which had the advantage that the reader could more easily find out if the work was complete.

Every book-lover feels a twinge of agony when he is asked for the loan of a favourite volume. If he refuses, he feels selfish in not sharing his joys with another. If he acquiesces, he knows no rest till again he feels his treasure within his grasp. The borrowers of old, like the borrowers of to-day, sometimes forgot to return that which was lent. But the ancients had the sense to guard against want of memory and punctuality. When a neighbouring monastery borrowed a book, it had to deposit as security a sum above its value, and there was a bond in writing promising to return the work within a certain period. An obscure or doubtful borrower had to deposit a work of equal value before he could even glance inside the coveted tome. This very care goes more to show the monastic love of learning and books than anything else. The armarian also superintended

the scribes, made the ink, cut the vellum, and hired those who were employed as transcribers. Two kinds of apartments or *scriptoria* were used for writing. The *scriptorium* used for general literary work was a huge bare hall, filled with rows of straight-backed seats, where the scribes sat. One monk, well acquainted with the subject in hand, read aloud, and all copied from him simultaneously. There were also small cells, where the most learned monks were permitted to study in solitude. We have undoubtedly great readers to-day, but under what different circumstances of ease and luxury do we pursue our studies! It is difficult to realise the life of Petrarch, who, besides being Italy's most glorious lyric poet, was also a great bookworm and collector. He never travelled without horses loaded with books, and accompanied by many scribes. His love of reading was so great that, he tells us, whether he rode or walked, had his hair cut or took his meals, his beloved book was always open before him. When he felt death coming on, he presented his treasures, his books, rare and ancient manuscripts, to the city of Venice, from which magnificent collection sprung the library of St Mark. Petrarch loved to share his learning with others: he lent his books freely; and through this good nature, we have to deplore the irreparable loss of Cicero's *De Gloria*, which was pawned by the old man to whom the poet had lent the manuscript.

At the same period, whilst Edward III. was on the English throne, that wonderful bibliophile, Richard de Bury, was forming his collection of vellum treasures. He was constantly employed in searching out the rare works his heart longed for. Not content with ransacking his own country, he went abroad, where he fell in with Petrarch. We can imagine how the two collectors compared notes and gloated over their books, and the hours they spent together amongst the treasures of Petrarch's library. Perchance the generosity of the great Italian sent De Bury away happy in the possession of some coveted tome, rich in wondrous calligraphy and gorgeous illuminations. De Bury's pen has left us *Philobiblon*, not so much admired for the purity of its Latin as for the enthusiastic tone which runs through it. So much for a book-hunter of five hundred years ago. Can we not picture him defying the icy winds of winter, as he lingered by the open stall—then the popular mode of selling books—fingering the musty tomes! He cared not whither or how far he went, so long as he found a book at his journey's end.

A few years previous to his death, there had been born, in an old manor-house in Yorkshire, a boy who was to light up his name with undying glory—John de Wyclif—who, living the life of a country parson, was yet building up day by day the first English version of the *whole* Bible.

A difference of opinion regarding ecclesiastical policy has done much to denude the monastic age of its well-deserved praise and gratitude. It is to them we owe our choicest and most beautiful manuscripts. To their love of books we owe our magnificent collections of valuable manuscripts which form the priceless treasures of the Vatican, the Cottonian and Bodleian libraries, and the British Museum. It is with a thrill of sorrow that the bibliophile remembers how many thou-

sands of manuscripts that escaped the lawless hands of the invading barbarians, met with a still more ignominious fate during later ecclesiastical contentions. Manuscripts of classic and ancient dates met with the same fate as those which dealt with the controversies of the day. There was no discrimination; and thus the bibliophile sighs over the wanton destruction of manuscripts of which it is impossible to estimate the loss. When the student wanders thoughtfully amongst the ruins of long ago, the 'long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults' are lit up by the holy light of a vanished past; he can see in fancy the sombre, cowed head of some monkish student gazing out upon the yellow corn through the delicate tracery of the pointed Gothic windows, now fast crumbling to decay. At night, through the arched and pillared cloisters, the moon throws long silvery streaks upon the broken stone pavements; and imagination sees the weird, hooded form of a long-robed monk glide silently across the broad triangle and vanish into the deep obscurity. The creeping lichens and drooping ivy obstruct the grand old gateway, and the chill stone walls have a green and mossy pattern traced upon their bareness. The *scriptorium* of the monks is now the home of the hooting owls and flittering bats; the air strikes to the bone, chill and icy and damp; but the book-lover gazes dreamily upon the ruins by the light and atmosphere of other days, and the feeling is a prayer.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XIII.—WHAT SUCCESS?

At the Meyseys' next morning, all was turmoil and surprise. The servants' hall fluttered with unwonted excitement. No less an event than an elopement was suspected. Miss Elsie had not come down to breakfast; and when Miss Winifred went up, on the lady's-maid's report, to ask what was the matter, she had found the door securely locked on the inside, and received no answer to her repeated questions. The butler, hastily summoned to the rescue, broke open the lock; and Winifred entered, to find the lamp still feebly burning at half-height, and a huddled confusion everywhere pervading the disordered room. Clearly, some strange thing had occurred. Elsie's drawers had been opened and searched: the black bag was gone from the stand in the corner; and the little jewel-case with the silver shield on the top was missing from its accustomed place on the dressing-table. With a sudden cry, Winifred rushed forward, terrified. Her first idea was the usual feminine one of robbery and murder. Elsie was killed—killed by a burglar. But one glance at the bed dispelled that illusion; it had never been slept in. The nightdress and the little embroidered nightdress bag in red silk were neither of them there in their familiar fashion. The brush and comb had disappeared from the base of the looking-glass. The hairpins even had been removed from the glass hairpin box. These indications seemed frankly inconsistent with the theory of mere intrusive burglary. The enterprising burglar doesn't make up the beds of the robbed and murdered, after pocketing their watches; nor does he walk off, as a rule, with ordinary hairbrushes and embroidered nightdress

bags. Surprised and alarmed, Winifred rushed to the window: it was open still: a branch of the wistaria lay broken on the ground, and the mark of a falling body might be easily observed among the plants and soil in the shrubbery border.

By this time, the Squire had appeared upon the scene, bringing in his hand a letter for Winifred. With the cool common-sense of advancing years, he surveyed the room in its littered condition, and gazed over his daughter's shoulder as she read the shadowy and incoherent jumble of phrases Hugh Massinger had strung together so carefully in Elsie's name last night at the *Fisherman's Rest*. 'Whew!' he whistled to himself in sharp surprise as the state of the case dawned slowly upon him. 'Depend upon it, there's a young man at the bottom of this. "*Cherchez la femme*," says the French proverb. When a young woman's in question, "*Cherchez l'homme*" comes very much nearer it. The girl's run off with *somebody*, you may be sure. I only hope she's run off all straight and above-board, and not gone away with a groom or a gamekeeper or a married clergyman.'

'Papa!' Winifred cried, laying down the letter in haste and bursting into tears, 'do you think Mr Massinger can have anything to do with it?'

The Squire had been duly apprised last night by Mrs Meysey—in successive instalments—as to the state of relations between Hugh and Winifred; but his blunt English nature cavalierly rejected the suggested explanation of Elsie's departure, and he brushed it aside at once after the fashion of his kind with an easy 'Bless my soul! no, child. The girl's run off with some fool somewhere. It's always fools who run off with women. Do you think a man would be idiot enough to—he was just going to say, 'propose to one woman in the morning, and elope with another the evening after?' but he checked himself in time, before the faces of the servants, and finished his sentence lamely by saying instead, 'commit himself so with a girl of that sort?'

'That wasn't what I meant, papa,' Winifred whispered low. 'I meant, could she have fancied?— You understand me.'

The Squire gave a snort in place of *No*. Impossible, impossible; the young man was so well connected. She could never have thought he meant to make up to *her*. Much more likely, if it came to that, the girl would run away *with* him than *from* him. Young women don't really run away from a man because their hearts are broken. They go up to their own bedrooms instead, and muse and mope over it, and cry their eyes red.

And indeed, the Squire remarked to himself inwardly on the other hand, that if Hugh were minded to elope with any one, he would be far more likely to elope with the heiress of Whitestrand than with a penniless governess like Elsie Challoner. Elopement implies parental opposition. Why the deuce should a man take the trouble to run away with an undowered orphan, whom nobody on earth desires to prevent him from marrying any day, in the strictly correctest manner, by banns or license at the parish church of her own domicile? The suggestion was clearly quite quixotic. If Elsie had run away with any one, it was neither from nor with this young man of Winifred's, the Squire felt sure, but with the gardener's son or with the under-gamekeeper.

Still, he felt distinctly relieved in his own mind when, at half-past ten, Hugh Massinger strolled idly in, a rose in his button-hole and a smile on his face—though a little lame of the left leg—all unconscious, apparently, that anything out of the common had happened since last night at the great house.

Hugh was one of the very finest and most finished actors then performing on the stage of social England; but even he had a difficult part to play that stormy morning, and he went through his rôle, taking it altogether, with but indifferent success, though with sufficient candour to float him through unsuspected somehow. The circumstances, indeed, were terribly against him. When he fell the night before from Elsie's window, he had bruised and shaken himself, already fatigued as he was by his desperate swim and his long unconsciousness; and it was with a violent effort, goaded on by the sense of absolute necessity alone, that he picked himself up, black bag and all, and staggered home, with one ankle strained, to his rooms at the Stannaways'. Once arrived there, after that night of terrors and manifold adventures, he locked away Elsie's belongings cautiously in a back cupboard—incriminating evidence, indeed, if anything should ever happen to come out—and flung himself half undressed at last in a fever of fatigue upon the bed in the corner.

Strange to say, he slept—slept soundly. Worn out with overwork and exertion and faintness, he slept on peacefully like a tired child, till at nine o'clock Mrs Stannaway rapped hard at the door to rouse him. Then he woke with a start from a heavy sleep, his head aching, but drowsy still, and with feverish pains in all his limbs from his desperate swim and his long immersion. He was quite unfit to get up and dress; but he rose for all that, as if all was well, and even pretended to eat some breakfast, though a cup of tea was the only thing he could really gulp down his parched throat in his horror and excitement. Last night's events came clearly home to him now in their naked ghastliness, and with sinking heart and throbbing head he realised the full extent of his guilt and his danger, the depth of his remorse, and the profundity of his folly.

Elsie was gone—that was his first thought. There was no more an Elsie to reckon with in all this world. Her place was blank—how blank he could never before have truly realised. The whole world itself was blank too. What he loved best in it all was gone clean out of it.

Elsie, Elsie, poor drowned, lost Elsie! His heart ached as he thought to himself of Elsie, gasping and struggling in that cold, cold sea, among those fierce wild breakers, for one last breath—and knew it was he who had driven her, by his baseness and wickedness and cruelty, to that terrible end of a sweet young existence. He had darkened the sun in heaven for himself henceforth and for ever. He had sown the wind, and he should reap the whirlwind. He hated himself; he hated Winifred; he hated everybody and everything but Elsie. Poor martyred Elsie! Beautiful Elsie! His own sweet, exquisite, noble Elsie! He would have given the whole world at that moment to bring her back again. But the past was irrevocable, quite irrevocable. There was nothing for a strong man now to do but to brace himself up and face the present.

'If not, what resolution from despair?'—That was all the comfort his philosophy could give him.

Elsie's things were locked up in the cupboard. If suspicion lighted upon him in any way now, it was all up with him. Elsie's bag and jewel-case and clothing in the cupboard would alone be more than enough to hang him. Hang him! What did he care any longer for hanging? They might hang him and welcome, if they chose to try. For sixpence he would save them the trouble, and drown himself. He wanted to die. It was fate that prevented him. Why hadn't he drowned when he might, last night? An ugly proverb that, about the man who is born to be hanged, &c., &c. Some of these proverbs are downright rude—positively vulgar in the coarse simplicity and directness of their language.

He gulped down the tea with a terrible effort: it was scalding hot, and it burnt his mouth, but he scarcely noticed it. Then he pulled about the sole on his fork for a moment, to dirty the plate, and boning it roughly, gave the flesh to the cat, who ate it purring on the rug by the fireplace. He waited for a reasonable interval next before ringing the bell—it takes a lone man ten minutes to breakfast—but as soon as that necessary time had passed, he put on his hat, crushing it down on his head, and with fiery soul and bursting temples, strolled up, with the jauntiest air he could assume, to the Meyseys' after breakfast.

Winifred met him at the front door. His new sweetheart was pale and terrified, but not now crying. Hugh felt himself afraid to presume upon their novel relations and insist upon a kiss—she would expect it of him. It was the very first time he had ever kissed her, and, oh evil omen, it revolted him at last that he had now to do it—with Elsie's body tossed about that very moment by the cruel waves upon that angry bar or on the cold sea-bottom. It was treason to Elsie—to poor dead Elsie—that he should ever kiss any other woman. His kisses were hers, his heart was hers, for ever and ever. But what would you have? He looked on, as he had said, as if from above, at circumstances wafting his own character and his own actions hither and thither wherever they willed—and this was the pass to which they had now brought him. He must play out the game—play it out to the end, whatever it might cost him.

Winifred took the kiss mechanically and coldly, and handed him Elsie's letter—his own forged letter—without one word of preface or explanation. Hugh was glad she did so at the very first moment—it allowed him to relieve himself at once from the terrible strain of the affected gaiety he was keeping up just to save appearances. He couldn't have kept it up much longer. His countenance fell visibly as he read the note—or pretended to read it, for he had no need really to glance at its words—every word of them all now burnt into the very fibres and fabric of his being.

'Why, what does this mean, Miss Meysey—that is to say, Winifred?' He corrected himself hurriedly. 'Elsie isn't gone? She's here this morning as usual, surely?'

As he said it he almost hoped it might be true. He could hardly believe the horrible, horrible reality. His face was pale enough in all con-

science now—a little too pale, perhaps, for the letter alone to justify. Winifred, eyeing him close, saw at a glance that he was deeply moved.

'She's gone,' she said, not too tenderly either. 'She went away last night, taking her things with her—at least some of them.—Do you know where she's gone, Mr Massinger? Has she written to you, as she promises?'

'Not Mr Massinger,' Hugh corrected gravely, with a livid white face, yet affecting jauntiness. 'It was agreed yesterday it should be "Hugh" in future.—No; I don't at all know where she is, Winifred; I wish I did.' He said it seriously. 'She hasn't written a single line to me.'

Hugh's answer had the very ring of truth in it—for indeed it was true; and Winifred, watching him with a woman's closeness, felt certain in her own mind that in this at least he was not deceiving her. But he certainly grew unnecessarily pale. Cousinly affection would hardly account for so much disturbance of the vaso-motor system. She questioned him closely as to all that had passed or might have passed between them these weeks or earlier. Did he know anything of Elsie's movements or feelings? Hugh, holding the letter firmly in one hand, and playing with the key of that incriminating cupboard, in his waistcoat pocket, loosely with the other, passed with credit his examination. He had never, he said, with gay flippancy almost, been really intimate with Elsie, talked confidences with Elsie, or received any from Elsie in return. She did not know of his engagement to Winifred. Yet he feared, whatever her course might be, some man or other must be its leading motive. Perhaps—but this with the utmost hesitation—Warren Relf and she might have struck up a love affair.

He felt, of course, it was a serious ordeal. Apart from the profounder background of possible consequences—the obvious charge of having got rid of Elsie—two other unpleasant notions stared him full in the face. The first was, that the Meyseys might suspect him of having driven Elsie to run away by his proposal to Winifred. But supposing even they never thought of that—which was highly unlikely, considering the close sequence of the two events and the evident drift of Winifred's questions—there still remained the second unpleasantness—that his cousin, through whom alone he had been introduced to the family, should have disappeared under such mysterious circumstances. Was it likely they would wish their daughter to marry a man among whose relations such odd and unaccountable things were likely to happen?

For, strangely enough, Hugh still wished to marry Winifred. Though he loathed her in his heart just then for not being Elsie, and even, by some illogical twist of thought, for having been the unconscious cause of Elsie's misfortunes; though he would have died himself far rather than lived without Elsie; yet, if he lived, he wished for all that to marry Winifred. For one thing, it was the programme; and because it was the programme, he wanted, with his strict business habits, to carry it out to the bitter end. For another thing, his future all depended upon it; and though he didn't care a straw at present for his future, he went on acting, by the pure force

of habit in a prudent man, as deliberately and cautiously as if he had still the same serious stake in existence as ever. He wasn't going to chuck up everything all at once, just because life was now an utter blank to him. He would go on as usual in the regular groove, and pretend to the world he was still every bit as interested and engaged in life as formerly.

So he brazened things out with the Meyseys somehow, and to his immense astonishment, he soon discovered they were ready dupes, in no way set against him by this untoward accident. On the contrary, instead of finding, as he had expected, that they considered this delinquency on the part of his cousin told against himself as a remote partner of her original sin, by right of heredity, he found the Squire and Mrs Meysey nervously anxious for their part lest he, her nearest male relative, should suspect them of having inefficiently guarded his cousin's youth, inexperience, and innocence. They were all apology, where he had looked for coldness; they were all on the defensive, where he had expected to see them vigorously carrying the war into Africa. One thing, above all others, he noted with profound satisfaction—nobody seemed to doubt for one second the genuineness and authenticity of the forged letter. Whatever else they doubted, the letter was safe. They all took it fully for granted that Elsie had gone, of her own free-will, gone to the four winds, with no trace left of her; and that Hugh, in the perfect innocence of his heart, knew no more than they themselves about it.

Nothing else, of course, was talked of at Whitestrand that livelong day; and before night, the gossips and quidnuncs of the village inn and the servants' hall had a complete theory of their own to account for the episode. Their theory was simple, romantic, and improbable. It had the dearly-loved spice of mystery about it. The coastguard had noticed that a ship, name unknown, with a red light at the masthead and a green on the port bow, had put in hastily about nine o'clock the night before, near the big poplar. The Whitestrand cronies had magnified this fact before nightfall, through various additions of more or less fanciful observers or non-observers—for fiction, too, counts for something—into a consistent story of a most orthodox elopement. Miss Elsie had let herself down by a twisted sheet out of her own window, to escape observation—some said a rope, but the majority voted for the twisted sheet, as more strictly in accordance with established precedent—she had slipped away to the big tree, where a gentleman's yacht, from parts unknown, had put in cautiously before a terrible gale, by previous arrangement, and had carried her over through a roaring sea across to the opposite coast of Flanders. Detail after detail grew apace; and before long there were some who even admitted to having actually seen a foreign-looking gentleman in a dark cloak—the cloak is a valuable romantic property upon such occasions—catch a white-robed lady in his stout arms as she leaped a wild leap into an open boat from the spray-covered platform of the gnarled poplar roots. Hugh smiled a grim and hideous smile of polite incredulity as he listened to these final imaginative embellishments of the popular fancy; but he accepted in outline the romantic tale as

the best possible version of Elsie's disappearance for public acceptance. It kept the police at least from poking their noses too deep into this family affair, and it freed him from any possible tinge of blame in the eyes of the Meyseys. Nobody can be found fault with for somebody else's elopement. Two points at least seemed fairly certain to the Whitestrand intelligence: first, that Miss Elsie had run away of her own accord, in the absence of the family; and second, that she neither went by road nor rail, so that only the sea or river appeared to be left by way of a possible explanation.

The Meyseys, of course, were less credulous as to detail; but even the Meyseys suspected nothing serious in the matter. That Elsie had gone was all they knew; why she went, was a profound mystery to them.

SOME STAGE-TRADES.

BY AN OLD STAGER.

AN article bearing the above title appeared in the *Journal* for January 31, 1885. A reference to the article in question will remind our readers that such accessories as wigs, costumes, hosiery, &c., contribute not a little to the dramatic effect of modern plays. There are many other trade items, however, such as picture-posters, electric light, stage-furniture, foil-paper, jewelry, and limelight, which often help, directly or indirectly, to enhance the success of a good play or gloss over the imperfections of a bad one. Let us examine one or two of these aids to theatrical prosperity.

Picture-printing—which of course includes the production of 'posters'—is, *par excellence*, the industry which gives the initial push to any theatrical venture, be the constituents of that venture good or bad. While many people have neither patience nor time to con over a startling advertisement in the newspaper, or to wade through columns of 'press opinions,' few can resist a passing glance at the red, blue, and yellow pictures which stare from every available hoarding, and portray with pardonable exaggeration the climax of virtue's triumph and the hand-cuffed termination of long successful vice. Who, for instance, could withstand the *Lights o' London* caravan-scene in eight double-crown coloured sheets? Who could banish all the superstition inherent in the human mind when an adjacent street lamp lights up with fitful weirdness the trap-scene in the *Corsican Brothers*? Who would not sympathise with the agonised, upturned face of the 'Silver King,' clench hands at the diabolical Jacques in the garret-scene of the *Two Orphans*, weep with poor 'Jo,' or smile with the curate whose appearance in the *Private Secretary* is so naturally realised by the lithographer or zincographer? Newspaper advertisements may be all very well for the supply of necessary details; but for 'drawing' purposes, 'double crown' is undoubtedly the backbone of any play. The same remark applies to posters. Any agent in advance will tell you how necessary it is for posters to be of that attractive description which, whether we like it or not, compels our attention.

Comparatively enormous sums are spent on this theatrical adjunct alone; and few touring companies would have much chance of success were not their advent in each town set forth in glaring letters of Gargantuan dimensions. The printing of posters has been greatly facilitated by machinery. It is not such a very long time since poster-work was done entirely by hand, and even now the colouring is to some extent dependent on handwork, while hand-wrought 'streamers' can still be supplied—unless large quantities are required—at a less expense than machine-printed letters. Machines, however, have been introduced which are capable of printing eight or ten colours by one process; while one eminent firm has patented an invention for 'taking off,' and thus saving the labour of the boys who were formerly employed for that purpose. The patent, it is understood, pays its cost in boys' wages in a little over a year, so that after that period the work accomplished by it is so much profit to the proprietor.

Lithography and zincography are the processes which form the basis of our street picture-galleries. The process known as lithography is so generally understood that it is unnecessary to detain the reader with a description of it. Zincography, however, is perhaps not so well known; and as this process has now greatly superseded lithography in theatrical work, a few words of explanation may not be superfluous. In lithography, a stone is used, from which the impression is taken of whatever is intended to be printed. In zincography, a zinc plate takes the place of the lithographer's stone. This zinc plate having been 'grained' with fine sand, is ready for the design, which is drawn upon it with lithographic chalk and ordinary printer's ink. The design having been drawn, the plate is subjected to a solution of nut-galls, and when dry, is ready for supplying the necessary impression. Ordinarily, we believe, only the black colouring is printed by zincography, the remaining colours being filled up by hand. Zincography is a cheaper process than lithography, and though the printing of the former may not be so delicate as that of the latter, its cheapness—combined with the fact that a couple of thousand impressions may be had from one plate—has led it to supersede lithography in the printing of large posters, where delicate drawing is not so essential as a taking *tout ensemble*. In small work, such as music title-pages, lithography still holds its own; and in some of the larger lithographic establishments, thousands of these stones are kept in stock, many of them already prepared with the impression which may make or mar a good waltz or an indifferent ballad, for attractive frontispieces have sometimes not a little to do with the popularity of a piece of music. A good story in connection with these stones was told by a theatrical contemporary some time ago: 'On one occasion, a young enthusiastic composer was gazing with admiration upon the proof-print of his first published composition, and in order to admire it in detail and at his ease, he reclined gracefully against a bench which was immediately behind him. He was wearing at the time an elegant mouse-coloured overcoat; and when he rose from his recumbent attitude, the full impression of the title-page of another composer's waltz was plainly visible upon his garment.'

He had reclined against a "primed" stone which was waiting to be put on the machine, and had thus veritably obtained a proof before printing!

Turning from what may fairly be termed the advertising department of the theatre to an employment more immediately connected with the footlights, it will perhaps be interesting to note the valuable aids to stage-effect which the gasman's 'properties' afford. Ordinary gas, limelight, and electric light are helps which no well-organised theatre could afford to dispense with. To a modern audience, their beautiful effects are accepted as a matter of course; they have become used to them, and with use has been born indifference. Yet it would not be hard to picture the awe of a first-night pittance of the olden time who was satisfied with the printed intimation, 'This is a wood,' were he to come back to earth and visit the production of a spectacular piece of the present period. His astonishment on witnessing the ever-varying glows of colour which light up the transformation scene of a pantomime, would in all probability be more than his resurrected remains would be capable of supporting; while such less impressive items as the soft toning in the lighting of a cathedral 'exterior,' or the almost imperceptible change from stage-darkness to stage-dawn would in all likelihood impress the poor ghost with a very elevated opinion of the trade-side of theatrical progress. The limelight especially would give our friend what nurses call 'a turn.'

With regard to limelight, it may not be generally known that the neighbourhood of Nottingham supplies the greater part of the lime which is used for illuminative displays. After being carefully picked, the lime is turned in a lathe and made into little cylinders, each cylinder having a hole drilled lengthways to admit the holder of the jet apparatus. This cylinder-turning is not a healthy occupation to the workmen engaged in it; they are obliged to wear damp clothes over the mouth and nose, to prevent the inhalation of the lime-dust, such inhalation causing much irritation and well-nigh unbearable thirst. This is not the only danger attendant on limelight. Occasional explosions abundantly testify to the delicate handling which is necessary to the safe use of the prepared material; for, should the gases become mixed in either the tubes or bags, an explosion is the inevitable result. These occasional explosions, fortunately, are not always attended with fatal results, and the fact that they are only occasional speaks volumes for the careful attention of the almost unrecognised limelight-man.

With the systems of ordinary gas-lighting at the various theatres it is almost unnecessary to deal. Ordinary coal-gas is gradually becoming—a thing of the past. Though still used for lighting purposes in the footlights, battens, &c., its function in many theatres is now confined to simple illumination, and does not, in some of the best appointed theatres, extend to scenic effect. Indeed, it is to be hoped that for even illuminating purposes gas will soon be superseded by the electric light. Had electricity been the illuminant at the late Exeter theatre, it is possible that the terrible disaster there would never have

occurred. For scenic effect there is perhaps nothing that can vie with the electric light; and although, by means of coloured glasses, we can get from the limelight bag a gorgeous variety of colour, rivalling the rainbow in beauty, yet, for startling brilliancy, the electric light knows no superior. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the possibilities of electricity in stage-effect was to be seen a year or two ago at the Manchester Theatre Royal. This theatre had four electric machines, each of two hundred and fifteen sixteen-candle-power. During the pantomime, the current which supplied the two-hundred-lamp sunlight in the auditorium was not required in the transformation scene, and the happy idea of diverting the current from the sunlight to the stage was carried out. The result was that two hundred lamps, in groups of five, were brought into use on the transformation, each group forming a halo round the heads of the posing fairies, the principal fairy being a perfect blaze of electricity, and the remainder of the lamps being arranged to form two arches of light over the entire stage. The spectacle could not but have the effect of impressing the onlooker not only with its present magnificence, but with the possibilities of future greater stage-triumphs by means of electricity.

Leaving the more easily recognised stage-employments, let us turn to one or two minor crafts which may not be without interest. We use the word 'minor' as if speaking from the standpoint of the uninitiated spectator. Such trifles, for instance, as stage-jewelry, foil-paper, &c., are comparatively unnoticed amidst the more gorgeous surroundings of a spectacular scene; yet they are not unimportant to those whose business it is to prepare the innumerable details which go to form the eye-pleasing whole. Who in stalls, gallery, or pit would waste a moment's thought on such a trifling item as foil-paper? Yet, but a year or two ago, there was only one man in London—Mr Bosanquet, in the Barbican—who could manufacture foil-paper! And where would all our demon caves be without the glitter of that weird-looking manufacture? Of course, with a limited home manufacture, the demand by far exceeds the supply, and the Continent is consequently laid under contribution. Germany, in fact, is our principal foil-furnisher; and though even Germany cannot equal the quality of home-made foil, it goes without saying that the quantity supplied by Germany is far in excess of the outcome of London. Quality, however, goes for a good deal in foil-paper; and it will probably surprise the reader to know that were a sheet of metal-faced paper worth threepence and a sheet of gold-paper worth four shillings placed before him, he would in all probability be unable to distinguish any difference between them.

Spangles, again, are a seemingly unimportant trifle, yet they occupy a prominent position in the adornment of many stage-costumes. Here, again, our continental neighbours undersell us; for while spangles in England cost something like four shillings per pound, they can be made and sold on the Continent for about three shillings. A spangle in the rough is simply a thin piece of copper wire which is placed on an anvil and struck flat by a boxwood hammer. The little disc which, multiplied by thousands, and stitched on harlequin's dress, gives our mysterious Christ-

mas friend such a glittering appearance, is the result. But poor harlequin, like many actors on the world's stage, has to sacrifice comfort for appearances, as the thousands of spangles which adorn his costume make that costume heavier than an ordinary suit of clothes, and render his seemingly light-limbed movements anything but agreeable exercise to the performer.

Other unconsidered stage trifles may be studied in the manufacture of pearls for costume-pieces. Stage pearls consist of a thin glass globule into which the pearl-maker pours a preparation composed of the scales of dace; and a coating of wax being added, the imitation pearl is ready for use. Other costume ornaments, such as stars, &c., employ a great number of labourers, and require more skill than is generally imagined. Some time ago, we had an opportunity of inspecting the establishment of a stage-jeweller in London, and while there, found a workman engaged on the formation of a 'star.' A piece of pasteboard was cut out to the necessary shape, and was then fastened to a foundation of buckram. On this, a wire was stitched from the centre of the 'star' to the apex of each triangle, the wire being bordered with spangles, which effectually covered the pasteboard foundation. A raised satin centre-piece was then added, and the star was ready for its kingly, princely, or knightly wearer. Friendly Societies and kindred organisations in which stars and other embellishments are worn by members, are good customers to this particular trade, which furnishes 'heaps of pearl, inestimable stones, unvalued jewels' to those whose business or pleasure it is to display such decorations.

To the one subject of the supply of stage-furniture an article might easily be devoted, were it not that such a description would perforce entail a *résumé* of the commonest details of so-called 'cabinet-making.' In these days of realism, 'make-up' furniture has no opportunity. The audience expects, and must have, a real drawing-room or a real kitchen, and will not be satisfied with the imitations which did duty in former days. When it is known that a suite of stage furniture has cost two hundred and fifty pounds; that Miss Genevieve Ward uses little footstools at three pounds apiece; that a fireplace and over-mantel are not thought extraordinarily dear at fifty pounds; a pair of curtains at forty pounds; a small marquetric table at fifteen pounds; a centre carpet at seventy-five pounds, and a candelabrum and clock at forty pounds—it will be seen that the days of imitation furniture are gone. To begin now to tell of the 'property' devices of past days would be but a resuscitation of ancient history; while a description of the stage-furniture of the present day would be an unnecessary catalogue of the contents of any first-class furniture warehouse.

It will be seen, we hope, from the few out of many available facts we have enumerated, that many almost unthought-of adjuncts help to contribute to the enjoyment which most of us find at any well-organised theatre. Without their assistance, theatrical entertainments would lose half their charm; and though the critical amongst us may possibly be able to deduce instruction or entertainment from the acting alone, yet the major portion of the theatre-going public will possibly be open to the conviction that acting

itself, however artistic, would be comparatively unattractive if deprived of the assistance of the stage-trades referred to in this and a former article.

IN DANGER'S WAY: A TALE OF TWO HEROES.

CHAPTER III.—PURSUED.

It was close upon midnight, as Captain Satchell had predicted it would be, before Max Von Rouin sprang ashore at Shingle Point. Having made his boat secure, he walked straight inland along a rough, narrow road leading towards the town. There were few lights visible at this late hour, and of these, one only had an attraction for him. It was a dim light in a cottage that stood in an isolated spot by the roadside. Towards this cottage he eagerly turned his steps. When he reached the door, he hesitated for an instant with the latch half lifted; but in another moment he had stepped into a cosy room—half kitchen, half parlour. A matronly woman, whom he strongly resembled—the same kindly expression and dark eyes—welcomed him with a demonstrative greeting on both cheeks.

'Mother,' said he, sinking down wearily—for the sight of Stephen Walsh's swift yacht gliding out of the harbour at Southsea Bay had almost driven him to despair—'you must not think me unkind; but a matter—something of deep importance—forces me to leave you again in a few hours.'

The mother's face grew troubled. 'My son, it is time enough to talk of parting when the moment comes. Let me fancy for a while, whatever the truth may be, that you've got some days' leave of absence from the captain. For months past, dear Max—and it seems like years—I have been picturing you seated in your poor father's armchair, as I see you now, looking—But what is troubling my boy? He is more restless than ever! Some bad news—Why, can it be possible,' the woman suddenly exclaimed, 'that he has heard about the shipwreck?'

Max Von Rouin changed countenance. 'What shipwreck, mother?'

'Abel Honeywood's brig, the *Cora*.'

The young sailor started to his feet; the eager look came into his eyes. 'Mother, tell me all you've heard.'

'I merely know that news reached Shingle Point this evening—I know nothing more—news that a ship, supposed to be the *Cora*, was breaking up among the rocks off the Channel Islands.'

'What are the bearings? I must know at once the exact spot.'

'Shall I run over to the *Six Bells*? There is sure to be some one there who could tell me. There was a crowd talking about it on the beach this morning; but I didn't mind what they were saying; I could think of nothing but my boy.'

Von Rouin put on his cap and stepped towards the door. 'I will go, mother. I shan't be a minute.'

'But, Max, you must be famished,' urged the mother, 'and your soup has been simmering'—

Before she could finish, Max was gone.

With tears in her eyes—for the woman foresaw that at daybreak her son would leave her—she began to busy herself about his supper. An hour passed, and then Max Von Rouin came in flushed with excitement, his great dark eyes flashing hopefully. There was something grand expressed in the sailor's weather-beaten face; and the mother regarded him with a strange mixture of admiration and anxiety. He swallowed the plate of soup which she placed before him with an absent-minded air; and even when his mother spoke some endearing word, he made no answer. It was evident that his thoughts were far away from this homely cottage.

'It's a spring tide: to-morrow at midnight will be the time. The *Cora* lies wedged in between the rocks. She may go to pieces in the next storm—possibly before.—What time is it, mother?'

'Just gone two.'

'Three hours! I must start at five o'clock. It will be light enough then.'

'So soon? Dear Max, won't you stop one short day with your old mother?'

For a moment her son made no reply; he sat with a dreamy expression on his face. 'I will come back. I will stay with you then, mother, for days.—But first,' he added, with that look of energy returning, 'I must get possession of the diamond. When I have it—when I feel my heart beating hopefully against it, I shall know that she cannot, dare not say nay, when I ask her to be my wife.'

'Of what diamond are you speaking?'

'A most precious one. A diamond, mother, that's on board the *Cora*. It's in the captain's locker. The man must get it who would win *Cora* Norland's heart.' And he told his mother how he had found the scroll. 'And if I lose an hour,' he added, 'Stephen Walsh, who started from Southsea Bay a few hours after me, will be there first. He came into the *Six Bells* just as I was leaving; we looked at each other, but never spoke. He seemed almost to challenge me with his glance, and I let him see that I understood. An hour's talk could scarcely have made our meaning plainer to each other. He is thoroughly in earnest, and so am I.'

There was a moment's silence; then the mother, with her hand upon her son's arm, put the question: 'Do you really love this girl?'

'With all my heart.'

'But Max, my dear boy, what chance have you against a gentleman—a rich man like Mr Walsh?'

'None, I know, unless I find this diamond.'

'Would you risk your life for that?'

'A thousand times! Would not any man who loved as I love *Cora* Norland?'

The mother made no reply. She knew that any attempt to dissuade her son when his resolution was formed would be useless. After a little she said persuasively: 'Take some rest: you will need all your strength. Will you go and lie down in your room? I will wake you at daybreak.'

The young sailor, with no look of fatigue in his eyes, rose from his chair. 'I had almost forgotten,' said he laughingly, 'that there was such a thing as sleep.—How thoughtful you are, mother, of your troublesome son. He hardly

deserves it.' As he spoke, he stepped into an adjoining room—his room when a boy—threw himself down in his rough coat upon the bed, and in a short time he was fast asleep.

During the moments that her son rested, the mother never ceased to watch regretfully for the dawn; and if she could have persuaded herself that it was still night, when the first indications of morning streaked the eastern sky below dark clouds, she would have done so. With a weary sigh she went and awoke her son. There was an altered look on his face—a look almost of awe—when he came into the kitchen and sat down to the cup of coffee which his mother had prepared.

'I've had a strange dream,' said he. 'An angel dressed in white came across the sea with the diamond fixed above her forehead, and it shone like a brilliant star. But as I hurried along the shore towards it, a demon with the wings of a vampire plucked it off and carried it away. I was left in darkness, and the sound of great waves seemed to break upon my ear. I remember nothing more.'

The young sailor's superstitious mind was troubled by this dream; it appeared to forebode misfortune. He could not dismiss the thought from his excited brain that this venturesome expedition in search of the coveted diamond would end in disaster. But he was somewhat cheered, when the sail was unfurled and his boat was cutting through the waves and Shingle Point was growing small in the distance, to see no sign of Stephen Walsh's yacht; and besides—a fact not less encouraging—the wind could scarcely have been more favourable. He was sailing in a southeasterly direction—the direction he had been advised to take—and if the wind continued in the same quarter, the rocky coast for which he was bound might be reached before nightfall.

During the hour's absence from his mother's cottage in search of news at the *Six Bells*, Max Von Rouin had not been idle. Having ascertained the spot where the *Cora* was supposed to be lying—though possibly a complete wreck by this time among the rocks—he had provisioned his boat with a bag of biscuits and a flask of brandy; for although he had spoken as little as possible at the cottage concerning his scheme, he was absolutely resolved not to quit the scene of the wreck while a vestige of it held together—a vestige that might retain the diamond between its planks. He had also secured an oil lamp and some tools which might prove useful.

In the meantime, Stephen Walsh, whose animosity towards Max Von Rouin every moment increased, was scheming deeply. All through the night, up at the *Six Bells*, he paced his room, watching impatiently for a glimpse of morning. And while it was still dark night, and no sound reached him except the monotonous sound of the sea below his windows, he seemed like one haunted by some grim spectre that had gained a strong hold upon him. He sat staring vacantly with his hands pressed to his forehead; he seemed to be giving an attentive ear to evil promptings—promptings that brought a sickly pallor to his cheek and a guilty look to his eyes: 'Why not? It will be low water at midnight.' He was repeating words that seemed whispered to him: 'Why not? The tide will rise, and the waves

will wash out the stain.' And then he started up and peered out towards the horizon for a gleam of light.

The light came; but the look of dark purpose on the face of Stephen Walsh never changed. He stood at the window, watching Von Roûn as he put to sea; and the menacing air was again expressed in his whole attitude, and more markedly than on the previous night when he stopped with a threatening gesture upon the beach at Southsea Bay. He was now fully resolved to follow Von Roûn to the dangerous coast where the *Cora* was reported to be lying among the rocks, and thwart the young sailor in his bold intention to reach the wreck.

Stephen Walsh had cruised in these waters as much as any man, and he knew that the tide would be rising when Von Roûn reached the shore. He made no haste therefore to follow him; and glad he was that there was no need, for he did not wish it to be supposed, if he could avoid it, that he was yachting with any stronger motive than usual—mere pleasure.

'Returning to Southsea Bay, Mr Walsh?' the landlord of the *Six Bells* had asked him.

'Probably,' had been the cautious reply.

Nor did Stephen Walsh seem to have made up his mind when a mile or more off Shingle Point, for his yacht put about, first in one direction and then in another; and until out of sight of the coast he continued to exhibit this masterly indecision. But when once in the open sea, no doubt remained as to the course he intended to take; he crowded all sail, grasped the helm firmly, and steered steadily in a south-easterly direction, with his eyes now fixed upon a white sail that had become dimly visible on the horizon. The wind increased; and as the yacht leaped forward over the rough sea, Stephen Walsh's face again became clouded. His brow contracted; his thin lips were tightly compressed, and his whole manner showed the anger of the man. He seemed to gather rage from the crested, creeping waves around him. The spray that flew up at the prow and struck him frequently in the face, failed to remove the dark frown. His countenance never changed; his eyes never wandered from the white sail that remained seemingly motionless on the horizon against the blue sky.

Some hours passed, and the sun had begun to incline towards the west before the yacht came in sight of land, that rocky coast for which Stephen Walsh was bound—the coast near which it was believed that the *Cora* had sunk and was breaking up among the boulders. As Walsh had surmised, the tide was running in, and no sign of the shipwreck could be discerned. Max Von Roûn, as he could perceive, had already found his moorings in a sheltered creek some distance along the shore; and to all appearance, he was bent upon passing the night there in his boat.

Steering round the coast away from this creek, Walsh presently reached a small inlet or bay which formed a natural harbour. It was a favourite spot of his—one in which he frequently anchored when out on a yachting expedition. Here he dropped anchor. It was only characteristic of the man that he should have provisioned his boat sumptuously. He was accustomed to luxury on the sea as well as on land. He opened a well-stocked hamper, which the landlord of the

Six Bells had sent on board, and ate and drank with an appetite. Then he lit his pipe and stretched himself upon the 'upper deck' above his little cabin, and lay watching the red glow of sunset across the sea with drowsy eyes. It was high tide, and the rocky coast was white with the foam of broken waves. When he had been lying there an hour or more, a sense of fatigue overcame him. He crept into his cabin—for there was no room to stand upright in it—and sank upon the cushions. He was soon fast asleep.

Stephen Walsh awoke suddenly, after a long rest, fancying that some one had whispered in his ear. Was it the spirit of Abel Honywood? This was his first thought; but it made him laugh. The moonlight was looking in upon him through the little porthole on the starboard side; and he glanced eagerly seaward across the uneven coast; but he saw no one; and the only whispering that reached him was the distant sound of the waves breaking along the shore. The tide had gone out, and great boulders glistened in the bright moonlight with briny seaweed. Suddenly the figure of a man appeared, barefooted, moving rapidly from rock to rock and approaching the line of breakers. In an instant Walsh was out of his cabin and sliding down into the water without a sound. It was little more than knee-deep where his yacht was moored, for the tide was now almost at its lowest ebb. He waded silently across the inlet and walked along the beach. At one moment in the full moonlight, a moment after hidden by some huge rock, Stephen Walsh followed the figure stealthily towards the sea.

A CURIOUS NEW INDUSTRY.

It has now passed into a commonplace, that whoever can make two blades of grass grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, deserves well of mankind. Still more has that man a claim upon the regard of his fellows who can point out how, by using up a waste product, a new form of industry can be established.

We have such a new industry to chronicle in the present paper—an industry which is quite unique in more than one way. In the first place, its raw material can be found everywhere in illimitable quantity; while it costs nothing, and will convey itself free of expense to the place where it is dealt with. Can any other industry or manufacture be started on such advantageous terms as these? What would the Manchester merchant think of his cotton obtained and packed in his mills free of cost ready for operation? Why, such a thing would be beyond his wildest dreams. Another curious point in the new industry is, that the raw material, universal as it is—and of great bulk withal—is perfectly invisible. But in case our readers should think that we are propounding some elaborate riddle or charade by which to test their powers of unravelling a tangled skein, let us say at once that this new industry resolves itself into a

method of obtaining pure oxygen from the atmosphere.

In a recent paper ('Oxygen Starvation,' No. 209) we dealt with this gas, and pointed out how important it was to the human family. In the present article we intend to regard it more from a commercial aspect, and to show to how many uses it can be put. Any manual of chemistry will inform us that oxygen is the most widely diffused element in nature. It enters into the composition of air, of water; it is found in nearly all earths and rocks; and forms more than one-half of animal and plant life. In fact it is not too much to say that oxygen forms one-half of the globe and its belongings; but of course it is combined with other elements. Chemists can tell us of a dozen different methods of isolating this gas; but the one most usually adopted is to subject a salt of potash (potassic chlorate), which is extremely rich in oxygen, to heat in a retort, when it quickly parts with that gas, which can be collected in a suitable containing-vessel for use. To show the extent to which this salt is used for the production of oxygen, we may mention that we were lately informed by a London dealer that he sold yearly one hundred tons of potassic chlorate, and that he had reason to believe that it was nearly all used for the production of gas. This quantity of the salt would afford, roughly speaking, nine hundred thousand cubic feet of oxygen, and we must not forget that this is the amount dispensed through one dealer only. The natural question which arises as to what purposes all this gas is applied, we shall deal with presently. We have preferred to show, first, that there is an enormous demand for oxygen, so that the importance of a new industry for producing it may be at once appreciated.

Oxygen forms one-fifth of the air which we breathe, the other four-fifths consisting of an inert gas called nitrogen. And it is important that we should remember that the mixture of these two gases is a strictly mechanical, not a chemical one. What we mean is this. If it were possible by any means to make visible and magnify the particles of air, we should be able to distinguish the atoms of oxygen and of nitrogen side by side, but in the proportion of one to four. It might be compared to a mixture of pepper and salt, which, although it looks gray to the unaided sight, would, under the microscope, show plainly the independent grains of both constituents. (It is curious to note that a *chemical* mixture of the same two gases, in which their atoms combine to form a new compound, produces that useful anæsthetic, nitrous oxide—laughing-gas.) It has long been the dream of chemists that oxygen might be produced direct from the atmosphere by separating its atoms from the atoms of nitrogen with which it is associated but not combined. Indeed, a plan by which this could be accomplished has long been known, but it happens to be one of those numerous methods which in theory are perfect, but which when reduced to practice are found to be encumbered by various difficulties. But as our new industry is founded upon the process referred to, and its success has been assured by a patient conquest of the numerous practical difficulties associated with it, we cannot do better than describe it.

It was long ago demonstrated by Boussingault

that when the substance called baryta, otherwise the oxide of barium, was heated to a low redness it would absorb oxygen from air submitted to it. He further showed that if this compound were then raised to a higher temperature, the oxygen thus absorbed would be given off once more, and the baryta would be restored to its former condition, ready for a repetition of the action. It would thus seem that there was at hand a process for obtaining from the atmosphere an endless supply of its essence, so to speak. But, as we have before hinted, theory and practice are two different things. The process would not work on a commercial scale. All went well at first; but for some reason or other, the baryta lost its power of recovery, and would not repeat its office of absorbing oxygen.

A few years ago, two of M. Boussingault's pupils, Messrs A. and L. Brin, resolved to carry through a series of experiments to find out, if possible, why in this case practice would not endorse theory. They soon found that the reason why the baryta lost its power of absorbing oxygen was due to certain molecular changes, which ceased to occur if the air supplied was absolutely free from impurities, and if the heat employed for reducing the baryta to its first condition were kept within certain limits. They further found that the necessary temperature might be much reduced if the material were heated in a partial vacuum. Another advantage was found in supplying the air under pressure, in which case the absorption of oxygen from it was much increased. These new conditions were speedily realised in apparatus which was erected in Paris, and which for three years yielded oxygen of the purest description, without any renewal of the baryta with which the retorts were charged at the commencement of operations; and this apparatus was exhibited at the Inventions Exhibition at South Kensington two years ago.

The process having been thus shown to be workable, the inevitable Company was formed; and oxygen can now be obtained in any quantity at a cheap rate by any one who requires it. Brin's Oxygen Company has established extensive works at Westminster, where, by a system of retorts and air-pumps, the business of abstracting oxygen from the air is continuously carried on. The gas is carried to a holder, in which it is stored; and is drawn from that holder and compressed in steel cylinders for the use of the Company's customers. These cylinders are so strong, that one having a capacity of little more than a cubic foot of gas will hold forty feet when that gas is compressed within it. These bottles, placed in wooden cases, are now sent over the kingdom by rail and carrier.

Let us now endeavour to point out to what uses this endless supply of oxygen is, and is likely, to be put. We may give the first place to the oxyhydrogen or limelight, which is so extensively used over the country for exhibition purposes—a light so intense and beautiful that it is frequently confounded with that given by the electric arc. It is used largely in all theatres for the purpose of scenic effect, and is the common illuminant for the optical, or, to call it by its old name, the magic-lantern. The use of this lantern for educational purposes is constantly increasing, and few schools of any standing are unfamiliar

with its occasional use. The limelight is produced by a jet of oxygen combined with a jet of hydrogen, rendering white-hot a piece of lime. When some more refractory substance than lime can be discovered, a substance which will resist the intense heat of the combined gases, the limelight will be possible of great extension. Under such circumstances it would speedily come into use for the lighting of public buildings, if not ordinary dwelling-houses. To the worker in metals, a ready supply of oxygen is especially valuable, for the oxyhydrogen blowpipe flame is of such intensity that even platinum will melt in its fervent heat. There are many other processes connected with the arts and sciences where oxygen, readily available, instead of having to be prepared by a tiresome and somewhat dangerous operation, will be welcomed as a great boon; and more especially will this be the case when it is known that the oxygen so obtainable is absolutely pure. In making it from the potash salt already mentioned, the gas was always contaminated with a certain proportion of chlorine, an adulteration difficult to obviate without still further complicating the apparatus used in its production. And this question of purity of the gas produced by the new method leads us naturally to the subject of its application to medicine.

Every worker in a densely populated town or city knows the benefit that is likely to accrue to him if he can only contrive to get a few days' change of air. This change of air means the exchange of a foul atmosphere for one containing the proportion of oxygen which nature has determined as being the best for our respiration. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, the doctrine which many medical men are now advocating which gives oxygen a foremost place as a remedial agent. Is this doctrine anything new? one may naturally ask. Perhaps not; but for the first time the doctor has at hand a ready means of obtaining this antidote to disease. Siphon bottles charged with oxygen—instead of with carbonic acid, as in the case of ordinary aerated waters—are now supplied for the use of patients, and we are told on high authority that sufferers from dyspepsia, gout, rheumatism, &c., benefit greatly by their use. Other sufferers from chest diseases, such as consumption, chronic bronchitis, &c., benefit more, as we might naturally suppose, from the direct inhalation of the gas, diluted with more or less common air.

One more application of this pure oxygen let us refer to. It is well known that many epidemic diseases have been traced to a contaminated milk supply; a danger so generally appreciated by careful people, that it is a common rule in households to boil all the milk received before it is brought to table. It is found that if milk be oxygenated with pure gas, the germs of disease, if present, are at once destroyed, and the richness of the milk is developed and its taste improved. Milk thus treated with oxygen will last fresh for a fortnight or more, for all putrefactive changes are arrested. Brin's Oxygen Company have, with these facts in view, arranged a system by which milk can be charged with oxygen in the country as it is yielded fresh from the cow, and before it passes through the ordeal of a journey to town. The benefits of such a system to invalids and

weakly children cannot be overestimated. In concluding this notice of an interesting and, we venture to say, important new industry, it is impossible not to wish success to the undertaking.

AN OLD SHIP'S LOG.

OF the many troublesome experiences which it falls to the lot of the seaman to encounter, one of the least palatable is that of 'doing quarantine.' Jack, to be sure, loves his leisure just as much as his betters, but he prefers it on shore, and with a modicum of the gaiety and liberty which an enforced spell of idleness under the hated dominion of the yellow flag denies him. Say that his vessel has dropped anchor in the ten-fathom water of some foreign port, and after being boarded by a posse of brass-bound Health Officers, has been condemned to a two weeks' quarantine. What situation could be more tantalising than Jack's, when, day after day, while he is enduring a sweltering idleness on board, which the mate makes desperate attempts to relieve by setting him to scrape and polish and oil the ship's furniture, he sees the loungers lounging on the distant quay; the open door of the *cabaret*, through which there is a constant ebb and flow of customers—those who go in halting a moment on the step to discharge themselves of their quids; those who come out wiping bearded lips on the back of hairy hands. And then, after nightfall, to see the harbour lights shining cheerfully, invitingly, across the intervening tide; to hear the whisper of fiddle-music coming from the shore; and to think of the jollity and the jigs that are going forward, and the glasses and lasses that are going round, in the warmth and light and clatter of the dancing saloon! Cooped up within the narrow limits of his fore-castle, Jack sees and hears and thinks of it all, and it makes him growl and swear a little to himself, like 'a bear with a sore head,' as the saying goes.

Yet he has much to be thankful for, if he could bring himself to be thankful for anything. He might, with all the reason in the world, congratulate himself, for example, on being a modern, instead of—as might easily have been the case, had the clock of his nativity been put back a century or so—an Ancient Mariner. The world has become a better and more comfortable place to live in since Seventeen Hundred odd, and so has the sea. Those of to-day who go down to it in ships take with them all sorts of land-comforts—electricity, steam, ice, potted meats and vegetables, pianos, bar-tenders, and all the rest of the adjuncts of civilisation. To be sure, few of these things ever go before the mast; but the 'shellback' has plenty of other reasons, including aids to comfort and safety, to thank his stars—to wit, the polar ones—that he is what he is to-day, instead of being his own ancestor, in the same walk of life, of a hundred years ago. For one thing, quarantine, irksome as it is, is not the dreaded and even dangerous penance which it formerly was. A fortnight of the yellow flag at the present time is considered a long sentence; in the last century, the conditions of public health being similar, such a confinement was an occurrence of exceptional clemency. In the wretched state of the sanitation, the very first

principles of which were ignored and unknown, the frequency and virulence of plagues were not to be wondered at; it is, indeed, much more a matter for wonder that when one of the great epidemics got a firm hold on any city of the Old World, it ever stayed its hand till every man and beast had perished out of the filthy, narrow, undrained streets and squares.

The ports of the Mediterranean were the cradles of the Plague, as they were the graves of its victims. The more dirt, the more death; and as the North African towns in Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers took the palm for the first, they easily carried it off for the second also. What scenes of cruelty, bloodshed, disease, despair, and, to end all, of death, must the shores and waters of that great inland ocean have witnessed! If you stayed at sea, it was ten chances to a poor precarious one that you fell a prey to a horde of ravening Barbary pirates; if you dodged those water-rats and got ashore, the odds were out of all proportion that you fell a victim to the Black Death, and left your goods and chattels to be squabbled for between the hungry officials of the Algerian Dey and the Great Turk; while your bones were picked clean by the kites and the dogs, for you were only a Feringhi and an Infidel, and not worth the cost of burial. Some conception of the widespread terror of the Plague, which drove men to adopt the most frantic and destructive measures for the prevention of contagion, may be gathered from the log of the sloop *Fawey*, forming the appendix to Dr Dale Ingram's *Historical Account of the Plagues of the World*—printed at the Rose, for R. Baldwin, 1755.

On the 19th of June 1753, this sloop (Isaac Clemens, commander) sailed from the Downs for Algiers. After a prosperous voyage, they sighted Cape Cassan on the 2d of August; but in consequence of light and variable winds, it was not until the 9th that they dropped anchor in 'Algier Mould.' There were conflicting reports as to the presence of the Plague in the port at that time; Captain Clemens, however, seems to have been convinced, and subsequently made an affidavit to the effect, that there was no Plague in the town when he landed. Like the energetic man that he was, the captain lost no time in whipping the cargo out of his vessel; and when that was done, he set his men briskly to work cleaning out the hold, stoning the decks, calking the sides, and generally getting everything ship-shape for taking on board the home-cargo. On August 21, the ballast was unloaded, and the consignment of merchandise for England began to arrive. Some three hundred dried hides and bundles of skins, two hundred casks of sugar, and forty-four bags of canary-seed, were stowed under hatches by the last day of August. Most of the crew were told off on September 4 to go ashore to the merchant's house, where they were employed 'in packing the skins, bagging the canary-seed, and pocketing the flax and wool,' which, though it sounds sufficiently felonious, was quite in order. 'The same day,' adds the skipper in that laboured logbook of his, 'a Turkish ambassador arrived from Tunis in a bilander,' to deliver to the Beglerbeg of Algiers, half-king, half-pirate, the compliments and cautions of his suzerain, the Great Signior at Stamboul, lord-paramount of those seas and lands.

'Sept. 7. Ship'd canary-seed, 6 bags; flax, in bags, 10. This day an English snow and a Danish ship sailed for Europe.' The 'snow' referred to was a vessel built something after the fashion of the brig, of Dutch derivation. From the 10th to the 19th of September they were busy putting under hatches hogsheads of wine, bags of wool, and skins and flax. At noon, they weighed and stood out to sea in their little craft, no doubt with a fine healthy stench on board from that heterogeneous cargo of hides and skins and wine-casks sweltering under a blaze of sunlight. Having only one deck to bless themselves withal, the crew were compelled to sleep and eat on the top of the canary-seed bags and the wool, and it is to be hoped that the rats and the fleas were mercifully disposed to let them alone. So light and shifty were the winds, that it was not before the end of the month, at nine in the morning, that the *Fawey* ran in and anchored in Gibraltar Bay.

'October 1. The product-master came on board, examined the vessel, and ordered a quarantine of six days; next day, weigh'd, and run up further in the bay.—5. The ship had product allow'd her.—6. Water'd the ship.—7. Took in bread, and deliver'd a bale of goods, and at noon weigh'd anchor and sail'd.—21. Spoke at sea with a snow from Dublin, bound to Cadiz.—24. Spoke with the *Prince George*, from St Christopher, bound for London.'

It appears, from the frequent soundings taken, that they skirted along the landward curve of the Bay of Biscay very cautiously and slow. The dreaded Ushant was left bearing south-and-by-east six leagues. On the 4th November, the Start was made west-by-north, and in the afternoon they reached Portland Roadstead. Few or no precautions were taken to isolate the newly arrived vessel; on the contrary, the townsfolk gave her a hearty and open welcome. All the crew and the passengers, glad to escape from their stuffy malodorous quarters and stretch their legs ashore, turned out and landed, all 'except Mr Brown,' a passenger from Algiers, who, for some unexplained and inexplicable reason, preferred to remain behind among the hides and the skins and canary-seed. A liberal man, skipper Clemens sent on board to his steward for some choice Algerian wine, which he kept by him for the emergency of a great occasion, and generously treated several principal merchants of the place with that and with 'almonds and other things.'

After a couple of days of relaxation, fresh meat and hospitality, they took Mr Pilot Slaughter on board, and stood out for Guernsey, which was the destination of the sloop; and here it was that their troubles began. As in duty bound, Captain Clemens went ashore and waited on the governor of the island, with whom, while their business was being despatched and the ship's papers exhibited, he had the honour of drinking a glass of Frontinac. The bill of health proving to be 'clean,' no objection was made to the sloop's coming into the harbour. All seemed to promise a prosperous ending to a prosperous and lucrative voyage, when, by great ill-luck, as the skipper was marching down town after his satisfactory interview with the governor, he was met by some self-important peremptory individual, who stopped him in full career, with that Frontinac under

hatches below his 'longshore vest, and demanded who and whence he was. After an angry stare at this impertinent, the choleric skipper gave him some sort of rough answer, to the effect that he was Captain So-and-so, of the sloop *Fawey*, from Algiers. High words passed between them in the street, no doubt to the unbounded delight of the neighbourhood, which, after the retreat in dudgeon of his interpolator, would hasten to apprise the burly skipper of the alarming fact that the gentleman in black with the periwig and the horn spectacles was no other than His Serene Highness the Attorney-general of Guernsey himself. The quarrel soon bore fruit of a very bitter kind for Clemens. At the instigation of the Attorney-general, a council was summoned, which, after a little biased deliberation, ordered the captain to perform forty days' quarantine in the Great Road. But the malice of his enemy, or the trepidation of the governor at the proximity of a vessel from a Mediterranean port, uninfected though that port was at the time, allowed Clemens no breathing-space, for by nine next morning orders were sent him to get under sail at once or the castle guns would open fire on him.

'It then blowing a hard gale of wind, sent ashore to the governor begging we might lie till the weather abated; which was refused. At eleven unmoor'd, though we had three anchors down.—9. Blew hard from E.S.E. with strong gale; ship'd several large seas, though under double-reefed mainsail and jib; at seven, took third reef in of mainsail.—12. At four in afternoon anchor'd in Portland Road in six fathom. At six, the Customs boat came on board and ordered us to proceed to the Muther Bank to perform our quarantine.' From some cause or other, the occasion for which is not forthcoming in the log, the authorities appear to have become thoroughly scared about the condition of that sloop. Almost eight weeks had elapsed since her departure from Algiers, and yet no sign of sickness had visited any of the crew or passengers, nor was there any shadow of justification for the inveteracy of the authorities in condemning an apparently uninfected vessel to sixteen weeks' quarantine, and, at the expiration of that weary time, in putting the finishing touch to their proceedings by sinking the sloop with all her cargo on board.

The journal of their imprisonment on the *Fawey* at the Muther Bank is one long record of the alternate receipt on board of coals, beer, and fresh beef. 'Feb. 1. A man-of-war's boat called alongside to know from whence we came, with an intent to press the men.' Then followed more beer, coals, and beef. By the middle of that month it had been resolved on to scuttle and sink the long-suffering little craft, for which purpose the smith paid them a visit, bringing bars to secure the hatches with. Boatloads of iron ballast, more beer and more coals, followed in due course. The sloop was to be conveyed to her burial-place in the Channel by the *Arundel* man-of-war, and a brig, 'appointed by the government to receive us after our sloop should be sunk.' The three of them weighed anchor on March 6, and stood out to sea. On the next day but one, in forty-three fathoms of water, the deed was done. The topsail-yards were handed down, and more ballast was piled into her hull.

'At eight, the commodore sent orders to hoist our colours as soon as we were ready for sinking. At nine hoisted our colours at the topping-lift; the commodore came alongside, and order'd us to let go our anchors. We let go our best bower, and weered it out to the bitter end; and after that our small bower.'

That must have been a sad sight out there at sea on that cheerless wintry day—the doomed little craft with its two consorts swinging their masts under a northerly wind and a falling rain. When all was ready, the gallant captain put his wife into one of the brig's boats, and his crew swarmed after, all of them in temporary gowns made of 'ozenbrigs,' with 'neither shift, petticoat, nor cap among them;' for their own clothes they had left on board the sloop, according to orders, as likely to be tainted. Of these 'ozenbrig' garments they were relieved as soon as they reached the deck of the brig, and other more seasonable clothes were given to them. But it was a bitter experience for them, sitting shivering under the wintry rain in the little open cockboat, watching the sloop gradually fill and settle in the water; and the wonder of it is that Mrs Clemens and Sarah, her maid, suffered no ill effects from that long exposure in their inadequate ozenbrig gowns. The *Fawey*, with her hatches battened down and both anchors out, was scuttled fore and aft in several places, and, as the water poured into her, she went down slowly at first, settling by the stern, until her decks were almost flush with the waves, when she popped out of sight in a moment, with kit and cargo, and left nothing behind her but a whirling maelstrom of bubbles where she had gone down, 'which was at one quarter past ten in the morning.'

Even then, the penance of that ill-starred crew was not at an end, for they were quarantined in the brig on the Muther Bank for a further period of sixteen days before they were permitted to go about their business. It would seem that in those good old Plague-days the mariner who was merely suspected of having the distemper on board his ship was treated with the scant courtesy of a felon convicted of a crime, isolated from his fellows, boxed up in quarantine for eighteen weeks, and, to cap all, the authorities, reckless in their cowardly fright, scuttle the vessel under him with all his goods on board, and turn him adrift to find another berth for himself where he may.

MARCH WINDS.

THE equinoctial gales that usually herald the stormy month of March with lion-like fierceness are, as a rule, of the greatest use to the agriculturist. The old and trite adage, so well known, 'A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom,' has more reason in it than is at first supposed. Solomon says, 'The king himself is served by the field;' from which it is fair to infer that the king's ransom, be it ever so costly, is a trifle compared to the state in which the fields are left by the weather at the end of March. 'A dry March never begs its bread,' and 'March grass never does good,' are the antithesis of each other; but show that when, from some natural cause, early

March is mild and showery, there must follow dry nipping winds later on in the season, that chill the growth of the tender young fibres, and prevent the roots sprouting again with their first vigour. Therefore, the wild blustering winds, and sharp driving storms of rain and sleet, in the beginning of the month are welcome in many ways, and warrant the saying that when 'March comes in like a lion it goes out like a lamb.'

People living in large towns can form little idea of the roarings of a March wind, though they often experience its destructiveness in the falling of old walls and stone projections, whirling chimney-pots and broken windows; but it is when one stands at the wood-side or on the precincts of a pine-forest, in the gray duskiess of a March twilight, that the sullen roar of the rushing wind through the leafless trees can be fully heard, understood, and perfectly realised. William Cullen Bryant has a good descriptive poem on the subject, beginning :

The stormy March has come at last,
With wind, and cloud, and changing skies;
I hear the rushing of the blast,
That through the snowy valley flies.

The wildness of March storms, hissing and seething along the earth and hedgerows, and amongst the rustling dead reeds in the water-courses, has something weird in its fierceness; and when great blasts shake the noble timber-trees to their roots, often laying them prostrate with tremendous crashes, and we stand alone in the gathering darkness, the young moon fitfully shining with watery light between the clouds, and on the wet stems and trunks of the trees, the rushing blasts driving through the vault of heaven, it is not a mere figure of speech to say that 'March roars like a lion,' for a hundred lions could not awake amongst the forest trees such voiceful roarings and plaintive moanings as the equinoctial gales of a stormy March.

Occasionally, these storms are alternated by clear days of calm sunshine, which make thoughtful minds wonder where the winds and clouds are gone which a few hours previous were whirling all before them—gone, as if they never existed. In the calm of the surrounding things, one is tempted to walk abroad and enjoy the returning genial rays of the sun, and look out for the young buds on trees and hedgerows, and listen to the faint, half-developed song of the early pairing birds, and the baby-cries of the young lambs from the home-meadows. We wander down into the coppice and note the advent of the gray and greenish-yellow tassels of the catkins on osier or willow, that are dancing merrily in the gentle south-west wind, as it sweeps through the boughs of birch and hazel, that have still their soft sheaths of shining brown, enfolding the young budding leaves. Not for long will they be required, if this spring-like weather continues; indeed, where the sun has shone more warmly in sheltered corners, many of them have already fallen, leaving a flower-like tuft of downy pinkish

green in their places. The chestnut buds have been ready to open their gummy outer coverings for some days, and are this morning folded back, showing the gem-like cones of vivid colour in their woolly cradles.

We hear from amongst the light vaporous clouds floating over the tender blue sky the 'clear keen joyance' of the skylark; and the primrose-hued rays of the morning sunshine light up the bright green and crimson buds along the hedges, gleaming on the fragile blossoms of the blackthorn, that are the sport of every passing breeze. The brown fronds of the ferns have begun to swell and take a look of life upon them; and just 'under the brown of last year's leaves' is nestling a bunch of violets of deepest purple, filling the air with the ravishing sweetness of their delicious perfume. The aconite is in full bloom, set in its beds of dark-green leaves, like drops of molten gold. All the countless varieties of grass and herbage are stirred into life by the warm sunshine, and take beauty from the gentle pattering showers that descend suddenly from the vapoury clouds overhead. The drowsy bees begin to leave the hives and take short flights in the air and bustle about, as if trying their wings after their long hibernation. Bright gold and green and purple beetles are sunning themselves on the old walls and bark of trees, amongst the brown-green mosses; the groundsel and chickweed just swelling into succulent morsels, for the swarms of birds that are flitting hither and thither in their search after building materials. The blue-tit has nearly finished her dainty feathery nest in the forked branches of a tree amongst the clinging ivy; and the vernal notes are audible for a considerable distance. The ringdoves are once more cooing in the thick plantations; and the rooks are holding high parliament in the tops of the elms, swaying about on the lofty boughs with hilarious greetings to each other—some busied in repairing their nests, others taking wide sweeping flights over and round their 'happy hunting-grounds,' and cawing wisely upon the probable number and excellence of the meals to be found thereon.

The wild arum and whitlow-grass can already be found in the damp patches of moss in secluded ditches; and here and there the golden daffodils are blossoming in rich profusion—

And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Very soon the budding indications of March vitality will open their valves to the balmy rain, and softer, brighter sunshine of an April day; and will expand their embryo leaves of golden green to the songs of the many-voiced choristers that are making the gardens ring with music, and the woods and plantations re-echo their exquisite melody. The prismatic bow of promise will span the horizon, and make the saddened 'heart leap up' when the eyes 'behold a rainbow in the sky.'

While we pursue our homeward way with pleasant musings through the coppice and lanes, our watchful ears catch a different tone in the western breeze, and lo! a soft, subdued, surging sound rises in the welkin afar off, giving a monition in its sighing whisper of a rough whirlwind of storm coming upon us, that has been sleeping amongst the distant hills, and is now

fast hasting, gathering, as it rushes through the valleys, all the local eddies and currents to blend with its greater volume, till it breaks through the coppice in a blustering whirlwind.

FOUL AIR IN WELLS.

We are constantly reading of lives lost through men incautiously descending wells, pits, and underground passages without previously taking the trouble to ascertain whether the air in them be fit to support life or not. Any air that will not support combustion is unfit for respiration; no animal or human being can live in it. It is this kind of air, or more strictly gas, which, escaping through the cracks and crannies in the sides of disused wells, or proceeding from the decay of organic matter, accumulates at their bottom a ponderous, suffocating mass, known as carbonic acid gas, and called by miners choke-damp.

The practice of letting down a *naked* lighted candle to test the purity or otherwise of the air below is pregnant with danger, since the gas may be of an inflammable nature. The candle should in all cases be securely caged in fine wire-gauze, on the principle of the Davy safety lamp. If it continue to burn, the air is wholesome; if it be extinguished, it is not. Some years ago, a gang of workmen were employed in cleaning a large vault in Arlington Street, and discovering a spring of water, one of them put down a lighted candle to take a fuller view of it, when the foul air took fire, and was with difficulty extinguished. In August 1770, a dreadful accident happened at Sir James Lowther's colliery at Seaton. Some foul air was suspected to be in the pit; and the men, not being permitted to go down, let down a candle in an ordinary lantern, which set fire to the air, which exploded with such a violent report as to be heard at Cockermouth, six miles distant. Three men were killed on the spot and many others seriously injured. (This was due to the presence of carburetted hydrogen—that is, firedamp—and is only given as an example of the necessity of taking every precaution.)

The various means of clearing out the impure air are very simple. One plan—though we do not recommend it—is to let down an iron pot containing a few ounces of gunpowder, and then to toss a shovelful of live coals after it, some of which are sure to fall into the pot, and the consequent explosion will effectually dispel the noxious vapours. Another and a better method, common among professional well-sinkers, is to lower buckets containing fresh-slaked lime before they attempt to descend, because, if carbonic acid be present, the lime will absorb it, to form carbonate of lime. The drawback to this is, that the combination of bodies always takes place in certain fixed and definite proportions, so that a certain quantity of lime will absorb only a certain quantity of gas, and we cannot tell when all the carbonic acid has been absorbed.

A more satisfactory way is to pump it out, for, being more than half as heavy again as the atmosphere, it will, though invisible, flow through it like water. Its presence can, however, be detected by its pungent odour. But the best plan is to drive it out by pure air. Procure a pair of smith's bellows and a leathern tube, such as the hose of a fire-engine: fix one end of the tube closely to the

nose of the bellows, and throw the other into the well, so as to reach within a foot of the bottom. Half an hour's blowing will cleanse the foulest pit; and where, before, a lighted candle would have been extinguished at a short distance from the top, it will now burn brightly at the bottom of the well. But we must bear in mind that, should the flame become at all dim, it will be unsafe to descend, for experience has shown that combustion may continue for some time in an atmosphere dangerously charged with carbonic acid, and that air containing only one-twelfth of its volume of this deadly gas causes suffocation.

TO SPRING.

A SICK GIRL'S INVOCATION.

COME forth, most beauteous Maid,
Nor let me yearn in vain;
I am so young to droop and fade,
Oh, lead me from this bed of pain.
Bear me to sunny bowers
Where happy song-birds sing;
Crown me with fresh young leaves and flowers,
And I will bless thee, lovely Spring.

A form of beauty, stand
Beside my little bed;
Hang round my neck with thy fair hand
A chain of daisies, white and red.
From these poor fevered lips,
The bitter draught, oh, fling!
I'll drink the dew the wild-rose sips,
From thy bright goblet, generous Spring.

For that blest draught, I know,
Hath caught its changeable hue
From hawthorn buds that sweetly blow,
Fair cowslip bells, and violets blue.
It thrills poor drooping hearts,
And bids slow pulses sing;
To fainting souls new life imparts.
Come, let me drink, thou balmy Spring.

When merry sunbeams play
Upon these cheerless walls,
I hear in valleys far away
The tinkling of the waterfalls.
I hear once more the lark,
And see his fluttering wing;
Then search all vainly in the dark
For thy dear blossoms, bounteous Spring.

Though wagons, all day long,
Go rumbling down the street,
I hear the distant river's song,
I hear the merry lambskins bleat.
A happy child once more,
In leafy boughs I swing.
Ah, life is sweet, and pain is o'er;
Thy breath doth heal me, heavenly Spring.

FANNY FORRESTER.

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THE CHILDREN'S WARD.

STANDING back a little from the noisy street, and rising in grand silence, is a large gloomy building studded with regular rows of long windows. It scarcely needs the inscription—'East-end Hospital; Supported by Voluntary Subscriptions'—running along the front in large letters, to tell us we are standing before one of those tremendous monuments of human suffering, the contemplation of which must cause the hardest heart to ache. There, where the strife and noise of the world are shut out, and the stillness of pain reigns paramount, the grim struggle against death and disease is always carried on. Day and night, though there is never noise, there is ever movement throughout that great building; and when all the surrounding houses are dark and the traffic hushed, lights still shine from those numerous windows, and the unceasing care of the sick and suffering continues without arrest.

Though the hospital displays a large frontage to the busy street, its full extent is not at once visible to the eye. There are four wings stretching back from the main building, which have been added at different times; and beyond these, again, are various houses appropriated to the use of the matron, chaplain, nurses, and others. The space enclosed by these edifices forms a small sheltered garden, where the patients approaching convalescence can sit and sun themselves; where the students can get a game of tennis, or the nurses stroll beneath the shade of a few sooty limes. The size of the wings just permits of two long parallel wards, connected by open arches, on each floor; and the two wards on the ground-floor of the western wing are those set aside for the treatment of children. They are the brightest wards in all the hospital: there are more pictures on the walls, more plants in the windows, and gayer quilts on the beds, than in any other part of the building. Fifty little cribs are ranged in rows down the walls, and in nearly every crib a small child, clad in a scarlet jacket, is sitting or lying. Here and there between the

tables which occupy the centre of the ward are swinging cradles with red curtains; also a doll's house, a rocking-horse, and reclining or wheel-couches break the monotonous line of beds. Altogether, the effect is one of brightness, light, and space: the long perspective of tidy cribs, the nurses in white caps and aprons, and the spotlessness of tables, lockers, and all other articles, appear almost miraculous in contrast with the smuttiness and dirt which pervade most private houses and offices in London.

Though all the small patients are suffering from some injury, the sound of moans or sobs is seldom heard; rather there is a gentle noise of laughter and childish chatter, and the patter of small feet on the boarded floor. Coming into these cool airy wards out of the endless rush and noise of city streets, there is a sense of peace and rest; and one immediately divines that it may be a good thing for many a child to be forced to abide for a while in this atmosphere of cleanliness and order. From hunger and want and dirty overcrowded homes, these little ones, when their misery culminated in some accident or illness, have found their way to this pleasant place, where there is always plenty to eat and lots of light and fresh air; where toys are plentiful, and boxes play music, and a gentle, skilful nurse pays attention to all those small wants, which, too probably, were utterly neglected by a drunken or an overworked mother. We hear so much about 'maternal instinct' and a 'mother's care,' that we are apt to overlook the well-established fact that in the outside community one child in every five dies from improper feeding or carelessness. There is no limit to the indiscretions of an East-end mother; she regards beef-steak and gin as suitable nourishment for a year-old baby; or will shut a child of two up in a room where there is a large fire blazing and no guard. What wonder that one of the 'Sister's' hardest duties is to return the child her constant skilled care has saved, back to the parents whose heedlessness had wrought the ill; for no woman can tend a child through-

out a long period of pain without learning to love the little morsel who turns so naturally to her for comfort and relief. To see a small child, when the surgeons have gone, nestle down in a nurse's arms and smile contentedly with the tears yet wet on its cheeks, makes it evident that though the nursing of children is the most trying work demanded of a woman, yet the reward is proportionately great.

It is a pity that so many of us, as we grow older, forget the trials and troubles of our childhood, and from the standpoint of a developed reason and strengthened body, look with contempt upon the petty sorrows of babes. The grown man may well bear pain with patience if he knows that it is a necessity, and that cure will come with time; but a child lives only in the present, and has no philosophical reasons for sustaining afflictions with calmness: it only knows that it is miserable, that it is hurt in some way; and is not in the least relieved by being told that it is all for its good, and that it will be better presently. This is not the way the intelligent nurses in the ward deal with a suffering child: they pick it up, give it the sympathy it craves, and then stopping before the doll's house or the window, point out some object of interest, and divert the small mind from its grief. It is really wonderful to see how these women, who have lived much amongst ailing children, learn to interpret the appealing look or hasty flush aright. Some of us can perhaps discriminate when a child is crying from passion or pain, but a nurse trains her sense of hearing till she knows whether the pain is an ache or a smart, whether the child is hungry or is tired. The language of a cry is plain to her discerning ears, and when read in connection with the expression of the face and the posture of the body, always leads to a correct conclusion.

Looking down the pleasant ward, where so many cheerful faces can be seen, it is hard to realise that into each of these little lives the tragical element has already entered—that all these children have received a baptism of suffering. A boy of three in a tent-bed by the fireplace had tried to drink out of a boiling kettle standing on the hob, with the result that the mouth and throat had been so scalded with the steam that he was brought to the hospital black in the face and nearly dead of suffocation. The operation of tracheotomy had been immediately performed—that is, a slit had been made in the windpipe close to the 'Adam's apple,' and in this a silver tube was inserted, through which the boy was breathing, the top of the throat being so swollen that it was completely closed. The boy was doing well. In a few days, when the scald was better, the tube would be removed; the slit would heal rapidly, and the child be shortly discharged quite cured. This is a common accident, and a week seldom goes by without bringing a case of this kind to the children's ward.

One small patient was completely unconscious, very pale, but breathing quietly. He had fallen from a running express train, and his friends, when they saw the door suddenly fly open and the child precipitated from their view, never hoped to see him alive again. Before the train could be stopped, they were miles from the scene of the accident; but the guard promised to send

help from the next station. At first, the boy was thought to be dead; then, when it was found he was still breathing, his recovery was despaired of; yet he had lived several days, and there was now hope. It was strange that the child had received no special injuries, being merely bruised and stunned by the shock.

A baby in one of the red-curtained cradles was a pitiful sight. Though three months old, it only weighed six pounds, and its face was wrinkled like that of an old monkey. From its birth, this poor piece of humanity had suffered for the sins of its fathers, and it made the heart swell with indignation to hear the weary wail which constantly broke from its lips.

Infants a few days old are not uncommonly received as patients, and of course they call for a great amount of attention. Forty ailing girls and boys all under seven, and four or five sick babies whose age can be reckoned by weeks, is a family that any woman might dread to have charge of. No wonder the Sister of the children's ward has weary lines around her mouth, though you scarcely notice them because of the sweet smile which dwells there. First, one baby has to be picked up and comforted; then a batch have to be packed in the wheel-couch and sent out into the garden; then a boy of five, whose head represents a model of bandaging, has to be given the promised treat of bread-and-butter and sugar in Sister's room, because he rocked the cradle till the 'white baby' fell asleep. This is the highest honour and reward a small patient looks for—to be allowed to sit in Sister's room for a while. There is a small cushioned chair in the corner by the fireplace, specially devoted to good girls and boys; in the cupboard are some toys; and often a piece of plain cake appears from the same shelf. The small room, full of pictures and flowers and a hundred dainty nicknacks, is such a cosy contrast to the long bare ward, that the children delight to be allowed to enter its sacred precincts. It never occurs to their small minds to regard that room as a woman's chosen home; yet there, in that corner cut off the ward, the Sister lives and sleeps from year's end to year's end, ever in the midst of her suffering charges, and within hearing of the work going on around. There is a pane of glass in the door; and if in the night there is the tramp of the surgeon's feet, or an unusual amount of crying, the Sister slips from the small bed and looks to see if she is wanted.

Amusing as well as painful sights can be seen from that door; for instance, there is a young student who has put the wrong side of the strapping plaster to the hot-water tin, with the result that it has firmly adhered to the vessel. As he drags it off, he looks sheepishly around, and is evidently pleased there is no nurse near—knowing nothing of the merry eyes watching him from the curtained door. But the spotless tin is smeared, and will tell tales; the hapless student is seized with a wild idea, and tries to clean it with a piece of cotton-wool. The fluff adheres to the sticky tin, making matters worse, and the desperate student beats a hasty retreat, while the Sister sinks back in peals of laughter.

It is pleasant to see how the students become boyish and gentle on entering the children's ward, and drop the airs they are apt to affect in other parts of the building. Their little patients become

very fond of their 'doctors' sometimes; and the powerful young fellows can so easily lift the tiny mites, and move them into more comfortable positions. At Christmas-time, when there is a tree in the ward, and all the cribs have to be turned in one direction, the students use their strong arms with a will; and also stride about from ward to ward, finding out all the children that have for some reason been lodged amongst the adults, and carry them off to be present at the treat. One winter afternoon a tall student came into the ward bearing, perched on his shoulder, a small girl with a pathetic face.

'Sister, Bessie's mother has brought her to the receiving-room, and says she has cried ever since she was discharged yesterday.'

'What is the meaning of that, Bessie?' asks Sister in those severe tones which never seem to awe the children. 'If I let you stay here to tea, will you go home to bed like a good child?'

'Yeth, Thithter,' lisps the pale little thing.

'Then, if you like to put her down in front of the fire for an hour or two, Mr Smith, you may; only, you must come and carry her home before six.'

'Very well. Only I wonder what you will ask me to do next?'

Sister and student laugh, and go their own ways, while Bessie lies quiet and contented before the blazing fire.

The rules and regulations are not nearly so strict in this ward as the others; and both house-governor and matron will be conveniently blind to small deviations where the children are concerned. Indeed, it would be a strange thing if all the sympathy and loving-kindness which sickness always calls forth were not doubled in the case of these small sufferers, on whose tiny shoulders such grievous burdens have been bound. The children's ward always has been, and always should be, the recipient of all the spare love and charity of those who, rather than gold or honour, would 'win one little child's caress.'

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XIV.—LIVE OR DIE?

AND all this time, what had become of Elsie and the men in the *Mud-Turtle*?

Hugh Massinger, for his part, took it for granted, from the moment he came to himself again on the bank of the salt marshes, that Elsie's body was lying unseen full fathoms five beneath the German Ocean, and that no tangible evidence of his crime and his deceit would ever be forthcoming to prove the naked truth in all its native ugliness against him. From time to time, to be sure, one disquieting thought for a moment occurred to his uneasy mind: a back-current might perhaps cast up the corpse upon the long dike where he had himself been stranded, or the breakers on the bar might fling it ashore upon the great sands that stretched for miles on either side of the river-mouth at Whitestrand. But to these terrible imaginings of the night-watches, the more judicial functions of his waking brain refused their assent on closer consideration. He himself had floated through that seething turmoil simply because he knew how to float. A woman, caught wildly by

the careering current in its headlong course, would naturally give a few mad struggles for life, gasping and gulping and flinging up her hands, as those untaught to swim invariably do; but when once the stream had carried her under, she would never rise again from so profound and measureless a depth of water. He did not in any way doubt that the body had been swept away seaward with irresistible might by the first force of the outward flow, and that it now lay huddled at the bottom of the German Ocean in some deep pool, whence dredge or diver could never by human means recover it.

How differently would he have thought and acted all along had he only known that Warren Relf and his companion on the *Mud-Turtle* had found Elsie's body floating on the surface, a limp burden, not half an hour after its first immersion.

That damning fact rendered all his bold precautions and daring plans for the future worse than useless. As things really stood, he was plotting and scheming for his own condemnation. Through the mere accident that Elsie's body had been recovered, he was heaping up suspicious circumstantial evidence against himself by the forged letter, by the night escapade, by the wild design of entering Elsie's bedroom at the Hall, by the mad idea of concealing at his own lodgings her purloined clothes and jewelry and belongings. If ever an inquiry should come to be raised into the way that Elsie met her death, the very cunning with which Hugh had fabricated a false scent would recoil in the end most sternly against himself. The spoor that he scattered would come home to track him. Could any one believe that an innocent man would so carefully surround himself with an enveloping atmosphere of suspicious circumstances out of pure wantonness?

And yet, technically speaking, Hugh was in reality quite innocent. Murderer as he felt himself, he had done no murder. Morally guilty though he might be of the causes which led to Elsie's death, there was nothing of legal or formal crime to object against him in any court of so-called justice. Every man has a right to marry whom he will; and if a young woman with whom he has cautiously and scrupulously avoided contracting any definite engagement, chooses to consider herself aggrieved by his conduct, and to go incontinently, whether by accident or design, and drown herself in chagrin and despair and misery, why, that is clearly no fault of his, however much she may regard herself as injured by him. The law has nothing to do with sentiment. Judges quote no precedent from Shelley or Tennyson. If Hugh had told the whole truth, he would at least have been free from legal blame. By his extraordinary precautions against possible doubts, he had only succeeded in making himself seem guilty in the eyes even of the unromantic lawyers.

When Warren Relf drew Elsie Challoner, a huddled mass, on board the *Mud-Turtle*, the surf was rolling so high on the bar, that with one accord he and Potts decided together it would be impossible for them, against such a sea, to run up the tidal mouth to Whitestrand. Their piteous little dot of a craft could never face it. Wind had veered to the south-east. The only

way possible now was to head her round again, and make before the shifting breeze for Lowestoft, the nearest northward harbour of refuge.

It was an awful moment. The sea roared onward through the black night; the cross-drift whirled and wreathed and eddied; the blinding foam lashed itself in volleys through the dusk and gloom against their quivering broadside. And those two men, nothing daunted, drove the *Mud-Turtle* once more across the flank of the wind, and fronted her bows in a direct line for the port of Lowestoft, in spite of wind and sea and tempest.

But how were they to manage meanwhile, in that tossing cockleshell of a boat, about the lady they had scarcely rescued? That Elsie was drowned, Warren Relf didn't for a moment doubt; still, in every case of apparent drowning, it is a duty to make sure life is really extinct before one gives up all hope; and that duty was a difficult one indeed to perform on board a tiny yawl, pitching and rolling before a violent gale, and manned against the manifold dangers of the sea by exactly two amateur sailors. But there was no help for it. The ship must drift with one mariner only. Potts did his best for the moment to navigate the dancing little yawl alone, now that they let her scud before the full force of the favouring wind under little canvas; while Warren Relf, staggering and steadying himself in the cabin below, rolled the body round in rugs and blankets, and tried his utmost to pour a few drops of brandy down the pale lips of the beautiful girl who lay listless and apparently lifeless before him.

It was to him indeed a terrible task; for from the first moment when the painter set eyes on Elsie Challoner, he had felt some nameless charm about her face and manner, some tender cadence in her musical voice, that affected him as no other face and no other voice had ever affected him or could ever affect him. He was not exactly in love with Elsie—love with him was a plant of slower growth—but he was fascinated, impressed, interested, charmed by her. And to sit there alone in that tossing cabin, with Elsie cold and stiff on the berth before him, was to him more utterly painful and unmanly than he could ever have imagined a week or two earlier.

He did not doubt one instant the true story of the case. He felt instinctively in his heart that Hugh Massinger had shown her his inmost nature, and that this was the final and horrible result of Hugh's airy easy protestations.

As he sat there, watching by the light of the one oil lamp, and rubbing her hands and arms gently with his rough hard palms, he saw a sudden tumultuous movement of Elsie's bosom, a sort of gasp that convulsed her lungs—a deep inspiration, with a gurgling noise; and then, like a flash, it was borne in upon him suddenly that all was not over—that Elsie might yet be saved—that she was still living.

It was a terrible hour, a terrible position. If only they had had one more hand on board, one more person to help him with the task of recovering her! But how could he ever hope to revive that fainting girl, alone and unaided, while the ship drifted on, single-handed, tossing and plunging before that stiffening breeze? He almost despaired of being able to effect anything. Yet life is life,

and he would nerve himself up for it. He would try his best, and thank Heaven this boisterous wind that roared through the rigging would carry them quick and safe to Lowestoft.

His mother and sister were still there. If once he could get Miss Challoner safe to land, they might even now hope to recover her. Where there's life, there's hope. But what hope in the dimly lighted cabin of a toy yawl, just fit for two hardy weather-beaten men to rough it hardly in, and pitching with wild plunges before as fierce a gale as ever ploughed the yeasty surface of the German Ocean?

He rushed to the companion-ladder as well as he was able, steadying himself on his sea-legs by the rail as he went, and shouted aloud in breathless excitement: 'Potts, she's alive! she's not drowned! Can you manage the ship anyhow still, while I try my best to bring her round again?'

Potts answered back with a cheery: 'All right. There's nothing much to do but to let her run. She's out of our hands, for good or evil. The admiral of the fleet could do no more for her. If we're swamped, we're swamped; and if we're not, we're running clear for Lowestoft harbour. Give her sea-room enough, and she'll go anywhere. The storm don't live that'll founder the *Mud-Turtle*. I'll land you or drown you, but anyhow I'll manage her.'

With that manful assurance satisfying his soul, Warren Relf turned back, his heart on fire, to the narrow cabin and flung himself once more on his knees before Elsie.

A more terrible night was seldom remembered by the oldest sailors on the North Sea. Smacks were wrecked and colliers foundered, and a British gunboat, manned by the usual complement of scientific officers, dashed herself full tilt in mad fury against the very base of a first-class lighthouse; but the taut little *Mud-Turtle*, true to her reputation as the staunchest craft that sailed the British channels, rode it bravely out, and battled her way triumphantly, about one in the morning, through the big waves that rolled up the mouth of Lowestoft harbour. Potts had navigated her single-handed amid storm and breakers, and Warren Relf, in the cabin below, had almost succeeded in making Elsie Challoner open her eyes again.

But as soon as the excitement of that wild race for life was fairly over, and the *Mud-Turtle* lay in calm water once more, with perfect safety, the embarrassing nature of the situation, from the conventional point of view, burst suddenly for the first time upon Warren Relf's astonished vision; and he began to reflect that for two young men to arrive in port about the small-hours of the morning, with a young lady very imperfectly known to either of them, lying in a dead faint on their cabin bunk, was, to say the least of it, a fact open to social and even to judicial misconstruction. It's all very well to say offhand, you picked the lady up in the German Ocean; but Society is apt to move the previous question, how did she get there? Still, something must be done with the uncovenanted passenger. There was nothing for it, Warren Relf felt, even at that late season of the night, but to carry the half-inanimate patient up to his mother's lodgings, and to send for a doctor to

bring her round at the earliest possible opportunity.

When Elsie was aware of herself once more, it was broad daylight; and she lay on a bed in a strange room, dimly conscious that two women whom she did not know were bending tenderly and lovingly over her. The elder, seen through a haze of half-closed eyelashes, was a sweet old lady with snow-white hair, and a gentle motherly expression in her soft gray eyes: one of the few women who know how to age graciously—

Whose fair old faces grow more fair
As Point and Flanders yellow.

The younger was a girl about Elsie's own time of life, who looked as sisterly as the other looked motherly; a pleasant-faced girl, not exactly pretty, but with a clear brown skin, a cheek like the sunny side of peaches, and a smile that showed a faultless row of teeth within, besides lighting up and irradiating the whole countenance with a charming sense of kindness and girlish innocence. In a single word it was a winning face. Elsie lay with her eyes half open, looking up at the face through her crossed eyelashes, for many minutes, not realising in any way her present position, but conscious only, in a dimly pleased and dreamy fashion, that the face seemed to soothe and comfort and console her.

Soothe and comfort and console her for what? She hardly knew. Some deep-seated pain in her inner nature—some hurt she had had in her tenderest feelings—a horrible aching blank and void.—She remembered now that something unspeakable and incredible had happened.—The sun had grown suddenly dark in heaven.—She had been sitting by the waterside with dear Hugh— As she thought of the name, that idolised name, a smile played for a moment faintly round the corners of her mouth; and the older lady, still seen half unconsciously through the chink in the eyelids, whispered in an audible tone to the younger and nearer one: 'She's coming round, Edie. She's waking now. I hope, poor dear, she won't be dreadfully frightened, when she sees only two strangers by the bed beside her.'

'Frightened at you, mother,' the other voice answered, soft and low, as in a pleasant dream. 'Why, nobody on earth could ever be anything but delighted to wake up anywhere and find you, with your dear sweet old face, sitting by their bedside.'

Elsie, still peering with half her pupils only through the closed lids, smiled to herself once more at the gentle murmur of those pleasant voices, both of them tender and womanly and musical, and went on to herself placidly with her own imaginings.

—Sitting by the waterside with her dear Hugh—dear, dear Hugh—that prince of men. How handsome he was; and how clever, and how generous! And Hugh had begun to tell her something. Eh! but something! What was it? What was it? She couldn't remember; she only knew it was something terrible, something disastrous, something unutterable, something killing. And then she rushed away from him, mad with terror, towards the big tree, and—

Ah!

It was an awful heart-broken, heart-rending cry. Coming to herself suddenly, as the whole

truth flashed like lightning once more across her bewildered brain, the poor girl flung up her arms, raised herself wildly erect in the bed, and stared around her with a horrible vacant, maddened look, as if all her life were cut at once from under her. Both of the strangers recognised instinctively what that look meant. It was the look and the cry of a crushed life. If ever they had harboured a single thought of blame against that poor wounded, bleeding, torn heart for what seemed like a hasty attempt at self-murder, it was dissipated in a moment by that terrible voice—the voice of a goaded, distracted, irresponsible creature, from whom all consciousness or thought of right and wrong, of life and death, of sense and movement, of motive and consequence, has been stunned at one blow by some deadly act of undeserved cruelty and unexpected wickedness.

The tears ran unchecked in silent sympathy down the women's flushed cheeks.

Mrs Relf leant over and caught her in her arms. 'My poor child,' she whispered, laying Elsie's head with motherly tenderness on her own soft shoulder, and soothing the girl's pallid white face with her gentle old hand, 'cry, cry, cry if you can! Don't hold back your tears; let them run, darling. It'll do you good.—Cry, cry, my child—we're all friends here. Don't be afraid of us.'

Elsie never knew, in the agony of the moment, where she was or how she came there; but nestling her head on Mrs Relf's shoulder, and fain of the sympathy that gentle soul extended her so easily, she gave free vent to her pent-up passion, and let her bosom sob itself out in great bursts and throbs of choking grief; while the two women, who had never till that very morning seen her fair face, cried and sobbed silently in mute concert by her side for many, many minutes together.

'Have you no mother, dear?' Mrs Relf whispered through her tears at last; and Elsie, finding her voice with difficulty, murmured back in a choked and blinded tone: 'I never knew my mother.'

'Then Edie and I will be mother and sister to you,' the beautiful old lady answered with a soft caress. 'You mustn't talk any more now. The doctor would be very, very angry with me for letting you talk and cry even this little bit. But crying's good for one when one's heart's sore. I know, my child, yours is sore now. When you're a great deal better, you'll tell us all about it.—Edie, some more beef-tea and brandy.—We've been feeding you with it all night, dear, with a wet feather.—You can drink a little, I hope, now. You must take a good drink and lie back quietly.'

Elsie smiled a faint sad smile. The world was all lost and gone for her now; but still she liked these dear souls' sweet quiet sympathy. As Edie glided across the room noiselessly to fetch the cup, and brought it over and held it to her lips and made her drink, Elsie's eyes followed every motion gratefully.

'Who are you?' she cried, clutching her new friend's plump soft hand eagerly. 'Tell me where I am. Who brought me here? How did I get here?'

'I'm Edie Relf,' the girl answered in the same low silvery voice as before, stooping down and kissing her. 'You know my brother, Warren

Relf, the artist whom you met at Whitestrand. You've had an accident—you fell into the water—from the shore at Whitestrand. And Warren, who was cruising about in his yawl, picked you up and brought you ashore here. You're at Lowestoft now. Mamma and I are here in lodgings. Nobody at Whitestrand knows anything about it yet, we believe.—But darling, and she held poor Elsie's hand tight at this, and whispered very low and close in her ear, 'we think we guess all the rest too. We think we know how it all happened.—Don't be afraid of us. You may tell it all to us by-and-by, when you're quite strong enough. Mother and I will do all we can to make you better. We know we can never make you forget it.'

Elsie's head sank back on the pillow. It was all terrible—terrible—terrible. But one thought possessed her whole nature now. Hugh must think she was really drowned: that would grieve Hugh—dear affectionate Hugh.—He might be cruel enough to cast her off as he had done—though she couldn't believe it—it must surely be a hideous, hideous dream, from which sooner or later she would be certain to have a happy awakening—but at anyrate it must have driven him wild with grief and remorse and horror to think he had killed her—to think she was lost to him.—Oughtn't she to telegraph at once to Hugh—to dear, dear, Hugh—and tell him at least she was saved, she was still living?

BREAKING THE OCEAN RECORD.

AMONG the improvements which have been effected in the arts since the commencement of the present century, the development of ship-building occupies no secondary position. Eighty-eight years ago steam-power had not been practically applied to sea-going vessels, though the idea had been mooted so far back as 1736 by one Jonathan Hulls. To give a general sketch of the advances which have been made in this direction in our own land since the days when the Celts propelled their rudely-shaped, fire-hollowed log-canoes from point to point on the British coast; or the Saxons ventured somewhat farther from shore in their larger galley-like, sail-driven vessels, would—though showing the methods by which increased speed has been attained in traversing the boundless deep—be altogether outside the aim of this article, which is intended simply to present in narrative form some of the more important improvements which have been effected in connection with our mercantile marine during the present century, and to show how they have tended to revolutionise ocean-commerce.

As has been already stated, nine decades ago steam was only beginning to be thought of as a ship-propelling agent, the first experiment in this kind of navigation on the Thames having taken place in 1793; the boat, designed by Rumsay, who had made trials with steam in America, progressing against the tide at the rate of four miles an hour. This, however, would appear not to have been the first experiment of this class made in the country, as it is recorded that about 1788, William Patrick Miller—the patentee of paddle-wheels—and William Symington constructed a small steam-vessel which travelled at a rate of a mile in fifteen minutes. These essays

could not be regarded as successful; but they showed the possibility of attaining a higher speed of ocean-travelling than could be accomplished by the ships of that period; and experiments began to be undertaken in various quarters. But it was not until 1807 that the practicability of steam-navigation as a means of communication was clearly demonstrated, the honour belonging to Robert Fulton, an American, who had gained much information from Symington whilst on a visit to this country; and he, like every other great inventor, had to bear the brunt of ridicule. When he first proposed his plans, his countrymen laughed at him; and when he began to build his vessel, they nicknamed it 'Fulton's Folly.' His personal friends, though civil, were shy of being seen in his company; and whilst they gave ear to his explanations, a look of incredulity overspread their faces. But he held on his way; and when at length the long-expected day of trial came, the boat—a paddle one—christened by her designer *Clermont*, glided from the wharf on the Hudson in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators, who had assembled to gloat over Fulton's failure. Before she had run a quarter-mile, the most sceptical were convinced, and the jeers of the rabble were changed to shouts of acclamation. The success of the undertaking was complete; and thus was introduced the pioneer of a class of vessels which were destined to bring about such a change in the earth's commerce as the world then dreamed not of.

Shortly after Fulton's triumph, Mr Stevens, of Hoboken, launched a steamboat, which he took round to the Delaware; and this was the first steamer that braved the waves of the ocean. From that time, vessels of this description rapidly increased in number on all the American rivers, and soon became the ordinary means of communication.

It was not, however, until 1812 that steam-navigation was put to practical use in England. On the 18th January in that year, Mr Henry Bell, of Glasgow, launched the *Comet*, the first British steamboat on the Clyde. She was employed to convey passengers across the river; and thrice per week she plied between Greenock and Glasgow, a distance of some twenty-two miles, performing the journey at the rate of seven and a half miles an hour—a great improvement on the experiment of Miller and Symington twenty-four years previously. A further advance was witnessed in 1813, when a larger vessel than the *Comet* appeared on the Clyde. She was owned by Mr Hutchinson, and travelled between Glasgow and Greenock at an average speed of nine miles per hour, with one hundred passengers on board. This success gave rise to new projects in other quarters, the principal among these being a small pleasure-boat which, in 1814, began to ply between London and Richmond; and another boat built in Bristol, and sent to London for the Gravesend station, and which had to be withdrawn in consequence of the opposition of the watermen. But this opposition was overcome in 1815 by the *Margery*, a steamer of seventy tons, sent from the Clyde, which maintained her ground in spite of the watermen. Following the *Margery* came the *Thames*, which, calling at Dublin on her voyage from the Clyde to London, was, when sighted off the coast, mistaken by the Irish pilots for a vessel

on fire, and they put off in swarms to the rescue, with a view to salvage.

These must be regarded as the forerunners of those colossal floating palaces which now traverse every sea; for though their rate of progress was slow when compared with that of the present day, their success established beyond a doubt the possibility of ocean-navigation by steamers. Money was freely invested in constructing vessels of this class, which rapidly came into use in the coasting service; and regular lines of communication began to be organised, not only between our own ports, but between this country and such foreign harbours as were then deemed to lie within the limits of steam-navigation; and as the vessels gradually improved in construction, the area of their courses was increased, until at the present day they embrace every port upon the habitable globe.

So much by way of introducing the first ocean record-breakers—to use a sporting term—of modern times; that is, the first vessels which traversed given distances in a less period than had ever before been accomplished.

Coming more closely to the subject of this article, it may be said that it was not until about 1836 that the era of really rapid steamboat travelling commenced. Up to that time, wood was the only material of which ships had been constructed, if we except the fact that, fourteen years previously, iron was introduced as an outer covering for wooden vessels. The idea, however, of building ships wholly of that metal does not appear to have been thought of until little more than half a century ago, though the advantages iron possessed over wood in point of the same strength being obtained with less weight of material, and the cumbersome combinations necessary for solidity in wooden vessels being consequently done away with, must have been apparent to all, to say nothing of the fact, that as iron plates could be rolled to any curve, a more graceful outline could be given to ships than was possible by the use of wood. In favour of iron there was the further fact, that it enabled vessels to be constructed up to any size desired, a thing which could not be achieved with wood, for the reason that beyond certain dimensions it was not safe to go. With the introduction of iron for shipbuilding purposes, the screw-propeller came into practical use. This means of driving vessels had been proposed many years before, and was tried by Shorter in 1802, the power for working the screw being supplied by manual labour. This method of propulsion was of course under the circumstances valueless—a more efficient motive-power was required—and the screw-propeller remained in the background until 1836, when Mr F. P. Smith, an Englishman, and Captain Ericsson, an American, successfully applied it, independently of each other, in somewhat different forms to steam-vessels—Ericsson's craft attaining a speed of ten miles an hour. The screw, after undergoing improvements, is now the principal means of propulsion employed, a greater rate of progress being attainable by this method than where paddle-wheels are used.

The fleetest mercantile vessels afloat ply between Liverpool and New York; and the first steamer of any magnitude to make this passage was the *Sirius*, of seven hundred tons burden, which sailed from Cork on April 4, 1838; and four days later, the *Great Western*, the first paddle-

wheel steamship ever built for the express purpose of crossing the Atlantic, left Bristol. In 1818, Lord Cochrane's *Rising Sun*, and in 1819 the *Savannah*, a steamer of three hundred and fifty tons, had each made the transatlantic voyage, the latter occupying twenty-six days in travelling between New York and Liverpool. But notwithstanding this, the bulk of scientific men declared it was impossible for a steam-driven vessel to accomplish the journey in anything like a satisfactory manner, though the general body of the people believed the thing was practicable enough; and the trials of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* fully proved that the latter were right, for the voyages of both ships were brilliant triumphs, the *Sirius* reaching New York on April 23, and the *Great Western* entering the same harbour only a few hours later. It is recorded that 'long before their arrival, notice of their coming had been given; and when the ships approached the shores of the greatest commercial city of the New World, they were greeted with flags and banners, and with music and ringing of bells, and the acclamations and applause of unnumbered multitudes. Half the width of the Atlantic had been annihilated, the year had been doubled in its length, and three-fourths of the cause of strife and discord had been destroyed for ever; for ten thousand avenues had been opened of mutual advantage and regard between the two great branches of the most wealthy, the most enterprising, and the most powerful among the nations of the world.' Two years later, the Cunard steamers began to sail, the pioneer vessel being the *Unicorn*, which made the passage from Liverpool to Boston, *via* Halifax, in sixteen days; not bad time for a craft very little larger than an ordinary tug of the present day. In the same year the Oriental Steam-packet Company brought the Indian empire within thirty days' distance of home; the first steam-voyage to that country having been accomplished in 1825 by the *Enterprise*, commanded by Captain Johnson, who received ten thousand pounds for making the passage.

Each year saw steam-navigation extended, and improvements of more or less importance effected in connection therewith, attention being given to augmenting the power of the engines employed, and so increasing the rate of ocean-travelling. Some idea of the rapidity with which these improvements were brought into practice may be gathered from the fact that, in June 1843, the *Colombia* performed the journey between Halifax and Liverpool in nine days and twenty hours; and the *Great Britain*—the original ocean screw-steamer—left the Mersey on July 26, 1845, and arrived at New York on August 10; and in May 1851, the *Pacific* crossed the Atlantic in nine days nineteen hours and twenty-five minutes. Whilst improvements were being carried out in connection with the engines, vessels were being increased in size, it being argued that the greater the ship the more scope would be allowed for her machinery, and as the increased bulk would not counterbalance the augmented power which the machinery would apply, the power would be beyond what was necessary to propel the additional weight, and it therefore would be a means of effecting a more rapid rate of progress through the water. But this argument received a rude blow by the failure of Brunel's colossal vessel in 1859, at which

period the average time occupied in bridging the Atlantic was from ten to eleven days. For some years the idea of increasing the size of vessels was abandoned, the main object being to augment speed, an aim which was greatly furthered by the introduction of steel for shipbuilding purposes, inasmuch as, weight for weight, steel is much stronger than iron—more than double; consequently, equal strength can be obtained with a far less weight of the former than of the latter. This difference in weight obviously caused a difference in displacement greatly in favour of steel, as vessels constructed of this material not sinking so deep in the water as those built of iron, the engines which propelled the latter would drive the former at a greater speed, weight for weight.

But though immense improvements in ocean-travelling have been made within the past quarter of a century, it is only during the past decade that the steam-propelled ship has become a 'greyhound,' the greyhound a floating town, and the dangers and discomforts of the sea reduced to a minimum. The strictly modern class of steamships, but little inferior in size to the *Great Eastern*, may be said to have begun with the *Arizona*, built in 1879, which, excepting Brunel's immense failure, was much larger than any merchant-vessel preceding her. Her proportion of engine-power to tonnage was so great that it was predicted that she would either blow up or shake herself to pieces. But she fulfilled none of the evil prophecies respecting her; on the contrary, she made the Atlantic passage in the fastest time then on record, attaining a speed of twenty and one-third statute miles per hour; and when, colliding with an iceberg, she sustained a hole in her bow so large that a barge was rowed in to take out the cargo, she steamed two hundred miles back to New York in perfect safety, her watertight compartments rendering her practically unsinkable. In the same year was launched the *Alaska*, which, in 1882, was the first vessel to perform the American voyage in seven days, and in consequence she was given the title of 'greyhound of the Atlantic.'

The demand for larger and more powerful ships continued; and in a few months the *Oregon* was rushing to the New World at a rate of twenty-two statute miles per hour—the highest speed which had ever been attained; but in 1884 this was eclipsed by the *Umbria*, whose rate of progress was twenty-three and a half miles per hour. Later on, the *City of Rome*, whose daily consumption of coal is two hundred and sixty tons, or the output of a colliery of average dimensions, made the homeward Atlantic passage in six days twenty-two hours and twenty-five minutes. But all previous records were broken in February of last year by the *Etruria* steaming from the Mersey to New York in six days and nineteen hours—a performance which she outdid in the following month, when she voyaged between New York and Queenstown in six days five hours and eighteen minutes. Rapid, however, as was this rate of travelling, it was put in the shade by the *Umbria*, which in May last reached New York from Queenstown in one hour and nineteen minutes less than was occupied by the *Etruria* on the same voyage in February; and in June she did the distance between Queenstown and New York in the unheard-of time of five

days and twenty-two hours. At present, this is much the 'best on record;' and the *Umbria* stands at the head of the Atlantic greyhounds, which reach their destinations with a regularity that would have been deemed impossible a few years ago, and which is only equalled by the locomotives on our railways. How long the *Umbria* will maintain the position she now occupies is a matter of uncertainty; for, looking at the vast strides which have, during the past twenty-five years, been made in steamboat travelling, reducing the Atlantic by one-half, there seems no reason why further improvements should not be effected, and the New World brought within half a week's distance of home.

To attain these extraordinarily high rates of speed demands an enormous consumption of coal; and for Indian, Australian, and other long journeys, the burning of this quantity of fuel would render the voyage an unprofitable one for the ship-owners; consequently, vessels of less steaming power than those engaged in the American trade are employed. Up to 1883, the fastest passage ever made for a long run was done by the *Stirling Castle*, which covered the distance between Hankow and London, with a heavy cargo of tea, in thirty-one days and ten hours including all detentions, and twenty-nine days and two hours' actual steaming-time. But magnificent as was this achievement, it was placed far in the background four years later by the *Ormuz*, which is a splendid example of the perfection to which ocean-going steamers have now been brought, embodying the fruits of all the progress which has been made within the last decade. This vessel, launched in 1887, was designed to make the journey from London to Australia in twenty-eight days; and though she did not on her first trip succeed in realising expectations, in July she traversed the twenty-two thousand five hundred miles of sea which lie between London and Adelaide in the unparalleled period of twenty-eight days and ten hours, thus exceeding the time in which her designers calculated she would make the passage by only ten hours. Looking at the fact that at the beginning of the century Australia was eight months' sail from our shores, and that the steamers now plying between these countries occupy something like six weeks in performing the journey, it seemed little short of marvellous that a vessel could be constructed which would cover the distance in two-thirds the usual time. But astonishing as was this feat, in the October following the same ship eclipsed herself, landing the mails in King George's Sound in a trifle under twenty-four days from London, which gave an average speed of eighteen and one-third statute miles per hour, a rate of progress only little inferior to that of the best American liners. To have built a vessel capable of performing such a task would have been impossible in the wood age, and as an example of the iron age it stands unrivalled.

Such are a few of the swiftest vessels of our mercantile marine, and such are some of the triumphs of modern shipbuilding, which during the past decade has made greater strides than were ever dreamed of. These wonderful ten years have witnessed the obtaining of greater safety by the introduction of water-tight compartments; and improved designs and more per-

fectly constructed machinery have done much, besides increasing the rate of speed, to enable steamships to outride storms which a quarter of a century ago would have very severely tested, if not sent to the bottom, the best vessel then afloat; in short, the ocean voyages of to-day, as compared with those of twenty years ago, have been robbed of one-half their terror by the ever busy hand of progress. The effect which those improvements have had upon ocean-commerce cannot be overrated. By bringing the most distant parts of the earth within a few weeks' travel of home, the shipping year has been lengthened fourfold, the world's trade has been proportionately increased, and new industries have been created. Progress in various branches is still being made; and when we contemplate the wondrous improvements in the shipping world which have taken place during the past few years, we are in astonishment led to ask ourselves: 'Can there be a limit to man's ingenuity and skill, or will still more rapid means of transit between foreign lands be devised, and the earth's commerce be revolutionised in the future, as it has been in the past?'

IN DANGER'S WAY: A TALE OF TWO HEROES.

CHAPTER IV.—THE STORM.

CAPTAIN SATCHELL, seated in his cabin one afternoon, was just meditating a quiet half-hour over his meerschaum pipe, when a quick step on the deck changed the current of his thoughts. Next moment there was a soft knock at his door, and in came Cora Norland. The captain laid down his pipe and jumped up to greet the girl with both hands outstretched.

Cora had been a special favourite ever since childhood with the captain. There was not a corner about the old deck unknown to her; it had been such a famous place for a game of hide-and-seek; and then Captain Satchell had told her wonderful tales of the sea in this snug cabin of his; and when worn out with listening to stories as well as with play, she had often fallen asleep upon the hard hair sofa, with the great, rough pea-jacket placed over her shoulders by the thoughtful mariner.

'Captain Satchell,' said the girl, casting an anxious look around her, 'can you spare a few minutes?'

The captain nodded. 'Why, I hardly know, Miss Cora, how to kill the time. I'm overjoyed to see you! We shan't begin taking in ballast till next week.'

'Then let me fill your pipe,' said Cora laughingly, 'as I used to try and do years ago.—Were you not contemplating a smoke, when I tapped at the door?'

The captain's face expressed approval. 'Ay, ay; so I was! Why, it is like old times, ain't it?'

When the pipe was filled and lighted, Cora said: 'I wanted to speak to you, Captain Satchell, about Max Von Roën.' Her voice trembled slightly as she mentioned his name. 'Did he tell you about Abel Honeywood's letter?'

'He did indeed. He seemed to know it, as I thought, almost by heart.'

Cora looked pensively through the little round

window—a glimpse of the sea was visible beyond the harbour. 'Do you think,' said she, without turning her head, 'that he has gone in search of that diamond?—Perhaps,' the girl hastened to add, with a quick glance at the captain—'perhaps you know if he has.'

The captain puffed nervously at his pipe. 'I know what I would do, Miss Cora, if I was a young man. I would try my hardest to find it—ay,' he added with emphasis, 'if the attempt cost me my life!'

The girl clasped her hands together in protestation.

'Why, what does the song say?' resumed the captain, growing still more emphatic: "'Only the brave deserve the fair!'"—Well, Miss Cora, let those who are brave enough get alongside that wreck—if the wreck can be found.—And if the girl's heart is free,' he concluded, with a meaning glance at Cora, 'it will be rightly bestowed on the man that brings that diamond ashore.'

'But'—and Cora looked careworn as she spoke—'if he is lost?'

'Drowned?' and the captain stroked his chin meditatively.

Cora nodded.

'Why, in that case, Miss Cora, the young woman, who shall be nameless, would have to love his memory, and'—

'I couldn't do that; it would kill me, Captain Satchell,' the girl declared with sudden impulse, 'if Max—if any one risked his life for me.—Won't you help me to prevent him—to prevent every one from making this search? It will only end in some disaster, and I shall be seriously to blame.'

The captain still stroked his chin.

'It was very selfish, very thoughtless of me,' Cora went on distressfully. 'I let them suppose—Stephen Walsh, and Max Von Roën too, I'm afraid—that whoever found the diamond would—would more than please me.—What shall I do? I have been dreaming all night long that the most dreadful fate has befallen both these men. Will you send some one to Shingle Point? I would give anything if you could go yourself—and put a stop to this foolish expedition.' As she spoke, tears came into the girl's eyes.

'Why, Miss Cora,' said the captain reassuringly, 'there is nothing to be distressed about. Do you suppose that if I was anxious about these young men—about my mate or Mr Walsh—that I should have spoken lightly about the matter? The brig *Cora* has sunk far out at sea, or gone to pieces among the rocks in the Channel. In either case, this diamond is beyond the reach of man, never mind how daring he may be. That's my opinion, Miss Cora.—But,' he hastened to add, 'I'll crowd all sail and steer for Shingle Point, if that is seriously your wish. What say you?'

The girl replied after a moment's silence: 'You'll think me very superstitious; but I've got a presentiment that some disaster will happen; and I should never know how to thank you enough, if you would go without a moment's delay.'

The captain was soon up on deck giving instructions to get a boat ready to convey him to Shingle Point. If a command had come direct from Mr Norland, instead of this modest request from

the ship-owner's daughter, he could not have been more active.

Cora returned home along the sands with a lighter heart. The two boats racing over the moonlit sea on the previous evening had begun to alarm her. In her woman's brain, she conjured up every conceivable mishap which might befall the two men. Could she hide from herself that she was loved? But which of them loved her truly? Stephen Walsh had asked her to be his wife; but had not Max Von Rönin long ago betrayed his passion in every look and action, though he had never spoken one word of love to her?

The bar-parlour of the *Six Bells* at Shingle Point was crowded with sailors. It was a wet, gusty night, threatening a gale; and those who had contemplated putting to sea in their fishing-smacks an hour or two ago, had abandoned their project; for the dull appearance of the sky towards the south-west, confirming the storm-signals off the Point, predicted foul weather in the Channel.

The rough wind and heavy rain beat against the windows. But the talk and laughter were loud. No one heeded; not even the thunder, which sounded almost incessantly overhead, attracted any comment. These sailors were accustomed to storms; the thunder was no more than a familiar voice, and the lightning alarmed them about as much as the flash of an angry eye. Such things in nature, 'vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,' formed part of their every-day experience.

Captain Satchell, just landed from Southsea Bay, came in with the rain and salt water dripping from his oilskin cap and overall, and looked keenly round him. 'Max Von Rönin not here?'

There was a dead silence. Every one looked towards the mariner and remarked his anxious face. Max Von Rönin was not among them.

'If he's out in this storm,' said the captain, 'he'll never sight land again. No boat like his—few bigger craft could live in such a sea. I've only escaped myself by a miracle. What's become of the lad? Any one know?'

'Gone diamond-fishing,' said a stalwart seaman with a big deep voice. 'The notion took him, as I understand, that Honywood left some in his locker.—Ha, ha! I always thought that young Dutchman was a bit daft.'

Captain Satchell shook his head. 'He's sane enough; but a bit too venturesome.—You haven't seen Mr Walsh's yacht cruising about?'

No one had seen her since yesterday morning.

The captain looked dejected. He was on the point of removing his oilskin, with thoughts of a pipe and a glass of grog, after his rough sail from Southsea Bay, when the sound of excited voices at the outer door of the *Six Bells* arrested his attention. With renewed fears concerning the safety of Max Von Rönin—fears which would never have entered his head but for Cora Norland—he hurried out into the bar. The front door was wide open; the wind and rain were beating into the passage over the heads of an excited crowd; and beyond this crowd, a number of people were running past the inn towards the shore; and Captain Satchell quickly learnt that some craft—no one agreed in the

description—was tossing about in a dismantled state within a few yards of the beach.

Calling upon the sailors who had filled the bar-parlour a moment before to follow him and assist in the rescue, the captain made his way out into the night; and he was at once recognised as the leader by a number of brave seamen who instantly answered to his appeal.

The wind was blowing a gale; and the roar of the sea along the coast was a deafening sound: the shingly beach trembled with the crushing weight of breakers. Each moment, the lightning disclosed leaping crests of foam; and it now revealed a boat capsized, and a form, between it and the shore, clinging grimly to a spar or broken oar. Cries of dismay rose from the crowd—cries that were smothered by peals of thunder and the crash of huge waves. The brave old mariner, threescore years of age, shouted out that a rope be fastened round his waist. He had thrown off his oilskin and pea-jacket and stood ready to go to the aid of the drowning man. He was a famous swimmer; he was known to have saved many a life in his time. But a sailor stepped from the crowd and seized the rope. 'Stand by!' It was the big deep voice of the seaman who had spoken laughingly in the bar-parlour about Max Von Rönin. 'Fasten the rope round me.'

So frequent now and so vivid is the play of lightning over the sea, so pitch-dark the intervals of night—a sombre curtain that rises and descends—that the scene is like a series of instantaneous tableaux vivants. A flash, a quiver of dazzling brightness, and the brave sailor is seen bending with head to seaward, and over him a high-crested wave: the wave falls—is heard to fall—in darkness. Another flash; the drowning man is still clinging to the spar, and the sailor's arm is uplifted to clutch him. In each flash that follows the figures are confused; sometimes the spar is driven or hauled forward, sometimes falls away from the beach; but at last two bodies have been cast ashore: they lie there motionless: and then they are borne from the sea in the midst of a concourse of hurrying forms.

FRENCH PENNIES.

THE face of the French penny, which until recently was so familiar in many parts of this country, has disappeared from amongst us, never more, probably, to return. It would be a difficult matter to trace with any certainty the origin and growth of the ready circulation which the bronze coinage of other countries had found here, to the consequent displacement of our own bronze coinage; but it seems not at all unlikely that the ever increasing facilities for intercourse with our continental neighbours, and more especially with France, tended materially to aid in the operation. Some have considered that the influx of bronze coins from abroad was due to a lack of bronze at our own Mint; but this the authorities strongly deny; and there does not, indeed, appear to have been much ground for such an opinion. It was recently found necessary to enlarge the Mint premises on Tower Hill, and during the process, some of the bronze coinage had to be manufactured at Birmingham; but as soon as the enlargement was completed, the authorities at the

Mint were able to do the work themselves, for which they now possess every facility. In the year 1885 the Mint earned a profit of thirty-four thousand eight hundred pounds in respect of this kind of work alone, which shows the quantity of bronze-work they can perform in a single year. At the present time, we learn that no bronze coin is being made, as there is no demand for it in the ordinary channels; and for such demand as there is, the Mint, it seems, is well provided.

Our own view, that the abundant means of intercourse between this country and the Continent led to the introduction and general circulation of foreign bronze coins amongst us, is strengthened somewhat by the fact that such coins were to be found in large quantities at those seaport towns on the southern and south-eastern coast which are in direct communication with the Continent; and this, too, seems only natural, as travellers returning home from their continental tours would always be anxious to get rid as soon as possible of the surplussage of foreign coins with which their travels had left them burdened. In such places as Dover and Folkestone, it was common, indeed, for the silver as well as bronze coinage to pass almost as current as the coin of the realm. The vast quantity of bronze coin which latterly accumulated here can hardly, however, be accounted for in the manner indicated.

It has been computed that as much as a third part of all the bronze coins in circulation was at one time of foreign origin; while another estimate has given the value of such foreign money at one hundred thousand pounds. By the light of subsequent events, however, these estimates appear a little wide of the mark, and it may be that they were based upon the assumption that the large quantity of foreign bronze which circulated in London formed a fair index of what was the case throughout the whole country. The basis was a wrong one, however; for while it is quite certain that neither in Scotland nor in Ireland did the bronze coins from abroad find any favour, it is also the fact that they did not penetrate very far north into England. The quantity of foreign bronze which flooded the southern parts of England was, however, of itself enough, and so enormous as to suggest the existence of a systematic importation into this country for the sake of the small profit accruing on the transaction. Of this, indeed, there could be little doubt; and the circumstance soon attracted the attention of the Master of the Mint, who is also Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the result that for the purpose of making provision against practices of this kind, a special clause was inserted in the Customs Amendment Act of 1886, giving power to Her Majesty to issue a proclamation prohibiting the importation of any foreign coin. In the exercise of this power, a royal proclamation was issued on the 24th March last, prohibiting the importation into the United Kingdom of 'all coins coined in any foreign country other than gold or silver coins;' and by this step no further systematic importation of foreign coins resembling pence or halfpence is apprehended by the authorities.

The first result of the proclamation was one which the government had hardly foreseen, for, although the ukase was directed against the wholesale importation of foreign bronze, and, as

was subsequently explained, not against its circulation, the fact that such coins had been proclaimed, and would not be accepted at any of the government offices, was sufficient to create a scare in the minds of the public. In short, the circulation of foreign bronze coins became suddenly arrested, and for the moment the coins were practically valueless to their possessors. Tradesmen and others in business declined flatly to receive such coins in payment for goods; and the public soon became alive to the necessity of carefully scanning their change, to avoid having any of the proclaimed stuff foisted on them. All this, of course, told very hardly on the poorer classes, and all the signs of a panic were fast assuming form. Fortunately, the government readily recognised the importance of the situation, and, seeing that the proclamation had given rise to a general unwillingness on the part of the public to receive the foreign bronze coins in circulation, speedily made arrangements, in pursuance of an announcement made in the House of Commons on the 14th of April, for their receipt in exchange for cash or stamps, from the 18th of April to the 31st of May, at any post-office in the United Kingdom, at the rate of thirteen ten-centime pieces, or twenty-six five-centime pieces, to the shilling, no less quantity than sixpence-worth being received. This step had the desired effect of restoring public confidence; and, as was to be expected, the foreign coins poured into the post-office in huge numbers.

The period during which the public were permitted to tender their French pennies, &c. at the various post-offices was, as can be imagined, an exceedingly busy one at the chief offices in London; for the coins came rolling in day after day in ton loads; and as soon as they were received, they had to be counted, weighed, tied up in sacks, and conveyed to the royal Mint. This caused a great addition to the work of the cash branch of the Post-office, and although there were no actual all-night sittings, yet late hours were freely indulged in during the period referred to. Curious and interesting, too, were many of the coins that were sent up; and many persons, we believe, in ignorance embraced the opportunity of disposing of bronze coins for which at any time they might have received a higher value from a coin-dealer. Bronze coins of all countries and various dates flowed in; and the Post-office, interpreting its instructions in the most liberal spirit, accepted them all. Even defaced coins, and many such there were too, chiefly defaced with the advertisements of enterprising firms, were not rejected. The term of grace, as it may be styled, expired on the 31st May; and, as need hardly perhaps be said, the great rush of foreign bronze holders to the Post-offices took place at the beginning of the period. But in every circumstance of life there are people to be found who are always too late, and the present case was no exception, for applications continued to come in for some little time after the 31st of May for permission to exchange foreign bronze, which appear in each case to have been granted; and it was thus not until about the middle of June that the labours of the Post-office in regard to the foreign bronze coinage came to an end.

At the Mint, as well as at the Post-office, the measure adopted by the government for ridding

the country of the foreign bronze coins in circulation gave rise to a considerable increase of work, although, probably, not to so great an extent as at the latter-named department; for, so far as we can gather, it has not yet been finally decided in what manner the coins received shall be disposed of. They may either be returned in bulk to the countries whence they originally came, or they may be melted down at the Mint and manufactured into current coins of the realm. There would probably, it seems, be a slight loss to the country if the latter course were adopted; but notwithstanding this, we believe that the decision of the government is, for several reasons, likely to be in favour of it. As showing how much foreign bronze coin was in circulation here at the time that the government took steps in the matter, and also as affording some idea of the work performed both at the Post-office and the Royal Mint in connection with it, we may mention that the quantity of such coin now lying at the Mint is something like fifty tons in weight, and twenty-one thousand two hundred pounds in value.

In conclusion, it but remains to add that, as in illustration of the old adage, that it's an ill wind which profits nobody, if the proclamation against the wholesale importation of foreign bronze coin at first bore hardly on the poorer classes, it certainly proved a source of profit to the owners of those automatic machines which are rapidly becoming so popular in this country. After the proclamation referred to, and before the government decided upon allowing a term of grace, people possessing French pennies and other foreign bronze coins eagerly availed themselves of this ready manner of disposing of their foreign coins. The foreign bronze question was certainly not without its amusing aspect, when we remember how at that time the public suddenly displayed a predilection for chocolate, butter-scotch, cigarettes, and other such-like cheap luxuries, which otherwise they might no doubt have denied themselves. Just then, indeed, there seemed to be a mania for buying postcards, toffee, chocolate, matches, or trying one's weight—all which was to be had of these machines by dropping the inevitable penny into the slit. To the observant, of course the reason was obvious; and one firm alone, we are told, benefited by this suddenly developed mania by taking three hundred pounds-worth more in French pennies in a week than they would have done had these once familiar coins not been proclaimed in this country.

AN EXECUTIONER'S SWORD.

FOUR years ago I spent a winter in a city in the south of Germany, where I made the acquaintance of an antiquary who was very old and bedridden, and had no relations, no one to care for him but an old housekeeper. The man had belonged to the town-council, and had spent his life in collecting curiosities connected with the history of his town. Among his treasures, above his bed was the city executioner's sword, much notched. This sword was six feet long, with a huge handle, to be grasped with two hands, and with an iron ornamented knob as counterpoise at the end of the handle.

How life is made up of lost opportunities! How much of the criminal history of the city

might I not have learned, if I had paid longer visits to Herr Schreiber, and listened to his account of the notches in the blade, to each of which a ghastly history attached. But the antiquary's bedroom measured fifteen feet by seven, and the window was hermetically sealed; moreover, there was a stove in the room, and—Herr Schreiber himself always.

'Ach, mein Herr! do you see dis great piece broken out of de blade? Dat was caused by a voman's neck. De executioner could not cut it drough; her neck vas harder dan his sword. She vas a very vicked voman: she poisoned her fader.—Do you see dis littel nick? Dis vas made by a great trater to the Emperor and Vaterland. I vill tell you all about it.'

But I never heard all the stories: I should have been suffocated had I stayed to listen; but I found, whenever I called on my friend, that my eyes invariably turned to the sword—it was so huge, it was so notched, and had such a gruesome history. Poor old Schreiber, I knew, would have to bow his neck before long under the scythe of Time. How he hung on in that stuffy room under the great sword so long was a marvel to me, and would be pronounced impossible by sanitary authorities in England. Nevertheless, he did live on for a twelvemonth after I left the town. When about to depart, I said to the English chaplain: 'Old Schreiber can't last long; he must smother shortly. Keep an eye on the sword for me, there's a good fellow. He has left everything to the housekeeper.'

A twelvemonth after, as I was about to leave England for a run into Bohemia, I got a letter from the chaplain: 'Schreiber is dead. I have the sword.' I wired at once to him: 'Send it me to my inn at Aix-la-Chapelle. Will pick it up on my way home.'

So I went on my way rejoicing, ascended the Rhine to Mainz, trained to Nuremberg, and passed through the gap of the Bohemian mountain-chain to Pilsen, and on to Prague, where I spent a week, and where, by the way, I cut these two advertisements from a newspaper: 'A literary lady would like to meet a literary gentleman with a view to matrimony. Prose preferred, as the lady is a poetess, and contrasts generally harmonise best—matrimonially.' The other: 'Two young German officers, feeling lonely, desire to make the acquaintance of two young ladies of good education, pleasing manners, and good looks. Private fortunes a *sine quâ non*. Matrimonial views not excluded.'

Prague, in fact, forms two hostile camps—the Czechs and the German Austrians. They have separate theatres, separate cafés, separate newspapers, and deal at shops of their separate nationalities. If they could, they would decompose the atmosphere into its constituent gases, and the Germans inhale the oxygen, and the Czechs the nitrogen—which would perhaps be the best solution of the difficulty.

But to return to my sword. After six weeks in Bohemia and Silesia, I descended the Rhine to Aix-la-Chapelle, and arrived at my inn.

'Dere is vun vunderful chest come for you,' said the landlord. 'Ve vas not very comfortable to take him in. Ve keep him, dough.'

And no wonder. The chest was shaped somewhat like the coffin of a very tall man.

'Vat ish he? He have been here four week and doe days.—Dere is no schmell.'

'I cannot take that thing—I really cannot. It is preposterous. How could the chaplain have put my sword into the hands of an undertaker?—Get me a hammer; I will knock the case to pieces.'

Now, there was a reason why the chest should assume the shape of a coffin—that was, because of the crosspiece between the handle and the blade. My name and address were on the lid at the place where usually goes the so-called 'breast-plate.'

The host of my inn, the waiters, the porter, the boots, all stood in breathless curiosity to see the box opened, and when the sword was exposed—'Ach!' exclaimed the host gravely, 'I vas right—dere vas no schmell, because dere could be no schmell.'

I could not see the force of this reasoning, remembering Herr Schreiber's room, and how long the sword had been in it; and allowing that there is no porosity in tempered steel, still, the black velvet casing of the handle might have absorbed a considerable amount of Schreiberian bacteria, bacilli, or whatever it is that physiologists assert to be so nasty and so ubiquitous, and so set on finding out our weak places and hitting us there, as swordfish 'go' at whales.

I had got my sword out of its coffin, but had not considered what to do with it next, and I found myself in as great a difficulty as before. I got a porter to convey it for me to the station, and he placed it in the first-class waiting-room with the iron counterpoise on the floor, beside a divan, and leaned the tip of the blade against the wall. There it was allowed to remain; and I walked about, pretending that it did not belong to me. Presently, a well-dressed, very stately lady—she was a *Gräfin* (countess)—came in, stalked to the divan, and seated herself on it, very upright, without observing the sword. She opened a reticule and produced a lace-edged handkerchief, with which she proceeded to dust the velvet of her dress, and in so doing, with the end of her delicately shod foot, touched the counterpoise. At once the sword-blade began to grate against the wall. She looked up suddenly, saw the huge notched executioner's sword descending upon her bowed neck, uttered a little scream, sprang to her feet and ran, fleet as a rabbit, across the waiting-room; whilst down its full length after her with a clang fell the weapon—followed by a burst of laughter from every one in the room but the countess.

After this, I took the sword up and marched on the platform with it at my side. This I will say for it—that, considering its size and weight, it is easily carried; for not only is there the crosspiece as hand-guard, but above this is a crescent worked in the iron, the horns extending with the convexity towards the point of the blade. By putting a couple of fingers under these horns, the sword is carried at the side, pommel downwards, blade up, with perfect ease, the balance is so true. Some difficulty attended the getting into the carriage with the sword; I had to enter backwards and bring my sword in after me, passengers keeping judiciously out of its reach till it was safely brought within.

Not the Douvres-Calais that day! only that

horrible little narrow boat that always upsets me—and I—such an heroic being, bearing the mighty medieval sword, an object of wonder and questioning to sailors, *douaniers*, passengers alike. As it happened, I was the sole individual on board whose inner organs had not their sea-legs on this occasion. I lay on a bench upon deck, hugging my executioner's sword, and faintly calling: 'A basin, please.' Two ruffians—I can call them nothing else—paced the deck, smoking, and passed me every forty seconds. If there is a thing which tumbles a human being of a highly-strung nervous temperament over when he feels squeamish, it is the occasional whiff of a cigar. Then, added to the occasional whiff, were occasional catches of derogatory remarks, which came home to me as unpleasantly as did the tobacco: 'A chap with a sword like that should live up to it, and not grovel over a basin.'—And a quotation from the Burial of Sir John Moore: 'He lay like a warrior taking his rest.'

My spine, with the pitching and vibration of the vessel, felt not like a spinal column, but like a loose string of beads. If by swallowing the sword I could have acquired stamina, I should have tried it; but I did not think I could keep it down. At length, with a pasty face, bleary-eyes, liver-coloured lips, a battered hat, a dripping and torn waterproof, reeling, holding my ticket in my teeth, the sword in one hand and my portmanteau in the other, looking like a dynamitard every inch, and at once pounced on and overhauled by the police and customs-officers, I staggered ashore. Having that sword was as much as proclaiming that I had infernal machines about me somewhere, and even my pockets were not sacred. Having turned out all my insides at sea, I had to turn out my exterior pockets and portmanteaus now. It was monstrous. That was not all. I am sure a detective followed me to town. When I got into a hansom at Charing Cross, the sword would go nowhere except between my knees, with the blade shooting up between the reins of the driver high above the top of the conveyance. I caused great amusement as I drove through the streets of London thus.

The sword is at rest now, lodged on my staircase, and of one thing I am sure: no one is likely to run away with it. I have lost curiosities, too tempting for specialists to keep their fingers from; but no one will carry away my sword. I shall go, but the sword will remain.

SOME BURMESE SUPERSTITIONS.

WHAT on earth has happened in the village? I put this question to myself, for want of any one else to speak to, as I scramble hastily from under the mosquito curtain about two o'clock one morning, and go to the veranda to see what has prompted the peaceable inhabitants of Setgone to raise such an appalling din at this hour of all the twenty-four. The compound of my bungalow is skirted by the village, but it is far too dark to make out what has given rise to the uproar which has brought me out of bed; so I dress hurriedly, speculating on the probable cause. Either a universal free fight is in progress, or the villagers by common consent have selected

this unseemly hour to execute general repairs to their household cooking-pots. These are the only two possibilities that suggest themselves to my half-awakened faculties, and the sight that greets my eyes when I reach the one street the village consists of, does not help me in arriving at a solution. Every house is lighted up with tin and earthenware lamps, and every man, woman, and child is actively engaged in the apparently purposeless occupation of making the greatest possible noise with the most efficient available means. Gongs, pots, huge wooden clappers, drums, trumpets, and other unmusical instruments, are in full chorus. Every one is striving to drown his neighbour's contribution to the general din, and players whose instruments do not demand the aid of their lungs, exert those organs with much diligence in the utterance of fearful and blood-curdling howls.

A large number of the male residents have climbed to the roofs of their houses, presumably to make their share of the noise as widely audible as they can; and every one is so completely absorbed in the pursuit, that I walk half-way through the village without meeting any one capable of answering a question. At length a capering figure reels up against me as it dances backwards across the raised pathway in the middle of the street. It is armed with a large oblong drum, and is hammering thereon a spirited bass accompaniment to a tempest of shrill screams. The musician pauses suddenly as I stop, and, to my surprise, reveals the features of the meek little copying clerk who, in the office, sits all day on his stool as quietly as a mouse.

'What is all this row about, Shway Pho?' I ask without ceremony.

Shway Pho looks sheepish, and stares at his drum, as though he contemplated seeking refuge from my curiosity inside it. Then he grins faintly. 'The Burmese people think this noise is good to drive away the *kala nah* [cholera], sir.'

'Oh, has any one in Setgone got cholera?'

'All right now, sir—they are dead,' is the glib but startling reply.

He means of course that every one else is 'all right'; but Shway Pho's limited knowledge of English often makes his expressions a trifle ambiguous. Further queries elicit the information that a boatman named Moun Lan, his wife Mah Khin, and a little boy of Moun Wah's, have all succumbed to this disease, so inevitably fatal to the native it attacks.

'Where is Moun Than?' I ask, naming another clerk, whose steadiness and good conduct I frequently hold up to his juniors by way of example. 'What is Moun Than doing to-night?'

Shway Pho explodes in rapturous giggles, and points with careful exactness to a spot on a neighbouring roof, whereon the decorous, the sedate Moun Than is seated, devoting all his energies to the flagellation of a huge iron pot with a bamboo. Shway Pho's malicious delight at being able to exhibit his senior in this undignified position is intense. He has, like most of his race, a keen sense of the ridiculous, and is greatly tickled by my undisguised astonishment at finding the 'model clerk' where he is.

The English-speaking Burman does not like to be caught joining in the superstitious doings

of his fellows, so, as Moun Than is too much absorbed in his business to notice me, I tell Shway Pho to call him down, and continue my walk through the village. It is the same throughout. Every soul is engaged with all his might in the creation and maintenance of the most deafening and confusing din I have ever heard.

Presently, Moun Than joins me, breathless but respectful; and we walk on together to a patch of jungle beyond the village, where the uproar is tempered by distance, and it is possible to make one's voice heard without raising it to its highest pitch. You must always ask an educated Burman what 'they' are doing, when you refer to the employment in which he has been engaged with his more ignorant fellows. He is much more likely to be confidential if your mode of address implies that you consider him their superior. It appears from his report that the Setgone people are anxious about the cholera, for the Indian coolies whose lines are a few hundred yards from the village have lately had several fatal cases, and the three deaths amongst the Burmese had established something resembling a scare.

'But what good will all this noise do?' I ask in desperation.

Moun Than hoarsely explains. 'These people, sir, think that a bad spirit has caused this sickness; therefore, upon that account they must make much noise, that he may become frightened and run away.'

This was concise, and so far satisfactory; but the din was quite as brisk now as it was when it first disturbed me, and I rather anxiously asked how long it usually took to frighten such spirits.

'I cannot tell,' said my informant. 'But,' he considerably added, 'when the people are tired, they will stop.'

That was something to be thankful for, at all events; but they showed no signs of fatigue yet, and I made some remark of the kind to Moun Than.

'Soon they will be tired; but this noise must continue four or five nights, sir—until the *nat-soh* [evil spirit] is quite gone, sir.'

This was not reassuring to a man who worked hard all day and earned his rest at night; but there was still the consolation of knowing that if the 'nat-soh' resembled humanity so far as to possess ears, and owned as much sense of harmony as a pariah dog, it would not voluntarily stay long. It was inconceivable that any spirit could withstand such a terrible notice of eviction.

'Good-night, sir,' said Moun Than, beginning to move off in the direction of the village. 'I shall now go to my house to sleep, sir.'

I walked leisurely back after his retreating figure, and it crossed my mind that the clerk was in a violent hurry to get to bed. His haste was explained by his reappearance on his own roof *dekchee* and bamboo in hand, doing his best to compensate for lost time.

I returned to my bungalow, and presently the commotion began to die away; individual efforts became more and more apparent, shouting ceased, and at length silence once more reigned over Setgone.

Next morning discovered the villagers again busily engaged on their roofs, but this time to

repair the damage last night's orgies had caused. The frail thatches of *dhunny* and bamboo had suffered severely, being by no means equal to supporting the proprietors in their gambols thereon in a high state of excitement. Indeed, the general aspect of Setgone was so dilapidated as to suggest the recent passage of a cyclone.

I believe 'occupation of the mind and body' is warmly recommended as a means of fending off the ravages of an epidemic. How far the Burmese specific can be held to afford mental employment, I leave readers to decide for themselves, but even Burmese ingenuity could not devise a more cheerful and exhilarating means of bodily exercise, so perhaps their method of dealing with cholera is less foolish than it appears. Whether it was due to the energetic measures I have described, or to the immediate closing of a well whose water was found to be impure, I cannot say, but certain it is that for many months Setgone was free from disease. Closing the well was productive of much grumbling in the village, as being a troublesome display of British prejudice.

'If it was the water,' said the old headman in his impressive way, 'why did not we *all* get cholera?'

Being bad at riddles, I could not answer this simple question; and persisting in my refusal to reopen the well, incurred much odium from the villagers, who had now to walk fifty yards farther to obtain their daily supplies. I am afraid the Setgonians regard me still as a wicked impostor, who thus revenged himself upon them because he was kept awake for a few nights by their own wise precautions.

The poor Burman is sadly bothered by the number of *nats* who perpetually hover about him to bring misfortune and trouble upon his head; however, by dint of propitiatory offerings, and by studying the well-known idiosyncrasies of the more malignant spirits, so as to avoid wounding their susceptibilities, he gets along fairly well—much better than any Indian race. Besides, although strict Buddhists disapprove of his regard for the *nats'* feelings, it is generally acknowledged that the presence of a *phoongyee* (Buddhist priest) or other pious man is enough to render the bad spirits incapable of mischief. And as wearers of the yellow robe are to be found everywhere, the *nats* are less troublesome than might be expected. Indeed, if you go the right way to work, there are few ills and dangers of life that cannot be avoided in Burma. Some of the Wise Men have such marvellous powers, and are so willing to exercise them for a trifling consideration, that it is your own fault if you run unnecessary risks. I became *thaynat hpee* (gun-proof) myself for five rupees; and nothing but a foolish regard for appearances deterred me from having another potent charm tattooed in red spots round my neck by a celebrated *sayah* (teacher or professor), who kindly offered his services. I remained satisfied with my gun-charm, however, and by showing it accidentally in camp one night, heard some instructive particulars. Such a thing in a European's hands could not escape notice, and an old Burman near me at once begged permission to examine it. I gave it him with feigned hesitation, and with injunctions to be careful, allowed it to be handed round to all the men. The charm itself

was a tiny figure of Gaudama in a sitting attitude, carved in ivory, and not much exceeding a large pea in size. Under my directions, my Burmese servant had procured it from a *phoongyee*, as if for himself.

'Does your honour *always* wear it?' asked the man who had last examined the charm, and now returned it to me in both hands.

'I must always carry it in the jungle,' I gravely replied. 'Are you *thaynat hpee* yourself?'

'Yes, your honour.'

He readily assented when I asked to see his talisman, and produced from some remote corner of his clothing a very dirty bundle of rags as large as a racket ball, which swathed a little tin pill-box in half-a-dozen wrappings. The box contained a figure similar to mine, and was examined with reverence by the men round.

'Who gave you that?' I asked.

'The *phoongyee* near Thitboungyee. I paid six rupees for it.'

'And are you quite safe with that one?'

'It is the best. I can get other kinds for three rupees; but they are not good; I should want many of them.'

He was wandering from the point, so I brought him back to it. 'If I fire at you with my gun, would you be hurt?'

'Your honour's gun always goes off,' said the old man, rather resenting the prospect of facing a gun he had not seen miss fire once in a long day's duck-shooting.

'Well, then, what would happen if a dacoit fired at you? Would he miss you?'

'Oh, his gun would not go off,' was the reply in a tone of conviction.—'This is the *best* charm that can be got,' insisted the owner plaintively, again.

'His gun would burst,' put in a gray-haired Burman on the other side of the fire, in a sepulchral voice—'the dacoit's gun would certainly burst.'

I handed back the charm, and asked to see any others the men had with them. All had curious devices tattooed on various parts of the breast and shoulders, and the majority had more material charms inserted under the skin, where they formed smooth and unsightly lumps like huge warts. These the owners admitted had been acquired from *sayahs* of the occult arts, and consisted of magic spells inscribed upon scraps of ivory, silver, lead, and, in one case, gold. The more precious metal did not, however, confer greater immunity from danger than other substances, the value of such charms depending altogether upon the spells written on them.

'I should like to become *dah hpee*' (sword-proof), I said, after comparing notes on the value of the gun-charms.

'Oh, that is easy. Your honour must eat the medicine to become dah-proof,' said two or three at once; for all were now interested in the discussion, and were satisfied that my inquiries were bonâ fide.

'What is the medicine made of?' I asked.

'We cannot tell. The *phoongyee* can make and give it to your honour.'

'I must get some at once,' I continued; 'but I do not like to eat it.'

There was a slight laugh at this show of squeamishness on my part, and after a pause, a

young man suggested that I might place it in a little bag and wear it round my neck.

'It is not very good like that,' said the old man who had first seen my charm. 'His honour might be wounded if he did not eat the medicine.'

The speaker was evidently regarded as an authority on the subject, for the others murmured assent, and the young Burman did not press his proposition further.

The 'medicine,' carefully wrapped in leaves, was afterwards brought to me as a present by one of my jungle friends. It appeared to consist of dried leaves or bark finely powdered, and had the faint smell one might expect from such a substance. There was only sufficient to cover a rupee, but I was assured that the quantity was more than enough, if I would only eat it. To satisfy the thoughtful donor, I undertook to do so, but my Burmese servant considerably stole the precious compound that evening, and so spared me the ordeal.

The Burman's faith in these charms is very deep-rooted, and in spite of frequent and painful demonstrations of their fallibility, he does not seem to lose confidence in their magical properties. An excuse can readily be found for their failure to protect the holder, and even the injured man is the first to explain how it happened that his talisman did not fulfil his expectations.

The late Mr St Barbe, who was shot by dacoits, was credited with the possession of powerful charms against violent death, for which he was chiefly indebted to his great stature and personal strength. Long after his cruel death, I asked a native official, in the course of a conversation on such things, how he could account for the failure of Mr St Barbe's charms to preserve his life.

The man stooped towards me, and in an awe-struck whisper, asked: 'Did not his honour the Big Deputy-commissioner carry his man to the boat when he was wounded and could not walk?'

I assented. It was an act that would have gained a soldier the Victoria Cross.

'The blood from the shot-wound fell upon his honour; therefore, it was easy to kill him. His charm was no use after that.' The man drew back, and shaking his head, gravely repeated, 'After the blood from the wounded man touched his honour, it was no use—no use.'

'Then, if the blood from a bullet-wound touches a man who is *thaynat hpee*, his charm is spoiled?'

'Yes; it is spoiled. He must then get another one.'

'And is it the same with a charm against dah-wound?'

'Yes; it is the same.'

The man appeared quite satisfied that his statement was true, and was perfectly open in answering me. It would seem that the blood from a dah-wound would destroy a dah-charm, but not one against the gun, and vice versa. He was confident that his own talismans would withstand any reasonable test, but demurred strongly when I suggested a trial. It would be time to test their virtue when he met with dacoits, he said; and laughingly declined to continue discussing the subject with so earnest a seeker after magical truths as I appeared to be.

A book could readily be filled with an account of Burmese superstitions and magic theories; but I have contented myself with a reference to the two that come most frequently under the notice of Europeans in that country, and do not perhaps differ widely from the beliefs commonly held amongst other half-civilised races.

INDESTRUCTIBLE PAPER.

The rapid decay of paper from the attacks of insects and germs of decay, combined with the high price ruling for parchment, have resulted in an attempt to render common paper indestructible by special preparation in manufacture, care being taken that the antiseptic treatment shall not affect deleteriously the usefulness of the paper for writing or printing, or damage any particular shade or colour it may possess. To this end, a chemical compound, prepared by the distillation of coal-tar, and known under the name of Resorcin, is employed, in the proportion of one part by weight to two thousand parts by weight of rags, jute, straw, and the other materials usually utilised in paper manufacture. The resorcin is added either during the washing and cutting to which these ingredients are subjected prior to their reduction to pulp; or, if found more convenient, the admixture can be made directly with the pulp. The oil of the *Eucalyptus globulus*, better known as the blue gum-tree of Australia, is afterwards added, rendering the paper pleasanter both to touch and smell, and imparting to it a slight perfume. By such means, all fungi germs, of decay, &c., are destroyed on coming into contact with the paper, and the indestructibility of the material is insured.

SHE FORGOT HER WRONGS.

Yes, she forgot them!—Angry words
That cut the heart like sharpest swords;
Yes, she forgot them!—Unjust deeds,
The wrong that envy surely breeds
In meaner natures; but no stir
Of baser passions marred in her
The conquering power of purer thought,
Ever remembering Who had taught:
'Father, they know not what they do;
Forgive them!'—and she wished it so.
Wrongs, she forgot them, one by one,
Though never yet a kindness done.

A generous act, a kindly speech,
Would seem her very soul to reach,
And there remain a lasting thought
To be with happy memories fraught;
Unlike cold natures, proud and vain,
In gratitude she felt no pain,
But rather joy, which on her face
Its lines of light knew how to trace.
I wonder, did she long ago
Learn lessons of unfathomed woe,
That she forgets her wrongs alone,
But never once a kindness done!

CAMILLA CROSLAND.

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CONCERNING ENCYCLOPÆDIAS.

WHAT a host of questions there are constantly cropping up in the course of one's ordinary reading, of one's every-day conversation. How does M. Pasteur treat his patients, and the Emperor of Russia his neighbours? What are socialism, crofters, blizzards, cantilevers, dynamitards, euchre, switch-back-railways, tobogganing, and theosophy? Who are Emin Bey, Daudet, Walt Whitman, Campion, Booth, Beckx, Begg, and Bubb Doddington? Where are Penjdeh, Baku, Battenberg, Saskatchewan, Angra Pequena? Who are the Basques, and whence did the gypsies come? When was boycotting invented, the phonograph, volapük, and the bowie knife? Who wrote the *Letters of Junius*, the *Imitatio*, or Shakespeare's plays?

From thirty learn thirty thousand. It is easy, indeed, asking questions. To answer them is not so easy, though the answer to nearly everything lies somewhere—in the columns of the *Times*, in this or that costly folio, in a consular blue-book, in the pages of a scientific journal. What, then; to solve every petty problem must one run up to London and ransack the book-shelves of the British Museum? Assuredly, some such a pilgrimage would often be our sole alternative to ignorance, were it not for the precious labours of a heathen Chineese and his fellow-encyclopædists.

In 1726, when Diderot and D'Alembert were boys at school, there was printed at Pekin the *K'in Ting Ku Kin tu' shu tsih Ch'eng*, or Complete Thesaurus of Writings Ancient and Modern, under the auspices of Kang Hi, the enlightened and scholarly Emperor of China. The fruit of forty years' labour, it filled no fewer than five thousand and twenty volumes, with maps, plans, and illustrative designs; but was restricted to a hundred copies, one of which found its way in 1878 to the British Museum Library.

One might plausibly pronounce this the first, as it is certainly the biggest, of encyclopædias. But during the seventeen centuries preceding its appearance, the 'foreign devils' of the West had

produced a score and more of kindred compilations. There was the *Historia Naturalis* of the Elder Pliny, who perished during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Its thirty-seven books treat of geography, zoology, medicine, magic, and half-a-dozen more branches of knowledge and ignorance. There was the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent de Beauvais, a Dominican friar who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century, and who styled his work *Speculum* 'because it briefly contains almost everything he could collect from innumerable works that is worthy of speculation.' It is divided into more than ten thousand chapters, several of which, that, for instance, on Botany, are subdivided alphabetically—an approach to the modern encyclopædic arrangement. There was the *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (On the Properties of Things) of our own countryman, the Franciscan Bartholomew de Glanville. Written about 1360, this became exceedingly popular in its translation (1398) by the Cornishman John Trevisa, a translation of great linguistic interest, since in the early manuscripts and the various printed editions of it may be traced the gradual changes in the English tongue during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Again, there was Johann Alsted's *Encyclopædia* (7 vols., Herborn, 1630), noteworthy as one of the first works bearing that title; but so broken up, like its predecessors, into books, according to subjects, that it is difficult, often impossible, to light on what one is wanting. Huge treatises are encyclopædic articles only in the sense that a ham and a quartern loaf are a potential packet of sandwiches. And finally there were the anonymous *Universal Historical, Geographical, Chronological, and Classical Dictionary* (2 vols., 1703), and Dr Harris's *Lexicon Technicum, or an Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1704). Themselves descendants of the foreign dictionaries and lexicons of Moreri, Hoffman, Bayle, and other seventeenth-century scholars, these two works may be deemed the first parents of all the subsequent race of English encyclopædias, cyclopædias of arts and sciences, and biographical dictionaries.

The earlier of them, the *Universal Dictionary*, has escaped the notice of all writers on the subject; indeed, Mr Lyons asserts positively that Harris's folio was 'the first alphabetical encyclopædia written in English.' Yet the Dictionary deserves not to be utterly forgotten, for it is full, concise, lively, and, all things considered, wonderfully accurate. This, though one smiles at its statement that 'the Arms of the Emperor of Japan are 3 *Trefoils Argent* in a *Field Sables*;' or at the vagueness of the following articles: 'Abraham, a Bishop who liv'd only upon Raw Herbs, yet entertain'd others Hospitably with good Victuals and Wine;' and 'Zareba, said to be a province of Arabia, of which, however, we could gain no exact information.' The use of 'em for them gives a quaint 'Harry Esmond' flavour to the style; and we cannot sufficiently admire the charity that concluded the article on James II. with this remark: 'Tho' he began to reign well enough, yet the remainder of his Government being blameworthy, I will draw a veil over the whole.'

At this point, our subject naturally branches into as many heads as a hydra's, and nearly as many as those of an old Scottish sermon. But we are not going to dwell on Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopædia* (2 vols., 1728); on the epoch-making, revolution-causing *Encyclopédie* of D'Alembert and Diderot (35 vols., 1751-80); on the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (3 vols., 1768-71; 9th ed., vols. i.-xxiii., A—Ups, 1875-88); on Coleridge's *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* (28 vols., 1817-45); on Knight's *English Cyclopædia* (23 vols., 1854-62); on Chambers's *Encyclopædia* (10 vols., 1860-68; 2d ed., vol. i., 1888); or on Mr Leslie Stephen's *Dictionary of National Biography* (vols. i.-xiv., A—D, 1885-88). Instead, we propose to offer some desultory remarks on encyclopædias generally and on the methods of their manufacture.

Encyclopædias differ like stars in magnitude. They vary in price from three shillings to one hundred and fifty pounds; in weight from nine ounces to four hundredweights; in rate of development from a few months to more than a century; in value from minus to ∞ —hyper-excellence. Cost does not matter much, if only one is rich; nor ponderosity, if one is stout of arm; no, nor slowness of production, if one comes of a long-lived stock, or has children and grandchildren to inherit the early volumes. Under such conditions one might safely have invested in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* (166 vols., 1782-1832), or even in the still vaster *Allgemeine Encyclopädie* of Ersch and Gruber, which, commenced in 1818, had reached in 1888 its 168th volume, and still is not nearly completed.

There is, however, one drawback to these monumental works: the ablest articles are apt in course of time to become obsolete, imperfect, absolutely wrong. This was true in the slow-coach days of our grandfathers; it is ten times more true in the present lightning age of change and progress. Glance back at the past ten years. Cyprus ten years ago was Turkish still; King Theebaw had not yet ascended the Burmese throne; the Prince Imperial and the Comte de Chambord were both possible candidates for the crown of France; Khartoum, ay and Gordon, were names little known to Englishmen; no bombardment had shattered the forts of Alexan-

dria; and Beaconsfield, Beecher, Borrow, Carlyle, Darwin, Doré, 'George Eliot,' Emerson, Fitzgerald, Gambetta, Garibaldi, Gortschakoff, President Grant, Victor Hugo, Lord Iddesleigh, Liszt, Longfellow, Pusey, Ranke, Charles Reade, Rossetti, Dean Stanley, Trollope, and Wagner were still alive.

Alive, but not therefore unknown?

Unknown at least to those encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries which take no account of the living, which require that a man must have died, if only a half-year before, to be worthy of a niche in their Valhalla. We do not ourselves believe that this rule was really dictated by a wish to exclude all matters of living interest. Rather its motive seems to be the fear that an article dealing with an unfinished career must itself of necessity be incomplete. Granted, it must; but so, too, must the bulk of the non-biographical articles. An article on any city or country, any branch of science or art, is seldom complete long after it has left its author's hands. Write an article to-day on Bulgaria; by the time it is printed and given to the world, the whole face of affairs may have altered; Bulgaria, indeed, may be wiped clean out of the map. Concerning the dead even one can never feel sure of having said the last word. Who could have written a faithful account of Bothwell before the appearance of his Life in Danish by Schiern? Or how can a really complete article be produced on Lord Beaconsfield so long as his diaries remain unpublished? To exclude Darwin, but admit the Darwinian theory; to describe Armstrong guns and the Bessemer process, but tell nothing about their inventors; to give sketches of German History and Tractarianism, but leave out Bismarck and Cardinal Newman—why, this is to work at a sum with half of the factors omitted.

There are hundreds, thousands, of other subjects demanding the same nice judgment on the editor's part, if he would shun the Scylla of omission, nor fall into the Charybdis of repetition. From four or five of the best and most recent works of general reference it were easy to frame a portentous list of omissions. Here are a few, culled at random: the Regents Murray and Morton, Sir Thomas Overbury, the dramatist Kyd, John Law and William Paterson, Philemon Holland, John Hales, North (Plutarch's translator), Prynne, Davoust, Gunpowder Plot (the Gowrie Conspiracy in the same work gets thirty-eight lines), the Peninsular and Crimean Wars (the Thirty and Seven Years' Wars have each an article), Ascidian, Juggernaut, Mica, Coquimbo, Dettingen, Maelstrom, Mont Cenis, Capes Cod and Horn, Magdalena. On the other hand, you sometimes find the same facts stated twice or thrice over in the very same work under such different headings as Boxing and Pugilism, Russia and Peter the Great, Catholic Emancipation and Roman Catholic Emancipation, British Navy and Navy (British), Borough and Municipality, Beating the Bounds and Perambulation of Parishes, Annates and First-fruits, and Banner, Colours, Crescent, Eagle, Ensign, Flag, Oriflamme, Pennant, Pennon, Signals, Standard, Tricolour, and Union Jack.

Certain it is that there must be some amount of repetition, though it can be greatly minimised by means of skilful cross-references; certain, too,

that no work can aim at telling everything, even though it does claim to be a 'dictionary of universal information.' All information is not valuable. That imparted by Mr F.'s aunt in *Little Dorrit* was decidedly worthless; so was that demanded of Water-baby Tom by the Turnip: 'Can you tell me the name of a place that nobody ever heard of, where nothing ever happened, in a country not yet discovered?' The *Perfect Encyclopædia* (Utopiæ, anno Millennium) will aim, of course, at absolute utility—will tell everything that may be reasonably wanted about everything likely to be ever looked for, tell it with the utmost conciseness consistent with clearness and good literary style.

Yes, utilitarianism—'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'—must ever be the editor's first principle. If nine hundred and ninety-nine readers will turn to the article Shakespeare, and one only—he doubtfully—to that on Sir Richard Blackmore, then Shakespeare, in racing parlance, is clearly first favourite, and Sir Richard a rank outsider. Still, the wise editor will, like his brother bookmaker, not overlook the outsiders; he will simply adjust his book to public opinion, and give Shakespeare, it may be, four pages, Sir Richard scarce fourteen lines.

Ah! but he'll have to reckon with his contributors. Bring together the Dodo specialist and the high-priest of Browning, and leave them to settle the relative length of their articles. Their end shall be that of the monkey and the parrot, whose mistress one evening left them alone in her bedroom. Returning five hours later, she heard a lamentable voice proclaiming, 'We have had a night of it;' and behold! Master Pug lay sightless on the bed, both eyeballs gouged out by the parrot, who himself drooped naked on the towel-rail, plucked cleaner than ever was medical.

Only readers may be gentle; the editor must be stern, inflexible. Let him be weak, and the articles on Unknown Tongues shall exceed those on French and Italian. But, indeed, there is a class of contributors with whom there is no doing anything till a score or so have been hanged for an example. There is your great authority on Suffolk—a Nimrod he, two-thirds of whose article is devoted to an *excursus* on fox-hunting, to an account of some memorable run in which thirty-three hounds were killed by a passing express. (This one knows to be a lie, for in East Anglia there are no expresses.) There is your nautical contributor. You ask him for four pages on the Navy; instead, he sends you nine on the Armada, which has long since received its allotted quota. There is the titled authoress, who begs leave so prettily to furnish a 'tiny notice' of the historic castle of her ancestors. Tippoo's sword is preserved there, and on that slender peg she hangs three whole columns of Indian history. There is the contributor who does good work so slowly, that you have to drag it from him piecemeal, if indeed you can get it at all. And there is the contributor who does bad work very rapidly, who composes by decomposing, and refurbishes stolen articles with different language—the more indifferent the less chance of his detection. (For him, see the third act of Mr Byron's *Our Boys*.) There are many others. Like the mouse's in *Alice*, the editor's tale is not seldom a long and a sad one.

We have had encyclopædias for the erudite, encyclopædias for the common-sensible; why not a *Lunatics' Encyclopædia*? It might prove a brilliant hit, as supplying a long-felt want, might even satisfy the never satisfied. It of course would put everything just where no sane being would dream of looking for it—Wood-engraving at Xylography, Roumania at Vlachia, Music at Schools of Musicians, Chad at Ceadda, Stonehenge and Avebury at Ancient Monuments, Earthquakes at Seismology, Cope and Chasuble at Overcoats, Bothwell at Hepburn, and so forth. (Only, the editor would have to be careful that he was not infringing a copyright.) It would lengthen everything that should be short, and shorten everything that might be long, giving an equal space to Keats, and Tannahill, and Robert Pollok; as much to Gilfillan as to Brantôme and Robert Burton together; twice as much to 'Monk' Lewis as to 'George Eliot;' and far less to Shakespeare than to Pope or Dryden. (Though here, too, it were hard to be original.) Then, to avoid monotony, it should give as many conflicting accounts of everything as possible; assign every event to at least two different dates; and adapt freely, daringly, from foreign authorities. (Varsovie and Warsaw, St Johnstone's and Perth, Regensburg and Ratisbon, figure well side by side in one article; and in describing an Italian town it looks so idiomatic to speak of the *Domplatz*, or of a Spanish townhall as an *hôtel-de-ville*.) Lastly, the *Lunatics' Encyclopædia* should revel in misprints and solecisms. So, by dint of the rarest ingenuity, it might furnish a collection of glorious *errata*, whose obscurity should outdim even such gems as these:

'The pretty little town of Biggar, with majestic *tints* looming in the distance.'—Perhaps Tinto Hill was intended.

'In the Middle Ages Göttingen was invested by the Moors.'—*Umgeben mit Mauern* might by some be rendered, 'surrounded with walls.'

'The spike used for spiking a gun is twenty-seven inches in diameter.'—This seems large.

'The animal kingdom of Austria embraces wild boars, foxes, jackals (!), otters,' &c.

'The countess was summoned in December 1683 to decipher them. She, *however*, replied that she had burnt the only key she had. Both she and Lorne, *however*, admitted that they were in Argyle's writing. The cipher was, *however*, at length read by Spence.'—This, *however*, is by no means the first or the last *however* in the article.

'The boy [Jean Jacques Rousseau] educated himself with the novels of Samuel Richardson.'—As the first of these appeared in 1740, and Jean Jacques was born in 1712, he must have been rather an old boy.

'A lacustrine expanse encinctured with silvan ornament.'—This is how a very good gazetteer has translated 'a lake surrounded with trees.'

'In 1696, William Prince of Orange built the new castle of Breda. It was afterwards the residence of Charles II. in his exile.'

'In 1529, John Caius was admitted a student of Gonville Hall at Cambridge, where, owing to the successive labours of Erasmus, Sir John Cheke, and Sir Thomas Smith, the new learning was being cultivated with great success.'—In 1529, Cheke was just fifteen years old.

'He died at Schlagfluss, 13th October 1823.'—*Schlagfluss* in German means 'apoplexy'—an odd name, even for a German place. We should read, 'He died of apoplexy.'

'When Kossuth, the Hungarian leader, landed in England, after having been rescued by Palmerston from the demands made for his surrender, he proposed to receive this personage at Broadlands.'—One would hardly guess that 'he' stands for Palmerston, and 'this personage' for Kossuth.

'The chief occupation of the natives of Mecca is the weaving of *chaplets of roses* for the pious pilgrims.'—Precisely, *Rosenkränze*. But it might mean 'rosaries.'

'The Banda Islands have an area of about 7150 square miles.'—'About' is a vague word; still, 'Behm and Wagner' gives the area as seventeen English square miles.

'Sydney Smith, born in 1771 . . . in 1780 was elected a scholar of New College, Oxford.'

'The present town charter of Hawick was confirmed in 1545 by Queen Mary during a residence in the town.'—She being then two years old.

'Idiotic mistakes,' says the reader. But, pray, dear reader, did you ever write for, or, worse still, edit, an encyclopædia?

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XV.—THE PLAN EXTENDS ITSELF.

FOR three or four days, Elsie lay at the Relfs' lodgings at Lowestoft, seriously ill, but slowly improving; and all the time, Mrs Relf and Edie watched over her tenderly with unceasing solicitude, as though she had been their own daughter and sister. Elsie's heart was torn every moment by a devouring desire to know what Hugh had done, what Hugh was doing, what they had all said and thought about her at Whitestrاند. She never said so directly to the Relfs, of course; she couldn't bring herself yet to speak of it to anybody; but Edie perceived it intuitively from her silence and her words; and after a time, she mentioned the matter in sisterly confidence to her brother Warren. They had both looked in the local papers for some account of the accident—if accident it were—and saw, to their surprise, that no note was taken anywhere of Elsie's sudden disappearance. This was curious, not to say ominous; for in most English country villages a young lady cannot vanish into space on a summer evening, especially by flinging herself bodily into the sea—as Warren Relf did not doubt for a second Elsie had done in the momentary desperation of a terrible awakening—without exciting some sort of local curiosity as to where she has gone or what has become of the body. We cannot emulate the calm social atmosphere of the Bagdad of the Califs, where a mysterious disappearance on an enchanted carpet aroused but the faintest and most languid passing interest in the breasts of the bystanders. With us, the enchanted carpet explanation has fallen out of date, and mysterious disappearances, however remarkable, form a subject rather of prosaic and prying inquiry on the part of those commonplace and unromantic myrmidons, the county constabulary. This strange absence of any allusion in the Whitestrاند news to what must needs have formed a nine days' wonder in the quiet little village, quickened all Warren Relf's profoundest suspicions as to Hugh's procedure. At Whitestrاند, all they could possibly know was that Miss Challoner was missing—perhaps even that Miss Challoner had drowned herself. Why should it all be so unaccountably burked, so strangely hushed up in the local newspapers? Why should no report be divulged anywhere? Why should nobody even hint in the *Lowestoft Times* or the *Ipswich Chronicle* that a young lady, of considerable personal attractions, was unaccountably missing from the family of a well-known Suffolk landowner?

Already on the very day after his return to Lowestoft, Warren Relf had hastily telegraphed to Hugh Massinger at Whitestrاند that he was detained in the Broads, and would be unable to carry out his long-standing engagement to take him round in the *Mud-Turtle* to London. But as time went on, and no news came from Massinger, Warren Relf's suspicions deepened daily. It was clear that Elsie, too, was lingering in her convalescence from suspense and uncertainty. She couldn't make up her mind to write either to Hugh or Winifred, and yet she couldn't bear the long state of doubt which silence entailed upon her. So at last, to set to rest their joint fears, and to make sure what was really being said and done and thought at Whitestrاند, Warren Relf determined to run over quietly for an afternoon's inquiry, and to hear with his own ears how people were talking about the topic of the hour in the little village.

He never got there, however. At Almundham Station, to his great surprise, he ran suddenly against Mr Wyville Meysey. The Squire recognised him at a glance as the young man who had taken them in his yawl to the sandhills, and began to talk to him freely at once about all that had since happened in the family. But Relf was even more astonished when he found that the subject which lay uppermost in Mr Meysey's mind just then was not Elsie Challoner's mysterious disappearance at all, but his daughter Winifred's recent engagement to Hugh Massinger. The painter was still some years too young to have mastered the profound anthropological truth that even with the best of us, man is always a self-centred being.

'Well, yes,' the Squire said, after a few commonplace of conversation had been interchanged between them. 'You haven't heard, then, from your friend Massinger lately, haven't you? I'm surprised at that. He had something out of the common to communicate. I should have thought he'd have been anxious to let you know at once that he and my girl Winifred had hit things off amicably together.—O yes, it's announced, definitely announced: Society is aware of it. Mrs Meysey made it known to the county, so to speak, at Sir Theodore Sheepshanks's on Wednesday evening. Your friend Massinger is not perhaps quite the precise man we might have selected ourselves for Winifred, if we'd taken the choice into our own hands; but what I say is, let the young people settle these things themselves—let the young people settle them between them. It's they who've got to live with one another, after all, not we; and they're a great deal more interested in it at bottom, when one comes to think of it, than the whole of the rest of us put together.'

'And Miss Challoner?' Warren asked, as soon as he could edge in a word conveniently, after the Squire had dealt from many points of view—all equally prosy—with Hugh Massinger's position, character, and prospects—'is she still with you? I'm greatly interested in her. She made an immense impression on me that day in the sandhills.'

The Squire's face fell somewhat. 'Miss Challoner?' he echoed. 'Ah, yes; our governess. Well, to tell you the truth—if you ask me point-blank—Miss Challoner's gone off a little sud-

denly.—We've been disappointed in that girl, if you *will* have it. We don't want it talked about in the neighbourhood more than we can help, on Hugh Massinger's account, more than anything else, because, after all, she was a sort of a cousin of his—a sort of a cousin, though a very remote one; as we learn now, an extremely remote one. We've asked the servants to hush it all up as much as they can, to prevent gossip; for my daughter's sake, we'd like to avoid gossip; but I don't mind telling you, in strict confidence, as you're a friend of Massinger's, that Miss Challoner left us, we all think, in a most unkind and ungrateful manner. It fell upon us like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. She left a letter for Winifred, saying she was leaving for parts unknown, without grounds stated. She slipped away, like a thief in the night, as the proverb says, taking just a small handbag with her, one dark evening; and the only other communication we've since received is a telegram from London—sent to Hugh Massinger—asking us, in the most mysterious, romantic school-girlish style, to forward her luggage and belongings to an address given.'

'A telegram from London!' Warren Relf cried in blank surprise. 'Do you think Miss Challoner's in London, then? That's very remarkable.—A telegram to Massinger! asking you to send her luggage on to London!—You're quite sure it came from London, are you?'

'Quite sure!—Why, I've got it in my pocket this very moment, my dear sir,' the Squire replied somewhat testily. (When an elder man says 'My dear sir' to a very much younger one, you may take it for granted he always means to mark his strong disapprobation of the particular turn the talk has taken.) 'Here it is—look: "To Hugh Massinger, *Fisherman's Rest*, Whitestrand, Suffolk.—Ask Winifred to send the rest of my luggage and property to 27 Holmbury Place, Duke Street, St James's. Explanations by post hereafter.—ELSIE CHALLONER."—And here's the letter she wrote to Winifred: a very disappointing, disheartening letter. I'd like you to read it, as you seem interested in the girl. It's an immense mistake ever to be interested in anybody anywhere! A very bad lot, after all, I'm afraid; though she's clever, of course, undeniably clever.—We had her with the best credentials, too, from Girton. We're only too thankful now to think she should have associated for so very short a time with my daughter Winifred.'

Warren Relf took the letter and telegram from the Squire's hand in speechless astonishment. This was evidently a plot—a dark and extraordinary plot of Massinger's. Just at first he could hardly unravel its curious intricacies. He knew the address in Holmbury Place well; it was where the club porter of the Cheyne Row lived. But he read the letter with utter bewilderment. Then the whole truth dawned piecemeal upon his astonished mind as he read it over and over slowly. It was all a lie—a hideous, hateful lie. Hugh Massinger believed that Elsie was drowned. He had forged the letter to Winifred to cover the truth, and, incredible as it seemed to a straightforward, honest nature like Warren Relf's, he had managed to get the telegram sent from London by some other person, in Elsie's name, and to have

Elsie's belongings forwarded direct to the club porter's, as if at her own request, by Miss Meysey. Warren Relf stood aghast with horror at this unexpected revelation of Massinger's utter baseness and extraordinary cunning. He had suspected the man of heartlessness and levity; he had never suspected him of anything like so profound a capacity for serious crime—for forgery and theft and concealment of evidence.

His fingers trembled as he held and examined the two documents. At all hazards, he must show them to Miss Challoner. It was right she should herself know for exactly what manner of man she had thrown herself away. He hesitated a moment, then he said boldly: 'These papers are very important to me, as casting light on the whole matter. I'm an acquaintance of Massinger's, and I'm deeply interested in the young lady. It's highly desirable she should be traced and looked after. I have some reason to suspect where she is at present. I want to ask a favour of you now. Will you lend me these documents, for three days only, and will you kindly mention to nobody at present the fact of your having seen me or spoken to me here this morning?' To gain time at least was always something.

The Squire was somewhat taken aback at first by this unexpected request; but Warren Relf looked so honest and true as he asked it, that, after a few words of hesitation and explanation, the Squire, convinced of his friendly intentions, acceded to both his propositions at once. It flashed across his mind as a possible solution that the painter had been pestering Elsie with too pressing attentions, and that Elsie, with hysterical girlish haste, had run away from him to escape them—or perhaps only to make him follow her. Anyhow, there would be no great harm in his tracking her down. 'If the girl's in trouble, and you think you can help her,' he said good-naturedly, 'I don't mind giving you what assistance I can in this matter. You can have the papers. Send them back next week or the week after. I'm going to Scotland for a fortnight's shooting now—at Farquharson's of Invertnar—and I shan't be back till the 10th or 11th. But I'm glad somebody has some idea where the girl is. As it seems to be confidential, I'll ask no questions at present about her; but I do hope she hasn't got into any serious mischief.'

'She has got into no mischief at all of any sort,' Warren Relf answered slowly and seriously. 'You are evidently labouring under a complete misapprehension, Mr Meysey, as to her reasons for leaving you. I have no doubt that misapprehension will be cleared up in time. Miss Challoner's motives, I can assure you, were perfectly right and proper; only the action of another person has led you to mistake her conduct in the matter.'

This was mysterious, and the Squire hated mystery; but after all, it favoured his theory—and besides, the matter was to him a relatively unimportant one. It didn't concern his own private interest. He merely suspected Warren Relf of having got himself mixed up in some foolish love-affair with Elsie Challoner, his daughter's governess, and he vaguely conceived that one or other of them had taken a very remarkable and romantic way of wriggling out of it. Moreover, at that precise moment his train

came in; and since time and train wait for no man, the Squire, with a hasty farewell to the young painter, installed himself forthwith on the comfortable cushions of a first-class carriage, and steamed unconcernedly out of Almundham Station.

It was useless for Warren Relf now to go on to Whitestrand. To show himself there would be merely to display his hand openly before Hugh Massinger. The caprice of circumstances had settled everything for him exactly as he would have wished it. It was lucky indeed that the Squire would be away for a whole fortnight; his absence would give them time to concert a connected plan of action, and to devise means for protecting Elsie. For to Warren Relf that was now the one great problem in the case—how to hush the whole matter up, without exposing Elsie's wounded heart to daws and jays—without making her the matter of unnecessary suspicion, or the subject of common gossip and censorious chatter. At all costs, it must never be said that Miss Challoner had tried to drown herself in spite and jealousy at Whitestrand poplar, because Hugh Massinger had ventured to propose to Winifred Meysey.

That was how the daws and jays would put it, after their odious kind, over five o'clock tea, in their demure drawing-rooms.

What Elsie herself would say to it all, or think of doing in these difficult circumstances, Warren Relf did not in the least know. As yet, he was only very imperfectly informed as to the real state of the case in all its minor details. But he knew this much—that he must screen Elsie at all hazards from the slanderous tongues of five o'clock tea-tables, and that the story must be kept as quiet as possible, safeguarded by himself, his mother, and his sister.

So he took the next train back to Lowestoft, to consult at leisure on these new proofs of Hugh Massinger's guilt with his domestic counsellors.

(To be continued.)

THE BLIZZARD OF THE NORTH-WEST.

THE word 'blizzard' was first used in January 1866 to designate the wintry storms peculiar to the north-western States and Territories, at which date one of the worst of these storms swept over the prairies of Minnesota and Dakota. The blizzard belongs to the prairies of North America, as distinctly as the simoom belongs to the deserts of Arabia; but the results are more disastrous to human life. Every country is visited by storms; but in no other country than these prairies of the north-west do we read of blizzards. They are as much worse than ordinary snow-storms as a hurricane on the ocean is worse than an ordinary wind. Imagine snow driven by a wind blowing at the rate of from forty to sixty miles an hour, with the thermometer registering from twenty to forty degrees below zero Fahrenheit. That is a blizzard! Fortunately, they do not visit us usually more than three or four times in the winter, and sometimes a winter is passed without one being recorded. The loss of life to man and beast resulting from these blizzards in the past has been appalling; but never has one

caused so many deaths as that which visited this section during the week ending January 14 of the present year. In this storm, it is estimated that over two hundred people were frozen to death in Minnesota, Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

The first of these storms of which any record is found occurred on December 31, 1863, when the thermometers in St Paul, Minnesota, registered fifty-two degrees below zero. In January 1866 another of these blizzards passed over this section, and in that storm Captain Field, together with twenty of the members of the 2d Minnesota Volunteer Cavalry, perished while marching from Fort Wadsworth (now called Fort Sisseton, in Dakota Territory) to Fort Abercrombie. Again, in January 1873 a disastrous blizzard passed over Minnesota and Dakota, resulting in death by freezing to sixty-six persons. But the blizzard of this year proved the most disastrous to human life on record, chiefly because the storm came so suddenly and the temperature fell so rapidly that it is a miracle how any one exposed to the fury of the elements escaped. The morning had been bright and sunny—indeed, such a one as is seen seldom in the depth of winter in this climate. It presented itself to farmers and others as a good opportunity to visit the distant towns for supplies; it was hailed with delight by commercial travellers who desired to visit their customers in outlying villages; children who had been unable to attend school for days because of the severity of the weather, started out cheerfully to the school-houses, in many instances more than a mile distant across the prairies; and stockmen and cowboys hailed the beautiful morning with delight as they saddled their horses and rode out on the range to look up the cattle in their charge. As noon drew near, light clouds gathered and obscured the sun, while snow fell gently; but almost without any warning, the whole appearance of the heavens is changed. The light clouds grow blacker, the wind commences to blow a hurricane, the snow is whirled across the prairies at the rate of forty to fifty miles an hour, and the thermometer falls to twenty and thirty degrees below zero so quickly, that it seems as though no one exposed to the storm can escape. Such was the fury of the tempest that men were lost a few yards from their own houses, the snow being driven into their faces with so much violence as to blind them. The noise made by the wind was so great that where the members of a party became separated from each other they could not hear one another's voices even at the distance of a few yards.

The experience of a commercial traveller in Dakota is worth recording. In company with about twenty passengers, he was about half-way between two stations, when the violence of the storm made it impossible for the engine to push its way through the snow, which had drifted in a cut to the depth of three or four feet in an incredibly short space of time. The engineer attempted to back the train to the station he had left a short time before, but the snow had drifted on to the track so as to render this impossible; and another attempt to run ahead resulted in the engine sticking fast in the snow, with the cold so intense that the pipes froze and rendered it

useless. All that afternoon, night, and the next morning till afternoon, the passengers and trainmen lived in the coaches, comfortable so far as warmth was concerned, because, with a stove at each end of the coach and plenty of fuel, that was no difficult matter; but very uncomfortable otherwise, having little or no food, and being unable to see the telegraph poles only a few feet from the track, so violent was the storm. As near as they could judge it was about nine miles from the nearest station; but none of them had the desire to attempt the journey, at anyrate on foot, as long as the storm lasted. However, some time after noon of the second day some citizens from the nearest town courageously started out with sleighs to rescue those in the snow-bound train. The transfer to the sleighs having been made, the horses' heads were turned towards home. But to drive with the howling wind and drifting snow in their backs was one thing—to face it, another, and before the town was reached, every one in the party was more or less frost-bitten. The sleigh in which Mr Burdick, the commercial traveller, was riding was upset in a drift, and every one had to look out for himself and walk. Mr Burdick had been in several bad storms, but he says that when he gained his feet after the upset, the storm was so severe that he was blinded and unable to locate the hotel or decide which direction to take. He, however, struggled on manfully, wading through the snow-drift as well as he could, sometimes walking, at other times crawling, until he fell, unable to rise, and felt unconsciousness gradually creeping on, which he knew was a sign that he was freezing to death. Fortunately, one of the other sleighs passed where he was lying, and he was conveyed to the hotel, where he was resuscitated, but suffered from blindness for two days, as well as with a frozen face, ears, hands, and feet, from which he will not recover entirely for months to come.

Another incident is recorded where a lady school-teacher left the schoolhouse with two of her pupils to go to her home, about a quarter of a mile distant. As they did not reach the house by the time they ought, a search-party was organised; but no trace of them was discovered until after the storm had abated, when the children were found frozen to death in the embrace of the lady, who had also perished. She had evidently struggled against the storm until its severity had exhausted her; but even then she had attempted to save the little ones by shielding them from the elements with her own body.

Incidents of heroic actions were not rare. We read of several men in one town starting out on foot to rescue the passengers in a train which was snowed-up only a short distance from a station. These brave men, in order to find their way had to take ropes and form a line between the telegraph poles; and by following this rope-walk, the passengers were rescued, and just at a time when the fuel in the train was exhausted, and after they had been several hours without food. The rescuers suffered more or less from frozen hands and feet, but counted their sufferings as nothing when compared with the lives their courage had saved.

One lady school-teacher kept her thirteen pupils in the schoolhouse until the violence of the wind

blew the door down. Then tying them together, and attaching the rope to her own person, in order to prevent the possibility of the party becoming separated from each other, she took the youngest in her arms, and after an heroic struggle against the blinding snow and bitter cold, reached the nearest farmhouse in safety with all her pupils.

Fortunately, such severe storms as the one just referred to are very rare, in fact, as nearly as the writer can ascertain, this last is the fourth within the last twenty-five years that has been attended with fatal results; and although this section is visited by blizzards often three and four times every winter, the only way to account for the absence of fatalities is that in most of the cases the storms gave timely warning of their approach.

IN DANGER'S WAY: A TALE OF TWO HEROES.

CHAPTER V.—CONCLUSION.

WHEN morning dawned, the wind had dropped, and the storm-clouds were no longer blackening the sky; but the waves along the beach at Shingle Point, impelled by the rising tide, still made themselves heard. The daylight looked in through a cottage window; it lit up a small room—so small that the bed at one end, although only a little one, occupied nearly half its dimensions. Upon this bed lay Max Von Roûn; and in a chair at the bedside sat Captain Satchell. The captain presently rose and drew aside the curtain.

At this moment Von Roûn's mother came in and glanced anxiously towards the bed. 'Still asleep?' said she.

The captain nodded; then he asked: 'How is the brave lad who saved your son's life?'

'Badly bruised, but in no danger. He is being well cared for up at the *Six Bells*. I have just been there to inquire.'

This conversation, though carried on in a whisper, awakened Von Roûn.

The captain sat down on the edge of the bed. 'Well, Max,' said he, 'what cheer?' and he placed a gentle hand on the young sailor's shoulder.

Von Roûn looked about him with a vacant stare. His eyes presently fastened upon his mother's face. 'Mother, how did I come here?'

The woman tried to answer; but she sank down with a sob at the bedside, her son's hand in both her own.

'My lad,' said the captain in a husky voice, 'you've been saved from drowning—saved off Shingle beach.'

These words brought a still more dazed look into Von Roûn's eyes; but all of a sudden his face brightened. 'Ah, I remember, captain; I remember everything now.' He raised himself upon his elbow and listened. The sound of the waves broke upon his ear. 'Captain, I came back yesterday, in the face of that storm, because I couldn't rest. You can guess why.'

Captain Satchell gave him a shrewd look, but said nothing.

'It was midnight, and low tide,' the young sailor went on, 'when I first caught sight of the *Cora*. She was lying, with some feet of sea below her, wedged in between two rocks.

It was a bright moonlight night; but there was a wind rising, and heavy clouds were coming up, and I had no time to lose. I could see the waves breaking against her starboard side. The masts were gone: she looked like a hulk that might go to pieces at any time. I hurried forward over the slippery rocks; but suddenly I became aware that some one was following me. I looked round: it was Stephen Walsh.

'Ah!' cried the captain.

'Yes; Stephen Walsh was coming up quickly behind. I saw my chance. The clouds would cover the moon before he could overtake me. I darted forward, leapt on board, and hurried below. The cabin still held together, but was nearly half under water; the lid of the locker wasn't an inch above water-mark. I had brought some small tools with me, and I got the locker open in two minutes. As soon as I raised the lid, I could not suppress a shout of joy. The moonshine which entered through the broken skylight overhead showed me a small tin box; it was lying among some damp books and clothes. I opened it, and a large and brilliant diamond was glittering before my eyes. It was like a vision; for next moment those dark clouds obscured the moon: the cabin was in darkness. But I had got my prize.' Again his face brightened. Presently he resumed. 'I reached the deck just in time to see a lingering glimmer of moonlight above the horizon, towards which the clouds were now being driven by a stiffening wind. But this light dotted with stars went out, as the light had done out of the diamond, and the whole sky was darkened. I couldn't see an inch before me. I heard an angry shout; but I took no notice of that. Neither was Stephen Walsh nor was I in a mood to meet at such a moment. There is no saying, if we had met, what would have happened.' For a while Von Roïin was silent; then he concluded in a few words. 'The tide had turned; and the waves, as I had reason to know, were already leaping over the deck. At any moment, if I didn't get instantly back to the rocks, I might be struck down and washed into the sea. I groped to the side, crept over the broken planks as best I could, and got safely on shore. There was almost as much need to hurry over the rocks; for, as I crept inland, more like a crab than anything else, I heard great waves coming up behind me, and felt the splash of spray on my shoulders. In this manner I slowly reached my boat. I had taken the precaution to hoist a lamp to the masthead after sunset, and I could see it shining dimly right away in the creek. At day-break it was nearly high tide, and I at once put to sea. There was a rough breeze blowing, and the sky threatened a gale: but I hoped to get here before the storm; for the wind, as I reckoned, would carry me across in a few hours. I was within sight of Shingle Point when the storm burst upon me; and although I stuck to the helm until the boat capsized, I had given myself up for lost before it happened.'

A knock now being heard at the door, Von Roïin's mother went out to answer it; and she presently came back to report that Captain Satchell was wanted up at the *Six Bells*.

It was a sunny morning, and a fresh wind

was blowing over the cliff; and as the mariner walked towards the inn and looked around, he thought of all that had happened last night. A sense of gratitude rose in his heart—a sense of thanksgiving for his chief-mate's escape out of the perils of that storm.

There was a horse and trap standing at the door of the *Six Bells*, which the captain recognised as Mr Norland's. He was asked by the landlord to step up-stairs; and in a private room looking out upon the sea, he found the ship-owner 'pacing the deck.' Cora was seated at the window. She rose as the captain came in and held out her hand.

'How can I thank you?' said she. 'We have heard what happened last night. It was all through my folly that—'

'Tut, tut!' interrupted the ship-owner. 'What had you to do with it? I'll have no sentiment.—Sit down, captain. The rumours this morning at Southsea Bay were so contradictory and so alarming, that we determined to come over and learn what really *had* happened.—Will you go and see, my dear,' added Mr Norland, turning to his daughter, 'what they can give us for breakfast? I want to have a talk with the captain.'

Cora was only too glad of an excuse to leave them. Having given the necessary instructions about breakfast, she hurried out into the sunshine; and what was more natural than that she should turn her steps towards the sea? The nearest way to the sea from the *Six Bells* led past a certain cottage. At the door of this cottage, as Cora approached, she saw Von Roïin's mother. It would have been unkind to have walked by without inquiring after her son; so the girl stopped at the gate and said: 'Father and I have driven over; we could not rest. We heard such dreadful reports this morning. We feared that Captain Satchell and—and others—were drowned. I'm so glad it's not true.'

Von Roïin's mother, beaming with smiles, held the gate invitingly open. 'Won't you step in? Max was wishing, only a minute ago, that he could see you.'

The young sailor was seated in the armchair by the kitchen fire when Cora came in. He was looking a little pale and worn, she thought; but he appeared all the more interesting in her eyes on that account. Had he not run in danger's way to win her love?

The girl sat down without uttering a word. Before reaching the cottage, she had, in her impulsive manner, felt an irresistible wish to go and visit the young sailor. She did not know—she only surmised—that he had been in search of the diamond. All she knew was that he had narrowly escaped drowning; and not until that moment, although Cora had known Von Roïin since childhood, did she realise how deeply she loved. But now—now that she was seated beside him—she wished herself back at Southsea Bay. She felt confused—vexed with herself for her impetuosity.

'Cora,' said Von Roïin, in an earnest voice, 'when I left you the other evening—the evening upon which I brought you Abel Honeywood's letter—I made a stern resolution. Shall I tell you what it was?'

The girl looked about her as if she had thoughts

of making her escape. But the door was closed, and Von Roën's mother, as if on guard, was in the front garden. Cora could see her through the window walking among the fruit-trees. She clasped her hands, and gave a nod at the kitchen fire.

'I resolved to find the wrecked vessel.'

'I was sure of it!' cried the girl. 'I told Captain Satchell so. He followed you; he came to Shingle Point on purpose to prevent you from undertaking so—so foolish an expedition.'

The young sailor looked searchingly into the girl's face. 'Captain Satchell came too late. I started from Shingle Point on this foolish expedition, as you call it, at daybreak yesterday morning; and I resolved not only to find the wreck—I resolved to find the diamond or never to return to England again.'

'Then why,' said the girl in her old laughing way, 'why have you come back now?'

'To bring you this!' and Max Von Roën put his hand to his breast and drew forth a splendid diamond, that glittered in a blaze of sunshine which burst upon it through the cottage window as he held it up in triumph over his head.

The girl stretched out her hands impulsively towards it.

Von Roën still held it over his head and beyond her reach. 'Stay,' said he, significantly. 'Do you remember?'

The girl cast down her eyes.

'Are you fated—if you would be happy—to become the wife of the man who gives you this?'

In a low, thoughtful tone Cora replied: 'It is my destiny.'

Von Roën held the cross towards her. 'Will you accept it, dear Cora, from me?'

She raised her pretty loving eyes to his face. He thought them far brighter than this diamond as they met his gaze.

'Yes, brave Von Roën!' cried she, throwing her arms round his neck, as she had often done when they were children. 'I could wish for no better destiny than to be your wife.'

Meanwhile, Mr Norland and Captain Satchell were having a serious talk together up at the *Six Bells*. The shrewd old mariner, finding the ship-owner in a good mood, seized the opportunity to relate Von Roën's adventure in search of the wreck. It was the most telling yarn he ever spun. 'His conduct,' concluded the captain significantly, 'deserves recognition. But there is only one reward that will content him.'

'And that is?—Ah, I understand,' said the ship-owner, 'and I cannot deny that such men merit promotion.—We must build a new brig, Satchell, and offer Von Roën the post of captain. That's the first thing to be done.—As for Cora,' added Mr Norland, 'I shall not attempt to interfere with her in her choice. A brave honest fellow like Max Von Roën is, after all, the best sort of husband.—What's your opinion?'

Captain Satchell's opinion was that the girl would never marry any one unless it was Von Roën. 'Stephen Walsh has altered his course,' he added; 'and it will take him a long time, I should imagine, to pluck up the courage to cruise about in these waters again.'

The mariner's words proved true. Walsh wisely kept out of the way; for it got noised

abroad—and there was some foundation for the rumour—that he, in his jealous passion, would not have hesitated to make an attempt on his rival's life had evil chance favoured his design.

After the new brig, *Cora*, had made her trial trip, under Von Roën's direction, the ship-owner gave his formal consent to his daughter's marriage with the young captain. And so 'destiny'—

That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in 't—

settled the affair as Max Von Roën had hardly dared to hope a few short months ago.

THE PROGRESS OF CYCLING.

CYCLING has now become an established institution in our midst, and the past summer has witnessed the usual developments amongst those who go 'out on the wheel.' Makers have vied with each other in turning out beautiful and perfect work, with the 'latest improvements' in steering or driving. The Cyclists' Touring Club now boasts of more than twenty-three thousand members; one firm of large makers at Coventry has, first and last, disposed of upwards of fifteen thousand tricycles of a certain pattern. The German makers, long distanced in the race, are now putting forth every effort to get a share of the trade in bicycles and tricycles; and if there is a fall in price this year in machines, it is not unlikely that it will have been owing to German competition. Over a thousand skilled workmen are busy in Germany, and it is calculated that they turn out seven thousand machines a year. The annual number sold of English and German machines together is said to be about twenty thousand. Many of the workmen in Germany are Englishmen. Every considerable town has now its place for hiring or selling bicycles or tricycles, and there are over a dozen newspapers or magazines devoted to this interest. In London and other large towns, cycles are largely used for business purposes, being made to carry goods. In America, tricycles are used by every class of Americans from physicians to telegraph boys; and it is reported that there are five hundred lady tricyclists in Washington. Medical men in our midst have been recommending this exercise to ladies, with certain reservations, so that this form of exercise has in all likelihood even a greater future before it.

The exercise is not limited to youth. At a cycling gathering at Coventry, last season, Major Knox-Holmes, eighty years of age, was engaged along with another gentleman on a tandem tricycle in the difficult task of reducing the thirty miles record. Singular to say, the pair succeeded. The recent cycling race with horsemen at the Agricultural Hall in London is another development of racing which called forth much public interest. A Roads Improvement Association has been started for the purpose of securing proper road maintenance, and attention to finger-posts and milestones—all matters of great importance to cyclists.

What is known as the 'Safety' or low two-wheeled bicycle, with the saddle placed between these wheels, made rapid strides in popularity last season. Its prospects appear to be quite as good this season, and many cyclists purpose taking it

up in place of the ordinary bicycle or tricycle. One of the novelties at the recent Stanley Show, London, was a tandem safety called the 'Lightning,' by Messrs Hall and Phillips, the American inventors of the machine. These gentlemen say that they have practically ridden this machine for eight hundred miles on the road. Two other makers have introduced a novelty of the same description. Another, an American cycling invention, which has been taken up by the Rudge Cycle Co., Coventry, is the 'Roadsculler,' which consists of two large wheels placed side by side, and a smaller wheel in front, as in an ordinary front-steering tricycle, but instead of being worked by treadles, is propelled by an action almost the same as that of sculling. A sliding seat, such as is fitted in racing-boats, is placed below the axles of the driving-wheels; and handles resembling those of sculls, and which are worked backwards and forwards in a similar manner, are placed on each side of the sculler. The steering is done either by the feet, or by pulling one hand harder than the other. It is said to be as fast as a cycle on an ordinary road, with the advantage that all the muscles of the body are brought into play, and the rider always faces the way he is moving.

We have just heard of two recent attempts to adapt steam to road-cycling, although the law against driving steam tricycles more rapidly than road-engines may prevent their development meantime. The Rev. J. Thomas Jones, LL.D., vicar of Curdworth, Warwickshire, has invented a method of applying steam to the propulsion of a tricycle. We are told that using one of Tangye's vertical boilers of the size commonly needed to work a one-horse power engine, he obtained from it, with a piston of four square inches surface, and steam at sixty pounds pressure, as much as six horse-power, indicated by the friction brake. We need not attempt to describe here the novel features of the machine, for which Dr Jones has applied for a patent, and which was fully described in the *Birmingham Daily Post* in January last. In *La Nature* for September 17, 1887, there is described another form of steam tricycle, the joint invention of Messrs Roger de Montais and L'Heritier. With one person, this novel carriage makes a speed of from nine to eleven miles an hour; with two, from eight to nine miles. The picture shows a front-steering sociable, having a body of the gig type; the riders have a footboard for their feet; the boiler, which looks like a small barrel on end, stands between them and the steering-wheel, the top being almost on a level with the rider's knees. The two large wheels are forty-seven and one-quarter inches diameter, the front wheel twenty-six and three-quarter inches. The boiler is heated by petroleum from a vessel which holds sufficient for ten hours' consumption. The water-tank contains water for two and a half hours, without replenishment. At first sight, it would appear that a really serious inconvenience would arise from the driver's vicinity to such a mass of heat as a steam-boiler; but we have not seen that anything has been said about this, and possibly some plan may have been fallen on to obviate the apparent inconvenience.

Of the beneficial effect of cycling to those engaged in sedentary occupations, we can speak from experience. Open air and cheerful healthful

exercise are the best tonics in existence. You do not need to be as ambitious as Mr Stevens, who journeyed round the world, to get the benefit of the exercise; a spin of ten or twenty miles on a good road will put you in excellent trim. For the timid, the middle-aged, and for ladies, the tricycle is most useful. Of course, the bicycle being a single-track machine, is best for rough roads, long journeys, and great speed. Our own experience is limited to the tricycle, which we have ridden on all kinds of roads—good, bad, and indifferent. In the selection of a machine it is well to hear the experience of several riders. Each rider may have his pet machine and praise it hugely, or he may painfully expose its faults. One must remember, also, that every new season brings fresh improvements in machines sold, and that a second-hand machine which is constantly needing repairs is not always a cheap machine. What with the spokes breaking and the tires needing fresh rubbers, a second-hand machine is often a doubtful bargain. Avoid what are known as 'taugent' wheels, that is, wheels which have the spokes twisted round and laced, instead of being 'headed' in. When one spoke gives way, the whole wheel is sent off its equilibrium. Admirable advice may be had as to improvements, lamps, and everything concerning the pastime, from a perusal of the Cyclists' Touring Club *Monthly Gazette* (139 Fleet Street, London), and other magazines and newspapers devoted to its interest. The guides and hand-books on the subject are too numerous to be mentioned here. The work on *Cycling* by Viscount Bury and G. Lacy Hillier is a perfect cyclopædia on the subject; while there is much curious information in Spencer's *Bicycles and Tricycles, Past and Present*.

In a sentence or two, we condense some good advice for beginners, which we have gained by experience or gleaned from others. Before beginning to exercise, it is well to have a doctor's assurance that there is no organic disease or weakness about the body which might render cycling unsafe. Choose the machine which is best fitted for your age, weight, strength, and size, for the condition of the roads you may have to ride, and which is in keeping with the amount you may have to spend. If some other member of your family, especially of the opposite sex, cares to go out with you, the purchase of a tandem may add greatly to the enjoyment of the exercise. Drive at first on level ground, at slow speed, and only for a short time and distance. It is foolish to try much hill-climbing until the muscles are braced with the exercise; this but proves discouraging. 'Never ride,' says one writer, 'for a record of speed or distance; ride not as an American, to be able to tell how much you have done; nor as an Englishman, merely for the muscular pleasure, but as a German would ride, for the benefit of both mind and body.'

Never ride directly after a full meal; if you do, you will have a sense of oppression, and your movements will be more languid than they ought to be. It is well to dress loosely, and best in all-wool. The tricycle is the best liniment ever invented for joints that have grown stiff through want of use. A ten-mile run will throw your 'nervous depression' to the winds. It leads to healthy action of the stomach and of the skin

and liver. We feel thankful for this form of recreation, by means of which one may drink in refreshment at every pore. While many make it a task and more toilsome than it need be, with most persons it strengthens brain and nerve, sweetens the temper, hardens the muscles, and makes those who practise it moderately, hardier and healthier.

IN A TURKISH CITY.

SECOND PAPER.

MOST of the streets in Scodra are far from being gay. The roadway is generally loose and pebbly, for it serves the double purpose of a road in dry weather and of a watercourse in the winter, when the Kiri overflows. At intervals, usually in front of some great gateway with massive wooden doors, are rows of boulders, which act as stepping-stones in the rainy season for those who wish to cross the street. The footpath is a raised causeway, sometimes a couple of feet above the road, in order to avoid the floods. There is no view at all; for on either hand rise high walls of cobble-stones, over which may perhaps be seen the red roofs of the houses they encircle, and the trees which beautify the courtyards and gardens kept so jealously guarded from the public eye.

My own little cottage will perhaps serve as a type of the houses in Scodra. Like the rest, it is hidden away behind its high stone walls, and its gateway is a huge and imposing affair like the entrance to a fortress. In front of the house is a bare little courtyard paved with cobble-stones, and containing the well with its curious hand windlass for drawing up the water. For some reason or other, this courtyard is covered in autumn with a luxuriant growth of chamomile, which renders the hot air heavy with a medicinal odour, and makes walking difficult except in the paths that get worn through the mass. It never enters into any one's head to uproot this growth: it is there, and we accept it with resignation. Beyond the courtyard, and separated from it by a slight fence, is the garden. It contains two or three olive trees, half-a-dozen vines, and a couple of mulberry trees, representing the three staple products of Scodra—oil, wine, and silk. To my own exertions are due the magnificent crop of tomatoes, the green peas, the other vegetables, and the glorious mass of flowers in one corner.

The house itself faces this little domain, and is a small one-storied cottage, built, like the wall, with cobble-stones from the bed of the Kiri, and plastered white all over. The roof is low; and the eaves project far over the walls, giving shelter from the burning sun in summer, and from the pitiless rain in winter. On the ground-floor is nothing but a servant's room, the rest being a wide open space, where wood, charcoal, and other stores are kept, and where the Albanians sometimes stable their horses and cattle. The house is really the half of a larger building, but was cut off from the other part many years ago. The

open balcony which runs along the front of all the houses of Scodra, has been shut in, to make a bedroom and an entrance-hall; while the ladder which formerly gave access to the first floor, has been roofed over and turned into a staircase. On this, the only floor, there are, besides the entrance-hall, two bedrooms, a sitting-room, and a kitchen. There is nothing remarkable about the other rooms; but my bedroom, which was in all probability the *harem* when an Albanian family occupied it, is a typical native room. It is lighted by three small square windows, guarded by an ornamental wooden lattice. These windows are about a foot from the ground, and only go half-way up the wall to where a broad shelf of carved wood runs all round the room, and is the general receptacle for every odd and end that can be stowed away nowhere else. Between two of the windows is the fireplace, a curious whitewashed erection resembling a small shrine. The hearth-stone is a broad octagonal slab, and was used on grand occasions for burning a whole log of wood at a time, as our ancestors burned the Yule-log. Opposite the fireplace is a deep alcove, panelled with carved wood; and above it a sort of balcony, to which access is given by a tiny staircase hidden in the wall. This recess once contained the carved oak-chest in which an Albanian bride's *trousseau* is stored; but now it serves as a wardrobe for my clothes, and as a convenient place for ranging my boots, over which huge rats tumble and disport themselves all night long.

Next door is the kitchen, where, with the most primitive of stoves and two or three tin pots, Simon the cook contrives to elaborate the most excellent dishes. I am proud of my cook, and with reason, for he is about the best cook in Scodra; indeed, on his own showing he is the only one. Occasionally he becomes inflated with pride, and gets restive, but is quickly brought to reason by the threat of sending to Trieste for a cook. Of course I have no such absurd intention; but Simon is given over to the idea so prevalent among the lower classes abroad, that the Bank of England cellars are full of new sovereigns, and that Englishmen have only got to go and take a few shovelfuls when they want money for any of their mad freaks. But then many educated foreigners will assert with all seriousness that England does everything with gold, and that even our soldiers never fight, but bribe the enemy to run away, as a French paper is persuaded they did at Tel-el-Kebir. Simon has a wife and family somewhere in the town, and does not sleep in the house, but disappears soon after dinner to reappear early the next morning.

Unlike the cook, who is an Albanian, Achmet, my personal servant, is a pure Turk. He is what corresponds to a university graduate in Turkey; but still, though he is a learned man, and writes his intricate language fluently, he does not disdain to put his entire energies into my service for the time being. And energies they are. He has none of the gravity of a Turk, and no one has ever yet

seen him walk. Correctly attired in a dark suit, and with his fez sticking straight up on his head, he goes about his marketing errands at a gait half shuffle, half trot, his beady little brown eyes glittering, and his umbrella tucked tightly under his arm after the manner of Mr Paul Pry. During the Russo-Turkish war, he managed to become the government's creditor for a considerable sum, just at the time when all government debts were being paid in *Caimées*, or paper money, when they could no longer be postponed. For a long time the worthy Achmet's importunities were met with fair words; but as he at last became wearisome, he was given an order for his money on the treasury of the vilayet of Scodra, to insure his leaving Constantinople. He arrived almost penniless in Scodra, where the governor, who had not been able to pay his troops for months, and who did not know where to turn for supplies of food for his men, treated the order on his empty treasury with scant ceremony. Poor Achmet was now at his wits' end; he fell ill from sheer privation, and was taken to the military hospital, where, when he grew stronger, he acted as general servant for his daily bread. This was his darkest hour. He had lost everything but a ragged suit of clothes, and the papers that proved the government's indebtedness to him; when one day he heard that the Austrian vice-consul had dismissed his servant and was looking for another. Achmet at once applied for the place; but was so miserable an object, and so ignorant of European ways, that it was with great hesitation the vice-consul allowed him to come for a week or two on trial, as there was no one else to be had. In a month, Achmet had become a very different being: his illness, brought on by hunger and despair, had completely left him; he had bought a neat dark suit of clothes with his first wages, and had become so excellent and trustworthy a servant, that his master would not have parted with him under any consideration. When the Austrian left Scodra, Achmet came to me; and a more faithful and hard-working servant no man was ever blessed with in the East or elsewhere.

A very little way off lives the consul who watches over the interests of the empire of China in Scodra. He is an amiable, shy, little man, whose pasty complexion gives him the appearance of having been parboiled. His official residence is a huge barrack not long erected, about which the poor little consul used to wander like a forlorn ghost. His chief friend and confidant is his dragoman, a worthy native of the town, whose eldest daughter has been educated in Europe. The lonely consul saw this girl, who had returned to her cottage home dressed in European costume, and speaking French with considerable fluency; but for a long while he kept his thoughts to himself. The poor child felt naturally rather like a fish out of water when she returned home, for she had become quite accustomed to European ways; while her mother and two sisters still clung to their loose Turkish trousers and oriental habits. But the fairy Prince was at hand. The little consul saw and loved; but the functionaries of the Chinese empire are not allowed to contract marriages at random, and without the leave of their imperial master; so the lover wisely kept his own counsel,

and sent in a formal application to his chiefs for permission to marry a girl with whom he had hardly exchanged two words in his life. In due time an imposing parchment arrived granting the required indulgence, and sealed with an imperial seal of portentous dimensions. The next day the consul placed the precious document and its envelope carefully into an inner pocket, and set off to pay a visit to his dragoman. The object of his affections was not in the room, so he timidly inquired after her. In the East, the head of a house assumes an extremely apologetic attitude towards a guest when speaking of his womankind, and considers a wife rather a thing to be ashamed of; but as his daughter had been educated *alla Franca*, the dragoman bowed so far to European customs as to summon her. The consul did not waste words—perhaps he could not trust himself to speak; but he pulled the enclosure from his pocket and thrust it into the girl's hands, saying simply: 'Read it.' Speechless with astonishment, she opened the document, and, stumbling through the preamble, saw, to her utter amazement, that the emperor granted permission to his trusty servant the consul to marry the lady mentioned in his application. It was perhaps the most original situation ever imagined.

The consul broke the silence. 'I have my august master's permission: what is your answer?'

Stammering something about consulting her parents, the girl rushed from the room; and her suitor, picking up his precious papers, took his leave.

The rest may be easily imagined. Consuls do not grow on wayside hedges. The family's acceptance was quickly notified to the lover; and he, prompt and decided in action, instantly secured the services of the priest. Every obstacle was overcome; the greatest secrecy was observed; and on the Sunday following this unique proposal, a little procession left the dragoman's house soon after sunset. First marched the *caravans*, gorgeous in his scarlet uniform, carrying a lantern in his hand, and too philosophical to betray any astonishment at the curious customs of the Franks. Then came the consul in his best black broadcloth frockcoat and billycock hat, with his bride leaning on his arm. Immediately behind the happy pair came the bride's two sisters, in Albanian dresses, shuffling along in their loose slippers, and with their full silken trousers rustling with aggressive newness, giggling behind their veils at the double impropriety of being out after dark and of seeing their sister leaning on a man's arm just like a Frank. The father and mother of the bride brought up the rear. The priest was waiting for the party; and the consul was married to his dragoman's daughter before more than half-a-dozen people in the city knew that there was ever an engagement between them.

The next day, the fact came out; and the gossip and amazement it excited were to be remembered; all the principal Christian merchants deeply regretting that their daughters had not been educated *alla Franca*, and resolving to rectify the mistake with the least possible delay. These good resolutions soon passed away when the nine days' wonder was over; but my neighbour remains with an amiable wife, and with

the satisfaction of having achieved the most unique proposal and wedding that ever entered the mind of man to conceive.

The other consuls are not men of such startling originality. One of them has a skittle alley in his garden; and once a week throughout the summer, consuls-general and pashas, consuls and beys, vice-consuls and Roman Catholic priests, vie with one another in bowling a heavy ball at the nine skittles at the other end of the alley. It is a capital amusement, as it combines gentle excitement and a certain amount of bodily exercise without the trouble of moving out of the shade of the spreading mulberry tree. At the other end, an Albanian gardener fags for us, and trundles back the ball with prodigious energy and never-ceasing grins. The representative of Andorra alone does not patronise these gaieties. He is an ill-tempered little man, with a hook nose and a heavy moustache, and often profits by the whole European colony being engaged at skittles, to pay one of his unfrequent visits. On returning home one day, I found his visiting card sticking out of a crack in my great outer gate. He knew I was out, but would not penetrate into the courtyard, for fear I should return and catch him before he could make his escape. I keep that card as a memorial of the high breeding shown by an official of the republic of Andorra.

For some reason or other, the kingdom of the Morea has a representative here. It is true that there is nothing for him to do; but that is just as well, for all the summer he is a prisoner in his rooms. It is far too hot to go out except just before sunset, and at that hour he dare not stir, for the cattle are then driven in from the pastures outside the city, and he has a mortal terror of cows. His predecessor nearly lost his life by rashly attempting to imitate the English, and take a cold bath directly after leaving his bed. He tried the experiment on one of the hottest days in summer; but the shock was so great that he retired shivering to his bed, and never repeated the attempt. He was quite right; it is a dangerous thing for a man of nearly forty to upset the habits of a lifetime, and use anything to wash in larger than a soap-dish.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE Secretary of the Edison and Swan United Electric Light Company has written an important letter to the *Times* bearing upon the subject of electric illumination. He urges that electric lighting is now possible and practicable, and that we only need legislation and the removal of the disabilities pressed upon manufacturers and others by a former Act of Parliament to obtain the great boon of a brilliant and pure light. He tells us that although there is not a single central station in the United Kingdom lighting the whole of any given area, such stations are common in America from New York to San Francisco, and are to be found at Berlin, Vienna, and many other cities of Europe. He further states that if an Electric Lighting Act rendering central stations possible be passed during the present session of Parliament, it will give immense im-

petus to the electrical trade; and that within a couple of years of the passing of such an Act, some one hundred thousand persons would find healthy and profitable employment. There is no doubt that these remarks are founded upon fact. It recently came to our knowledge that at two large paper-mills in Lancashire where the electric light has been adopted there is a saving of twenty-five per cent. on the cost of the gas previously used. We may also state that at Taunton, in Somersetshire, an Electric Lighting Company which has been in existence for more than a year has earned a dividend of five per cent. on its subscribed capital, and that additional capital is rapidly being subscribed for, so that the system may be much extended.

We hear of so many cases of burglary in which the offenders get off 'scot-free' with valuable booty, that we are pleased to notice the introduction of a Mechanical Burglar Alarm which seems to be both simple and effective. It consists of a rotating barrel containing a spring, which is coiled within it after the manner of a spring blind roller. To this barrel is attached a bell, which rings loudly directly the barrel begins to turn. The contrivance is held in check by a long cord which can be stretched in front of windows or doors, when a burglarious entry is likely to be made, and fastened to a catch-pin at any convenient point. Slight pressure upon this cord will release it from its pin, when the spring will cause the barrel to revolve and the bell to ring. The apparatus also acts as a fire-alarm, for it stands to reason that if the cord be severed by burning, the bell will immediately be caused to ring. This useful invention is being introduced by Mr Moser, of 31 Southampton Street, London.

According to some interesting researches by two French physiologists, it seems that the lungs of animals, even when in a state of perfect health, give off, besides carbonic acid, a decided poison, which is very prejudicial to animal life. It is believed that it is this poison that renders a confined atmosphere so unhealthy and dangerous. The carbonic acid expired does not wholly account for the particular effects which have been noted by these experimenters.

A singular explosion lately occurred at the town of Rochester in the state of New York. A Company there, which supplied the gas-works of the town with naphtha, pumped this inflammable liquid through a pipe two miles in length, which passed through the centre of the town. For some unexplained reason this pipe burst, and the naphtha got into the sewers to the amount of about fourteen thousand gallons. The vapour caught fire, and flames burst through the pavements in the streets and caused a number of explosions, which unfortunately led to fatal results.

Professor Milne, whose researches in earthquake phenomena are so well known, has in the *Transactions of the Seismological Society of Japan* called attention to a result of earthquakes which before has not met with the attention it deserves. He states that the gradual increasing terror has developed generation after generation in a nation subject to these terrible convulsions of nature, and that these terrors cannot but have a permanent effect upon the nation at large. He tells us that the survivors of the earthquake at

Manila in 1880 said that they had lived ten years in a minute. Again, at Chio, a year later, whole communities suddenly suffered terrors which in many cases amounted to madness; and for years after such a catastrophe, every tremor of the earth would produce a panic. Professor Milne believes that the effect of earth-disturbances upon the human race generally has been very great; and he further says, that if those forces which have been common in South America were turned loose in England or Germany, they would ultimately produce nations with no idea of permanency, and among whom everything intellectual would collapse—a result which would sink Germans and Englishmen to the lowest level in the ranks of civilised communities.

We have heard at different times so many panaceas for sea-sickness, all of which have disappointed expectation, that we are loath to give credence to a new one. It is stated, however, that the great remedy has at last been found in a substance which is called Anti-pyrene, one more product from that inexhaustible conjurer's bottle called coal-tar. This new remedy it is said has been administered with the best results, and is actually now being sold in little tablets of five grains each, which can easily be kept in the waist-coat pocket.

We have all learned to admire the great talent of Japanese artists, the chief charm of whose work is that they get their inspiration direct from nature; indeed, in some respects they may be said to be closer observers of nature than Europeans, notably in the case of the representation of flying birds, which, as we have pointed out before, they show with the wings sometimes in a downward position, which is strictly in accordance with nature, as has lately been proved by numerous instantaneous photographs. But with all our admiration for the Japanese, we can hardly endorse the opinion of one of their Commissioners, who some eighteen months ago was deputed by their government to visit the various art-centres of Europe and America. The deputation of which this official was a member has now returned to Japan, and has given in a Report, which, compressed into one paragraph, says 'that Japanese art is the only living art in the world to-day.' This Japanese critic further states that there is almost no such thing to-day as good European design, the capacity for designing having died out several centuries ago. This is indeed discouraging news for those who have believed in the forward progress of our various Art Schools throughout the country. Let us hope that it is not quite true.

Some very curious experiments have recently been made by Major King of the Engineer Corps, United States. He has converted a pair of large cannon, each weighing more than twenty tons, into an electro-magnet, by crossing their ends with a bundle of iron rails, and placing coils of wire around their muzzles in connection with a dynamo-machine. The effects obtained from this novel magnet are very wonderful, as is shown by certain photographs which are reproduced in the *Scientific American*. In one of these photographs we see a string of four fifteen-inch shells, each weighing three hundred and twenty pounds, suspended from the muzzle of one of the guns. These shells are hung one upon the other, just

as four tacks might be held up upon a toy-magnet. Some other very novel effects have been obtained from this enormous magnet.

According to the *Electrician*, an agreement has been entered into whereby London will be brought by telephone within speaking distance of the Midland counties, and ultimately also of the north of England. The details have not yet been elaborated; but it is said that Birmingham and London will be able to converse together very shortly.

We have heard so much from different sources about the abuse of tea as a beverage, that we are glad to note that Professor Sée, in a lecture lately delivered at the Hôtel-Dieu, Paris, upon the diet of patients, referred to tea as the best of beverages. He asserts that it is the best digestive known, provided that it is drunk shortly after being infused. He ridicules the idea of tea being injurious, and says that it is the best fluid upon which to maintain intellectual activity.

The task of moving a house bodily from one situation to another is one which has been undertaken more than once, especially in America. But it is not often that an enterprise of the kind has been attempted on such a scale as is now contemplated at Coney Island, New York. Here there is a building called the *Hotel Brighton*, which, like many other houses, has, in spite of a very old axiom regarding the futility of such a mode of building, been erected on the sand. At the particular point where it stands, the sea is rapidly encroaching, and the owners of the hotel have made up their minds—as they cannot keep the waves back—to remove their premises out of their reach. For this purpose, the hotel, which weighs five thousand tons and is three stories high and which has a frontage of four hundred and sixty feet, is to be cut up into three sections, and moved away on a railway constructed underneath it, by a dozen or more engines. A bathing pavilion of smaller size is to be carted away in a similar fashion. We are indebted to our contemporary *Iron* for these particulars.

The occurrence of mysterious fires in cargoes of cotton has often formed the subject of remark, and many reasons have been suggested to explain them, that of spontaneous combustion being the theory generally adopted. The Board of Trade has recently caused an inquiry to be made into a fire which occurred last December on the ship *Hawarden*, and the result of this inquiry points to incendiarism. Several matches have been found in the remains of the cotton bales which have been examined, and the presumption is that these matches were placed purposely among the cotton by the men who stowed the cargo in the ship. The inducements for the destruction of a vessel before it leaves port are not at first apparent; but it is explained by one witness that a large number of persons benefit by such a catastrophe, however the unfortunate owners of the goods or the underwriters of the ship may suffer. These favoured ones are stevedores, owners of storehouses, surveyors, lawyers, and many others. According to Dr Dupré, the well-known chemist, American cotton is so pure in substance that it is next to impossible for spontaneous ignition to occur. It is known that it is with cotton as with wool—if these fibres are highly saturated with oil, such combustion is produced under certain circum-

stances; but he distinctly gives it as his opinion that the cotton on board the ship in question was set on fire before, or while it was being put into the vessel.

A short time ago, the French government appointed a Commission to decide upon the recipient of the Volta prize of fifty thousand francs for the most important Application of Electricity; and this Commission has conferred the honour upon M. Gramme. Electricians will be glad that the prize has been awarded to one who has done so much towards the development of the modern dynamo-machine. It will be remembered that M. Gramme pointed out a new and important method of producing the electric current by means of his well-known ring-armature. It is true the principle of the ring was published some years before he applied it in the well-known Gramme Machine, but he was the first to put it upon a practicable footing.

The great Lick Telescope, about the progress of which so much has been heard during the past few years, is at length in working order, and several short trials of its performances have been made. Already a star has been discovered in the constellation Orion which no one has before seen. So far, Saturn and Neptune are the only planets which have been examined with the big telescope, for the other planets have not yet been in such a position that they could be viewed at a convenient hour. The further results of observations with this wonderful instrument will be anxiously looked for by astronomers.

The medical journals do good service in being prompt to call attention to unforeseen dangers which may threaten the community, and the *Lancet* has recently warned our theatrical artists, both amateur and professional, of a practice where danger is apt to lurk. It is known that the glare of the footlights is very uncomplimentary to the natural complexion of human beings, and therefore no actor thinks of stepping upon the stage without first going through a certain process which is known as 'making-up.' This consists generally of the application to the face of some white powder together with rouge. It is in the nature of these white powders that the *Lancet* smells danger. There is no harm in ordinary violet powders, which chiefly consist of starch; but we are told that bismuth is occasionally used, and that carbonate of lead in large quantities, mixed with chalk, is very common. When our stage friends learn that lead-colic and lead-paralysis have been sometimes traced to the use of such cosmetics, especially if used night after night, and that many milder forms of lead-poisoning have been traced to the same cause, they will do well to take heed of the caution which has been published for their benefit.

It is a matter of common report that savage nations find antidotes to snake-bite in various plants. But, judging from the number of deaths from snake-poison in our great Eastern dependency, it is very clear that there these antidotes can hardly be efficacious, or that they are unknown to the general populace. Mr Daniell Morris has lately attempted to bring together for the first time a mass of information about these plants, with a view to test the truth of their alleged virtues. It is not quite clear how he will be able to make these tests, unless he depends upon

experiments upon the lower animals; for opportunities of watching the action of snake-bite are rarely offered to an investigator who is competent to come to any conclusion respecting them. But this enumeration of the various plants referred to is the first step in a very useful direction.

According to the report of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, the bison or American buffalo is all but extinct. A couple of years ago it was noted that the specimens in the Museum were of a very defective character, and it was at once resolved to replace them by fresh ones. Inquiry soon elicited the opinion that there were no bison left, except in the Yellowstone Park; but afterwards some were heard of in Montana and Texas. With very great difficulty, twenty-two buffaloes were taken in an expedition which was organised for the purpose, and their skins and skeletons, which will now figure in the Museum, are regarded as being of almost priceless value. It is not too much to say, indeed, that in a few years' time a buffalo skeleton will be almost as rare as an egg of the great auk. It is believed that besides the bison, in a few years the elk, the moose, the mountain sheep, and other animals of the United States will have disappeared.

The Chinese have the credit of having been acquainted with the art of printing many centuries before the name of Caxton was heard of; but it would seem, according to a correspondent of the *North China Daily News*, that in some places at least the art is followed in a very primitive fashion. He describes a printing establishment which is of a portable nature; for the custom in the part of the country to which he alludes is to hire the printers, who bring their type and various appliances with them, and set up a workshop on any spot required. The Chinese compositor stands in front of a block of hard wood, which is hollowed out into grooves about an inch in depth. The bottom of these grooves is filled with common stiff clay, and the various types, which are cut in square blocks of wood, are stuck into this clay until the block or frame is filled. The compositor then presses a flat board upon the top of the types, so as to give the characters a plane surface. He then brushes over their face with printing-ink, and presses paper upon them to get an impression. This he carefully scans; and if any of the types have been pressed out of position, he carefully adjusts them with a pair of pincers, which also serves as a tool for handling the types and placing them in position. It is said that this method of printing has been handed down from generation to generation for more than six hundred years.

'A Year's Insect Hunting at Gibraltar' is the title of a very interesting article contributed to the *Entomologist's Magazine* by Mr J. J. Walker, one of the officers of Her Majesty's gunboat *Grappler*. Mr Walker tells us that the insects which swarm about the Rock exhibit a great many different species. Butterflies may be found there all the year round. He has found nine hundred species of beetles, and is continually adding to their number. But besides the purely entomological interest attached to this account, we gain from Mr Walker's paper much concerning the botanical, geological, and other features of the Rock of Gibraltar. The Barbary ape is found

there in a wild state, and nowhere else in Europe. These apes, being protected, increase rapidly in numbers, and are very bold in their depredations among the gardens during the fruit season.

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.

SUPPOSED REMAINS OF THOMAS À BECKET.

ON the 29th of December 1170, Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was assassinated by four English knights, in revenge for the insults which, in their opinion, he had heaped upon their sovereign lord, King Henry II. The archbishop's body was hastily entombed, and buried in the crypt of the cathedral, whence it was some years after removed to the gorgeous shrine which was erected for its reception. In the month of August 1539, that shrine was destroyed by the emissaries of King Henry VIII.; the archbishop's coffin was taken out of its resting-place, and the remains were ordered to be burnt. Some historians tell us that the order was carried out; others, no less deserving our credit, assert that the bones which were burnt were not those of Becket, whose remains had been carried away by night, and remained undiscovered. Which account are we to look upon as the true one?

After the lapse of three and a half centuries, some light has been thrown upon the answer to this question by the interesting and unexpected discovery which was made in the crypt of the cathedral a few weeks since. Under the direction of three gentlemen well known in the neighbourhood for their interest in antiquarian matters, Canon Scott Robertson, Canon Routledge, and Mr Austin, excavations were being made in the crypt with a view to the discovery of any existing remains of the foundations of the building which preceded the erection of the cathedral in its present condition. While doing so, the thought suggested itself that it might be possible to find out the exact spot where the coffin of the martyred archbishop was placed before its transference to the famous shrine. The searchers were more than rewarded for their trouble by finding a stone case, not made in the form of an ordinary coffin, but apparently made to do duty for a coffin in some sudden emergency. In the lower part of this case no bones were found; but in the upper part there were the entire remains of a human skeleton—that of a tall powerful man; the bones all carefully placed together in such fashion as to show that the body had not been primarily buried in its present receptacle, but that the bones had been hurriedly and yet reverently collected together from elsewhere and placed in their extemporised resting-place. Were these the bones of Thomas à Becket? was the question which naturally occurred to the discoverers; and although it seems impossible to decide the point absolutely, yet the burden of evidence is in favour of those who believe that they are.

In company with a friend, the writer made a pilgrimage to Canterbury to inspect the relics, and look with his own eyes upon the remains of the man who took so prominent a part in his country's history seven centuries ago. Arming himself with a permission from the Dean, he presented himself at the house of Mr Austin, the architect to the Dean and Chapter, whose

premises form part of what was once the archbishop's palace—the very place from which Becket went on his last journey to the cathedral. The skeleton was laid out carefully and reverently in the drawing-room, the body covered with a silken cloth, and the skull fixed upon moistened clay and enveloped in a damp cloth. These coverings being removed, the skeleton, which is practically entire, proved that the body must have been that of a man of just about six feet in height, with powerful limbs and strong frame. The skull showed that the owner had possessed a large mouth, of most determined character; a forehead somewhat low, but remarkably broad, and with prominent temples; the marks of the indentation of some sharp weapon upon the skull being plainly visible just above the left eye—thus suggesting immediately that the deceased had been attacked in the very manner in which we all know that Becket met his death. Strange, if the remains be actually those of the murdered archbishop, that they should rest once again, before their reinterment for ever, in a room in the very building in which he slept on the night before he met his death seven hundred and seventeen years ago!

The remains have been by this time carefully restored to their resting-place in the cathedral; but two or three photographs were taken of them while they 'lay in state,' and they were examined by anatomical experts.

As the writer and his friend left the precincts, the thought forcibly occurred: were we actually face to face with the dead archbishop of long ago? Who shall say? The discovery at least was an unexpected one, and as interesting as it was unexpected.

AT MIDNIGHT.

THE pallid moonlight through the casement drifts

A sea of silver-breaking spray, that falls

Shimmering down the darkly-shadowed walls

And oaken floor. Outside, the nightwind lifts

A rustling branch against the pane: it shifts

The shadow to and fro, and faintly calls

In soft sea-tones, learned where the slow foam crawls

In serpent-wreathed coils through craggy rifts.

O crooning west wind, dost thou bear to me

No greeting from one loved and far away?

Is there no message in thy whispering

To me awake, waiting to hear from thee

One tender prayer that her dear lips might say

Ere slumber shadowed her with drowsy wing?

GEO. L. MOORE.

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'THE HERMIT LAND.'

UNTIL within quite recent times, Corea has been 'a sealed book' to Europeans. Travellers in China have occasionally made mention of the stern-looking, dignified, and unsmiling Coreans who may be seen twice a year in Pekin—members of the missions who go there periodically to pay tribute to the Emperor of the Sun and to receive the almanac for the current year; but no one ever seems to get speech with them. Remarkable alike in appearance and dress, these representatives of the Hermit Nation seem to regard all foreigners with jealousy and suspicion, and to confirm the general impression of the irreconcilable unfriendliness of the Coreans to all outside nations. These visitors to Pekin, also, never responded to any overtures for trade, and never seemed to have any desire for traffic on their own part; yet this disinclination is probably due to another cause than dislike of foreigners. In other words, it may be because they have nothing to offer, and no money with which to buy foreign products. From what is now being made known with regard to Corea, this at least seems a reasonable inference.

The area of Corea is computed to cover about ninety thousand square miles. The population has been variously estimated; but Mr W. R. Carles, who was recently vice-consul in Corea,* states it to be about ten millions, which is considerably more than has been usually supposed. In physical characteristics, the two coasts of Corea present wide differences. That of the east has a well-defined line, has almost no islands and very few harbours, and has an inappreciable tidal flow. But what ports there are on this coast remain open all the year, even in the higher latitudes; and this is the reason why Russia was so desirous of possessing Port Lazaret as a naval station for her Pacific fleet. The west coast-line,

on the other hand, is much broken up by innumerable islands, closely adjoining the mainland, the intervening spaces being large bare tracts of mud at low water, for on this side the tide recedes a great way. The action of the tide is so violent and the channels through the mud so narrow, that most of the inlets are available only for native boats. There are only some three or four accessible harbours on this coast, and the rivers which find an outlet there are frozen in the winter. The chief rivers flow into the sea on the south and west—namely, the Nak-tong, the Yöng-san, the Keum, and the Han. The Amnok, called also the Yalu, is a fine river which divides Corea from Manchuria.

The interior of Corea is described as, in the northern part, one mass of mountains down to the narrow neck between Gensan on the east and the Yellow Sea, the greatest heights being in the centre. Below this neck, the mountains follow the east coast-line, with branches running inland, thus dividing the country into a series of valleys opening towards the sea. The formation is generally igneous, and in the south the hills fall away into an almost barren plain. The population is most dense in the lowlands, and is frequently reduced by famines and pestilence. In 1886 an epidemic of cholera is said to have carried off one hundred thousand persons in the district surrounding the capital.

The climate is not a bad one, and the weather is usually bright and invigorating. But on the west coast, fogs are sudden and frequent, owing to the great evaporation from the exposed mud-tracts. The rainfall is considerable, and the winters are very cold. The people have a curious method of protecting themselves from the rain: they use a sort of overall waterproof coat made of oiled paper of a bright yellow colour. These paper coats cost only a trifle, and are very serviceable so long as they escape a rent; but when once torn, they are not to be mended by stitches. Mr Carles says he has seen an inferior kind of waterproof garment made out of paper oiled after it had been used in the schools, and the wearers

* *Life in Corea* (London: Macmillan), a work upon which we draw for most of the information in this article.

of which present to the admiring gaze a choice assortment of copy-book texts written in a large hand as models of handwriting. There is something rather attractive in the idea of this twofold utilisation.

It should be mentioned that paper is one of the chief exports of Corea to China, the only two others of any importance being timber and ginseng. The paper is said to be not only strong and impervious to rain, but also excellent for (Chinese) writing purposes, and transparent enough to be used in houses in lieu of glass windows.

Down to about 1873, the Coreans were as Ishmaelites among the nations, with their hands against every one, and with all hands against them. If they have been savage in their persecution of the Christians who endeavoured to obtain a footing among them, and cruel in the murders they have committed, they have also suffered much at the hands of Chinese and Japanese invaders. In fact, so great has been the havoc of the frequent wars, that almost all relics of the earlier history of the country have disappeared, and it is said that hardly a dozen monuments of any antiquity are to be found throughout the length and breadth of the land. And yet it is a country which claims to have historical records covering three thousand years, and from which the art of manufacturing porcelain was imported into Japan many centuries ago. During all her history, however, Corea consistently denied the right of free intercourse between foreigners and her own subjects on her own soil. The first departure from this rule was in 1876, shortly after the present king came to the throne, when a treaty was concluded with Japan which permitted the residence of Japanese at three of the ports, allowed the establishment of a Legation at the capital, and sanctioned the right of trade between the subjects of the two countries under certain restrictions. The ice thus broken, further progress soon followed; and in 1882 treaties were negotiated and partly concluded with Great Britain, the United States, and Germany. A revolution which broke out in this year in Corea caused a good deal of alarm among the foreigners who had begun to gather in the country; but it was quickly suppressed by the aid of the Chinese. Then in 1883 Sir Harry Parkes went on a special mission to arrange a new treaty of friendship and trade, and it was as a member of this mission that Mr Carles gained most of his experience of Corea.

Landing at the port of Chemulpo, night overtook the travellers on the road to Soul, the capital, and they had to find shelter in the house of a Chinese agent residing in a native village. A single description will serve to show the character of Corean domestic architecture generally: 'The house consisted of several detached dwellings, of an architecture half Chinese, half Japanese, each in its own courtyard, and generally facing south. The best of them was raised a couple of feet above the ground, and had an open balcony running along its front, somewhat after the fashion of a stage at a Chinese country theatre. The wood-work was unconcealed by paint or varnish; and the only part which bore any ornament was the lower panels of the windows and doors, the centres of which were in slight relief. Windows

and doors differed but little, each consisting of battens of wood, of which the lower half was filled in with panels, and the upper with a trellis-work covered with Corean paper. The windows slid in grooves to either side; and the doors, when thrown open or closed, were held in place by iron rings passed over knobs of the same material. The eaves of the house projected considerably, especially at the corners; and the roof was of tiles. . . . Furniture there was none; but the walls were neatly covered with white paper; and there was a general air of comfortable cleanliness about the place. Each man was furnished with a pipe with a brass bowl and mouthpiece, and a reed stem nearly three feet long; one or two small brass spittoons on the floor, and a kerosene lamp, betokening the influence of the Chinese tenant. The men were all wearing long white robes of cotton cloth; but one had taken off his conical hat, which was hanging on a peg on the wall, and had on only a tight band to keep his hair in place. The hair, dragged away from the forehead and sides of the head, was gathered together in a knot on the crown in the manner said to have been general in China previous to the establishment of the present dynasty.'

A word as to the curious headgear peculiar to the male Coreans. It is cone-shaped, not unlike the hat of a Welshwoman cut down, and is fitted with a flat circular plate three or four inches wide, which forms the brim. Both hat and brim are made of a substance perforated like the sides of a meat-safe. The hat is black, and is tied under the chin by broad black strings. The women do not wear this hat, but envelop their heads in a green mantle when out of doors—rather to conceal their want of beauty, to judge by Mr Carles' opinion of them. They wear loose baggy trousers; and the feet, which are small and well shaped, are clad in white socks and straw sandals. The men, on the other hand, swathe their feet in many folds of cotton cloth, and so require enormous shoes of the Chinese shape. The people are extremely modest both in garb and demeanour. They will not divest themselves of clothing in the hot weather, as the Japanese do; but they have invented loose wicker-frames, which fit closely to the body so as to keep the clothes from contact with the skin. This is to prevent saturation by perspiration, and thus to serve as a preventive against chills. They are great talkers, and seem to be much more fond of gossip and smoking than hard work.

Soul, the capital, is a walled city of some one hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand inhabitants. The houses are closely packed together, and the main street runs for about three miles from east to west. This street is about forty yards wide, and serves as the market-place; while the side-streets are narrow and very dirty. The shops and stalls are much more interesting in themselves than for the wares they expose for sale; these, indeed, are commonplace, and Corea generally seems poor in 'curios.' The silks, for which Corea once had a sort of mythical reputation, turn out a great disappointment, being knotty, poor of lustre, and narrow in breadth. More artistic are the saddlery wares—leather ornamented with silver in an attractive manner. Pony-back, indeed, seems the only mode of loco-

motion for those who would travel distances. Sedan-chairs exist, but the Koreans have not learned to carry them, or indeed any burdens, with the deftness and labour-saving skill which seem to come natural to the Chinese. The life and movement of the streets, however, are full of endless interest, of quaint objects, and variety of colour. The officials are remarkable for the gorgeousness of their apparel, and the long robes of ordinary persons give a furnished appearance to the general picture.

The king has two palaces in Soul, and Europeans have now free access to the grounds, which in the case of one of them are nearly a mile square, and spread up the slope of a hill prettily wooded with firs. The country round Soul is broken up into rice-fields wherever water is available; and where not, cotton, maize, millet, and beans are cultivated for local consumption. There is not the most rudimentary idea of sanitation either in the provincial towns or in the capital; and the marks of smallpox are almost everywhere to be seen.

Corea is divided into eight provinces, and Mr Carles made a tour through about half of them—those, namely, of the northern portion of the kingdom, and right up to the Manchurian frontier. His object was to see the condition of the country and its capabilities for trade. Instead of hostility, he everywhere experienced the greatest friendliness and hospitality, for which no doubt the credentials he bore from the court were largely to be thanked; but he found the people poor and unenterprising, and, in more places than one, approaching the verge of starvation.

At times, on the country roads, curious figures were seen. Planted on both sides of the way would be wooden posts, on one face of which is carved a rude representation of a human face with very prominent teeth. The teeth and cheeks are coloured, and the whole effect sufficiently fiendish. These figures are called *syon-sal-mak-i*, and are intended to frighten away evil spirits from the roads and the villages. The mileposts are also often similarly decorated.

This practice seems to show a belief in spirits somewhat analogous to that of the Chinese; and in fact Buddhism prevailed in Corea in ancient days, although it has been under repression since the present dynasty came into power. Buddhist remains are frequently to be seen; and Mr Carles describes two colossal stone figures, cut out of the boulders *in situ*, which he saw on his journey. The figures are half-length, and one wears a round cap, and the other a square cap, of stone. They are supposed to represent the male and female aspects of nature, and are, with other figures of the same kind, called by the Koreans *miriok*, which seems to be the equivalent of the Chinese *mi-le*, or Buddha. But the Koreans apply the same word to all statues, and even to natural rock formations resembling human figures. There is a very large *miriok* at Un-jin which is said to be sixty-four feet high, and concerning which the following legend is current. Long ago, a country-woman was gathering firewood on the hillside, when a high pinnacle of rock suddenly sprang up through the ground. She reported the occurrence to the governor of the province, who in turn reported it to the capital. There it was decided that the rock was designed to furnish a statue of

Buddha, and the government ordered one to be cut, which was done accordingly.

It has been remarked that there are evidences of fetich-worship about most Korean villages; and the care with which snakes are avoided rather than attacked seems to suggest a survival of serpent-worship. But, indeed, there is a good deal of light yet wanted on the subject of Korean religion and folk-lore.

The pugnaciousness of the Koreans has long been traditional, and probably not without reason. At anyrate, in the important northern town of Ph्योंg-yang, stone-throwing seems to be cultivated as a fine art; and at certain seasons of the year, leave is given for a general fight among the inhabitants, when town-folk and country-folk engage in a war of stones for three days. Sometimes a man is killed, but the event is then regarded as a holiday accident, and no notice is taken of it by the authorities.

In the villages there is a species of self-government which is interesting. The village elders are divided into three classes: the *tsou-eu* and the *tjoa-shang*—who are chosen by the villagers—and the *sa-im*, who are appointed by the magistrate of the district. To the *tsou-eu* belong the settlement of all minor disputes among the villagers, and the keeping of account of the land-tax, due from every house. To the *tjoa-shang* belong the duties of looking after the roads and bridges, and of reporting the births and deaths to the *sa-im*. The *sa-im* keep the register of the population, and deposit a copy of it with the magistrate. There is a school, as we gather, in every village of importance; and about ten per cent. of the people can write Chinese, which is regarded as the only language worth learning.

Corea has some reputation for minerals, and Europeans have been diligently prospecting for gold and silver and lead, but not apparently with much success as yet. Copper-mining has been carried on to some extent by the Koreans. The trade of the country is small and of a retail character. We have already named the chief exports, and there does not seem much else to be obtained at present. At the same time, Corea is capable of producing many things if the inhabitants had only some of the energy and perseverance of their neighbours to the north, in Manchuria. Mr Carles does not have much opinion of the commercial prospects. At first, when foreigners began to come, beans were suddenly discovered to be a marketable commodity, and they were brought forward with zeal, measured, and put into bags. By-and-by the people tired of that, and found that foreigners would also buy bones. Bones then became the object of spasmodic attention, and a good trade was done in them, until zeal again slackened. And so on with other commodities.

Ginseng, which is exported to China, is a government, or rather a royal, monopoly. The king grants licenses to certain farmers to cultivate the root, and derives about one hundred thousand pounds sterling a year from the industry, such as it is. Ginseng is believed by the Chinese to have the recuperative virtues which used to be ascribed in Europe to the mandrake, and the roots are worth their weight in silver in China. The plant, which grows slowly, is raised from seeds that are sown in March. In the first or second year, the ginseng plant is only two or three inches

high, and has only two leaves. It is transplanted frequently during this period. In the fourth year the stem is about six inches high; and in the fifth year a strong healthy plant has reached maturity, though it is more usual not to take it up until it has reached the sixth season.

In conclusion, it would seem that now, when 'the Hermit Land' is at length opened up to Europeans, its reputed wealth has disappeared. Even the Japanese find it impossible to thrive on Korean trade as it exists at present; but there may be better days ahead. One cannot expect much vigour in a nation which has wilfully shut itself up from the rest of the world for three thousand years.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.—FROM INFORMATION RECEIVED.

AT Whitestrاند itself, that same afternoon, Hugh Massinger sat in his own little parlour at the village inn, feverish and eager, as he had always been since that terrible night when 'Elsie was drowned,' as he firmly believed without doubt or question; and in the bar across the passage, a couple of new-comers, rough waterside characters, were talking loudly in the seafaring tongue about some matter of their own over a pint of beer and a pipe of tobacco. Hugh tried in vain for many minutes to interest himself in the concluding verses of his *Death of Alaric*—anything for an escape from this gnawing remorse—but his Hippocrene was dry, his Pegasus refused to budge a feather: he could find no rhymes and grind out no sentiments; till, angry with himself at last for his own unproductiveness, he leant back in his chair with profound annoyance and listened listlessly to the strange disjointed echoes of gossip that came to him in fragments through the half-open door from the adjoining taproom. To his immense surprise, the talk was not now of top-sails or of spinnakers: conversation seemed to have taken a literary turn; he caught more than once through a haze of words the unexpected name of Charles Dickens.

The oddity of its occurrence in such company made him prick up his ears. He strained his hearing to catch the context.

'Yes,' the voice drawled out in a low London accent tinged with the peculiar Wapping dialect; 'I read that there book, *Our Mutual Friend*, I think 'e calls it. A pal o' mine, 'e said to me right out at the time, "Bill," says 'e, "that there Dickens 'ave took a leaf out o' your book," says 'e; "'e've been a-takin' of you off: 'e've showed you up in print, 'e 'ave, under the halias of Rogue Rider'ood," says 'e; "an' you'd oughter read it, if it was for nothin' on earth but for the sake o' the likeness."—"Is that so?" says I, never thinkin' 'e meant it, as the sayin' is. "It is," says 'e; "an' you've got to look into it."—Well, I got a 'old o' the book, an' I read it right through on 'is recommendation: leastways, my missus she read it out loud to me; she've 'ad a eddication, my missus 'ave: an' it's a pack o' rot, that's wot I calls it. There ain't no kind o' sense in it, to my thinkin'.'

'The cap don't fit you, then, says you,' the other voice retorted with a gurgle of tobacco. 'E ain't drawn you so as a man could recognise you.'

'Recognise me! Well, recognisin' ain't in it, d'ye see. Wot 'e says is just a lot o' rubbish. This 'ere Rogue Rider'ood, accordin' to the story, 'e'd used to row about Lime'ouse Reach, a-searchin' for bodies.'

'A-searchin' for bodies!' the second man repeated with an incredulous whiff. 'Wy, wot the dooce did 'e want to go an' do that for?'

'Well, that's just where it is, don't you see? 'E done it for a liveli'ood. A liveli'ood, says I, wen my missus reads that part out to me; wot liveli'ood could a beggar make out o' bodies, says I? 'Tain't as though a body was worth anything nowadays, viewed as a body, says I, argumentative-like. A man as knowed anything about the riverside wouldn't never 'a gone writin' such rubbish as that, an' in a printed book, too, as 'ad ought to be wrote careful an' ackerate. It's my opinion, says I, as this 'ere Dickens is a over-rated man. A body nowadays, wether it's a drowned body or a nat'ral body, ain't worth nothing, not the clothes it stands up in, viewed as a body. Times was wen a body was always acshally a body, an' worth savin' for itself, afore the 'Natomy Ack. But wot's it worth now? Wy, 'arf a crown for landin' it, paid by the parish, if it's landed in Essex, or five bob if you tow it over Surrey side o' the river. Not but wot I grant you there's bodies an' bodies. If a nob drowns hisself, wy, then, o' course there's sometimes as much as fifty pound, or might be a 'undred, set upon the body. 'Is friends is glad to get the corpse back, an' 'ave it buried reglar in the family churchyard. A reward's offered free enough for a nob, I don't deny it. But 'ow many nob's goes an' drowns thei'selves in a season, d' you suppose: an' 'oo as knowed anything about the river would go a-lookin' for nob's in Lime'ouse Reach or way down Bermondsey way?'

'Stands to reason they wouldn't, Bill,' the other voice answered with a quiet chuckle.

'O' course it stands to reason,' Bill replied with an emphatic expletive. 'Wen a nob drowns hisself, 'e don't go an' throw hisself off London Bridge; no, nor off Blackfriars neither, you warrant you. 'E don't go an' put hisself out aforehand for nothin' like that, takin' a 'bus into the City, as you may say, out o' pure foolishness. 'E just claps 'is 'at on 'is 'ead an' strolls down to Wes'minster Bridge, as it maybe 'ere, or to Charin' Cross or Waterloo—a lot of 'em goes over Waterloo, perlice or no perlice; an' 'e jumps in close an' 'andy by 'is own door, in the manner o' speakin', an' is done with it immejately.—But wot's the use o' lookin' for 'im after that, below bridge, away down at Lime'ouse? Anybody as knows the river knows well as a body startin' from Waterloo, or maybe from Wes'minster, don't go down to Lime'ouse, ebb or flow, nor nothin' like it. It gets into the whirlpool off Saunders's Wharf, an' ketches the back-current, an' turns round an' round till it's throwed up by the tide, as you may say, upward, on the mud at Millbank, or by Lambeth Stangate. So there ain't no liveli'ood to be made any'ow by picking up bodies down about Lime'ouse; an' it's always been my opinion ever since then that that there Dickens is a very much overrated person.'

'There ain't no doubt about it,' the other answered. 'If 'e said that, there can't be no doubt at all about it.'

To Hugh Massinger, sitting apart in his own room, these strange scraps of an alien conversation had just then a ghastly and horrible fascination. These men were accustomed, then, to drowned corpses! They were connoisseurs in drowning. They knew the ways of bodies like regular experts. He listened, spellbound, to catch their next sentences. There was a short pause, during which—as he judged by the way they breathed—each took a long pull at the pewter mug, and then the last speaker began again. ‘You’d oughter know,’ he murmured musingly, ‘for I s’pose there ain’t any man on the river anywheres as ‘as ‘ad to do with as many bodies as you ‘ave.’

‘That’s so!’ the first person assented emphatically. ‘Thirty year I’ve served the Trinity ‘ouse, rain or shine, an’ you don’t provision light-ships that long without learnin’ a thing or two on the way about bodies. The current carries ‘em all one way round. A body as starts on its journey at Wesminster, as it may be ‘ere, goes ashore at Millbank. A body as begins at London Bridge, comes out, as reg’lar as clockwork, on the furrer end o’ the Isle o’ Dogs.—It’s just the same along this ‘ere east coast ‘ere. I picked up that gal I’ve come about to-day on the north side o’ the Orfordness Light, by the back o’ the Trinity groyne or thereabouts. A body as comes up on the north side of Orfordness ‘as always drifted down from the nor-west’ard. So it stands to reason this ‘ere gal I’ve got lying up there must ‘a come with the ebb from Walberswick or Aldeburgh, or maybe Whitstrand: there ain’t no other way out of it any’ow. Well, they told me at Walberswick there was a young lady a-missin’ over ‘ere at Whitstrand—a young lady from the ‘All—a lady o’ property, seeming—and as there might be money on it, or again there mightn’t, wy I come up ‘ere o’ course to make all proper inquiries.’

Hugh Massinger’s heart gave a terrible bound. O heavens! that things should have come to this pass. That wretch had found Elsie’s body!

In what a tangled maze of impossibilities had he enmeshed himself for ever by that one false step of the forged letter. This wretch had found Elsie’s body—the body that he loved with all his soul—and he could neither claim it himself nor look upon it, bury it nor show the faintest interest in it, without involving his case still further in endless complications, and rousing suspicions of fatal import against his own character.

He waited breathless for the next sentence. The second speaker went on once more. ‘And it don’t fit?’ he suggested, inquiringly.

‘No; it don’t fit, drat it,’ the man called Bill answered in an impatient tone. ‘She ain’t drowned at all, the young lady as is missing at the ‘All. They’ve ‘ad letters an’ telegrams from ‘er, dated later nor the day I found ‘er. I’ve ‘anded over the body to the county perlice; it’s in the mortuary at the Low Light; an’ I shan’t ‘ave no more nor ‘arf a crown from the parish after all for all my trouble. Suffolk and Essex is half-a-crown counties; Surrey’s more liberal: it goes to five bob on ‘em. Wy, I’m more’n eight shillin’s out o’ pocket by that there gal already, wot with loss of time an’ travellin’ expenses an’ that. Next time I catches a body unbeknown knockin’ about permiscuous on a lee-shore, with the tide runnin’, an’ the breakers

poundin’ it on its face on the shingle, they may whistle for it theirselves, that’s wot they may do; I ain’t agoin’ to trouble my ‘ead about it. Make a liveli’ood out of it, indeed! Wy, it’s all rubbish, that’s wot it is. It’s my opinion that that there Dickens was a very much overrated person.’

Hugh Massinger rose slowly, like one stunned, walked across the room, as in a dream, to the door, closed it noiselessly, for he could contain himself no longer, and then, burying his face silently in his arms, cried to himself a long and bitter cry, the tears following one another hot and fast down his burning cheeks, while his throat was choked by a rising ball that seemed to check his breath and impede the utterance of his stifled sobs. Elsie was dead, dead for him as if he had actually seen her drowned body cast up, unknown, as the man so hideously and graphically described it in his callous brutality, upon the long spit of the Orfordness lighthouse. He didn’t for one moment doubt that it was she indeed whom the fellow had found and placed in the mortuary. His own lie reacted fatally against himself. He had put others on a false track, and now the false track misled his own spirit. From that day forth, Elsie was indeed dead, dead, dead for him. Alive in reality, and for all else save him, she was dead for him as though he had seen her buried. And yet, most terrible irony of all, he must still pretend before all the world strenuously and ceaselessly to believe her living. He must never in a single forgetful moment display his grief and remorse for the past; his sorrow for the loss of the one woman he had really loved—and basely betrayed; his profound affection for her now she was gone and lost to him for ever. He dare not even inquire—for the present at least—where she would be laid, or what would be done with her poor dishonoured and neglected corpse. It must be buried, unheeded, in a pauper’s nameless grave, by creatures as base and cruel as the one who had discovered it tossing on the shore, and regarded it only as a lucky find to make half-a-crown out of. Hugh’s inmost soul was revolted at the thought. And yet— And yet, even so, he was not man enough to go boldly down to Orfordness and claim and rescue that sacred corpse, as he truly and firmly believed it to be, of Elsie Challoner’s. He meant still in his craven soul to stand well with the world, and to crown his perfidy by marrying Winifred.

GALLOWES TREE ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

AN ancient elm stands on the verge of Hampstead Heath, over against the gardens of Wildwood, at the side of Heath Hill Road. When stripped of its leaves, the gnarled trunk and rugged limbs stand out in bold relief against the sky, the outline being filled in with a delicate tracery of twigs. Here and there a broken branch tells of the ravages wrought by wind and weather. One stunted bough which stretches out over the pathway, and must once have hung over the road, has been blasted by lightning. The lower branches, too, have been roughly hacked with axe and saw, for they still show the scars which time has but rudely healed. Yet the elm is vigorous

in its old age; and in summer-time its spreading foliage throws a welcome shade over the low wooden seat which has been put up beneath it. And every autumn its glories glow undimmed when the sun lights up the blended hues of its golden leaves, casting ever-shifting shadows, which in turn create a thousand tints. This is the Gallows Tree.

It is not perhaps so old as the Chequer Elm, which according to local tradition was planted in the days of Stephen; nor, probably, as the famous Chipstead Elm, under which it is said the Kentish rustics held their annual fairs during the Wars of the Roses; nor yet as the Crawley Elm, within whose hollowed trunk Druids may have found a retreat. But although it cannot claim so great an antiquity as these silvan monarchs, the Hampstead Elm is old enough for the legends which cluster round it to be themselves forgotten. Few, certainly, of the hundreds of couples who rest beneath it on summer evenings, or of the thousands who pass under it on their way to North End or the West Heath, even think of its associations. But it is only for the few that old-time memories have a living voice.

It is, for instance, already almost forgotten that Addison and his friends used at times to spend their summer evenings in the gardens of the *Bull and Bush*. There is now nothing to show that Dr Mark Akenside lived and practised, after a fashion, at North End. It is scarcely remembered, even by art critics, that Linnell struggled against poverty and neglect in a little farmhouse which stood on the northern edge of the heath. There is little to recall the fact that Lord Chatham spent that terrible twelvemonth in which he abandoned himself to his infirmities, at Wildwood; and the remembrance of the all-powerful minister gloomily sitting at the little oriel window and gazing away over North End across the green fields of Heath Farm and the trees of Bishop's Wood, while the destinies of the nation were trembling in the balance, is largely lost upon the crowds of holiday-makers who pass the Holly Bush and stroll through Wildwood Grove towards the Spaniards' Road, or saunter up Heath Hill Road to Jack Straw's Castle. And you may interview all the oldest inhabitants in vain as to the origin of the weird name which still belongs to this ancient elm.

Some garrulous old woman, perchance, may recount, upon persuasion, a mysterious story about Lord Chatham and Wildwood, which makes out that the tree is in some way or other connected with the death of that eminent minister. Indeed it would not be surprising if the intelligent foreigner had appropriated the notion, and now that English history is being rewritten at Paris, we may yet have some such version of the fate of the great Pitt. Nor is it surprising that mystery should surround Lord Chatham's sojourn at Hampstead, that some echoes of the suspense through which the country then passed should have come down to our own times. The house has been considerably enlarged since then—it has been raised another story—but the room in which Lord Chatham chiefly lived is still preserved; and the double-doored aperture through which the unfortunate statesman communicated with his servants is, or was very recently, still to be seen. The story has often been told; but

it is unsatisfactory in some of its details. Here Lord Chatham, it is said, lived in utter seclusion. Even his meals, we are told, were placed in the little cupboard, and the outer door being shut, a signal was given when they were ready. Now we know that while at Hampstead, Lord Chatham drove frequently about the heath; and since he went there for the sake of that dry and bracing air, which still, in spite of the inundation of bricks and mortar, makes the northern heights of London famous not only as a suburb but as a health resort, it seems to follow as a matter of course that he would walk at times on the less-frequented paths, many of which were then as secluded as the most ardent recluse could desire.

It is easy to conjure up the lovely isolation of the little straggling village. Hampstead was in 1768 'far from the madding crowd.' The fame of the Wells, which had been at its zenith during the first half of the century, was now on the decline, so that it was no longer one of the most dissipated watering-places in the kingdom; and the coffee-rooms, dancing-rooms, raffling-shops, bowling-greens, which had sprung up with the Wells, were now almost deserted. The fashionable throng, indeed, at this time seldom went farther than Belsize House, still in the height of its reputation as a place of amusement, in spite of the rivalry of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, of which it was the prototype. It was a few years later than this that four hundred coaches of the nobility and gentry came to Belsize on one occasion to see a wild-deer hunted and killed in the Park. But for the fairs, which were held on the Lower Flask Tavern Walk, and the races, which were run on the East Heath, and for the holiday-makers, who could never have been very numerous, since the population of London was then less than eight hundred thousand, much of the common must have been delightfully rural and deserted. It is, too, certain that Lord Chatham would walk in the gardens of Wildwood, where he would be free from the observation of the curious; but, beyond the possibility that he may have sat under its branches, there is no foundation for the fabled connection between Lord Chatham and the Gallows Tree.

Another legend, more shadowy still, is the only authority for the rumour that a murder was committed in the garden of Wildwood, and that the murderer expiated his crime on this convenient gibbet. This is still a favourite after-dinner anecdote at Hampstead, and its recital commonly gains an adventitious interest by whispered suggestions that the garden is still haunted by the shrieking spectre of the victim. There is, it is true, a story extant that in a summer-house here a butler once upon a time killed a confiding cook. This is, however, probably apocryphal. The names of the murderer and the victim have not been preserved. It is not even known why or how the deed was done, so that its authenticity may well be doubted.

A genuine murder was, however, committed at Fortune Green, near West End, where gypsies still do congregate in tents and caravans, and lend a general aspect of rural vagabondism to the surroundings of Hampstead Cemetery. Here one Thomas Cowley was foully done to death. The crime was believed to have been committed by Martha Bradley, a gypsy, and 'other persons

unknown.' Martha Bradley was put upon her trial; but the prosecution broke down for want of evidence, and instead of being hanged upon the Gallows Tree, the prisoner left the court 'without a stain upon her character.' This seems to be a natural inference from the fact that she spent her old age in the almshouses, which were still so characteristic a feature of the Vale of Health when Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, and Haydon used to meet there in the house of Leigh Hunt. It is said that the old woman was in the habit of muttering to herself the details of the dark deed; while in the silent watches of the night she was overheard by her neighbours moaning and crying for mercy and pardon. The story, if true, shows that, in spite of the fitness of things, there is no link between Martha Bradley and the Hampstead Elm.

But it is not surprising that the true and veracious history of the ill-omened *genius loci* should have been forgotten; for we must go back for it for more than two hundred years. There is a rare and curious quarto tract, dated 1674, and called on the title-page, 'Jackson's Recantation, or the Life and Death of the Notorious Highwayman now hanging in chains at Hampstead, delivered to a friend a little before execution; wherein is truly discovered the whole mystery of that Wicked and Fatal Profession of Padding in the Road.' It is not a vulgar confession, for Jackson says little or nothing as to the crime for which he was condemned; but an autobiographical sketch, and therefore an early example of our now fashionable criminal literature. It has the true prison ring common to these productions in every age; and although it is owing to the enterprise of Mr Samuel Swinfincks that it saw the light, there is a *vraisemblance* about it which seems to distinguish it from the concocted catchpennies commonly sold at Tyburn, in much the same way as their modern counterparts are now hawked in the Strand. An affectation of candour, a simulation of sincerity, a veneer of penitence, are as marked traits of Jackson's 'Recantation' as of the revelations of many modern felons. In the guise of advice to the public, he contrives to give his brethren of the road many excellent hints as to the best and safest method of carrying on their profession. Any one who is robbed on the highway, for instance, is advised, instead of scouring the country, to go to Holborn Bars, St James's Street Westminster, Bankside Southwark, Lambeth, or Foxhall, in search both of thieves and property; and the advice is so far sound that it is equally useful for footpads and passengers. To lie *perdu* in London town until the hue and cry is over has always been the favourite dodge of persons 'wanted.' The tract is, moreover, really useful, as throwing a vivid side-light upon the seamy side of life in London in the middle of the seventeenth century. Even Ned Ward is not more graphic.

Early in his career, Jackson, who was born of 'poor but honest parents,' is reduced to the lowest ebb, when the lucky find, in the gutter, of a purse containing fifty guineas sets him on his legs again. He sets up as a man about town, and for a time makes a satisfactory livelihood as a sharper and blackleg. In his own expressive language, he

'nicks the nicker' very much to his satisfaction. But London becoming too hot to hold him, Jackson was easily persuaded by one of his pals to take to the road, then the recognised resource of any one who was 'down on his luck.' His career was near coming to a sudden end, for he was caught after robbing a coach near Barnet. Fortunately for him, however, the prosecutor proved amenable to bribery, agreeing not to bring any evidence against him if he restored the property!

In company with three others, he next 'infested' the Marlborough Downs, where he drove a brisk trade. Putting up at the various inns, where, according to his account, highwaymen were always welcome, they picked up plenty of information as to the movements of travellers, whom they robbed so systematically, that the band soon made themselves a terror to the whole neighbourhood.

It is curious to find in this old tract a version of the oft-told tale of how the attorney was overreached by the highwayman, and it is quite possible that this is the original, which has been stolen by later highwaymen, story-tellers, and other dishonest persons. Thomas Jackson's account is at anyrate very circumstantial. Chancing to meet at one of the inns an attorney going to London, he got into conversation with him, and, according to his custom, turned the talk upon the robberies which had recently been committed in the neighbourhood. The lawyer fell into the trap, and, with an assurance not uncommon in his profession, boasted of the immunity from robbery which he enjoyed owing to certain precautions of his own devising. No footpads, he asseverated, would rob him. Jackson expressing incredulity, the attorney, in order to justify his boast, showed him his saddle, in which he had concealed one hundred and fifty pounds in gold. Jackson at once gave his friends the hint; and the confiding lawyer was 'stopped' when he had gone a few miles on his way to London. He cheerfully gave up the loose cash which he had upon his person; but when the highwaymen cut open his saddle, he loudly proclaimed his conviction that they were in league with the Evil One.

There is another story which is probably true, because, so far as it goes, it does not redound to Jackson's professional credit. A seaman who had just landed after a long voyage and was on his way home alone with his pay (sixty-five pounds) upon him, although he had been warned that the highwaymen were out, was speedily punished for his temerity by Jackson, who relieved him of his money. Hereupon, the sailor declared that he was destitute and desperate, and offered to throw in his lot with the gang. In some way or other he succeeded in convincing them of the sincerity of his resolution, for, after a while, he was told off to accompany Jackson, who had charge of the money. But no sooner had the two got well away from the rest, than the sailor pulled out a pistol, and, in true highwayman fashion, demanded Jackson's money or his life. With a very bad grace Jackson gave up the money; and his chagrin was not unnaturally increased when the seaman made him exchange horses, the one a picked animal, the other a wretched screw.

As to the details of the crime for which he was convicted, he says nothing. All that is now known is, that when on the road near North End

he murdered and robbed Henry Miller. The offence was brought home to him, and he was condemned to death. There were then two elm-trees on Hampstead Heath, near North End, of which only one still lives, and it was betwixt the two that the gibbet was erected on which Jackson was hanged, and, after the unpleasant if morally wholesome fashion of the time, hung in chains. The post of the gibbet was afterwards used as a mantel-tree over the fireplace in the kitchen of Jack Straw's Castle. It is the surviving tree which is still known by the name of the Gallows Tree, although the episode from which it is derived has long since been forgotten.

Hampstead Heath has always figured largely in the chronicles of highway robbers and robberies. Thomas Jackson's reputation was obscured by the notoriety of his well-known contemporary, Claude Duval, who was hanged in 1669, and afterwards canonised by the mob. There are few more curious illustrations of the times than the spectacle of the body of the notorious French highwayman lying in state at a tavern in St Giles's, and being afterwards buried in state in the middle aisle of St Paul's, Covent Garden. And many of Duval's 'deeds of daring,' as they are uniformly described in the books, were committed on the highway near Hampstead and Highgate, for Hornsey Lane was that ruffian's favourite haunt. There is, too, a tradition that Dick Turpin, in the next century, lived at Hampstead; but this is without authority. Turpin's chosen rendezvous was in Hackney Marshes. In 1737, it is true, after he had shot one of his pursuers, near Epping Forest, he came to Islington, and for a time drove a thriving business in the back lanes of Holloway and Hampstead. The numbers of rich and fashionable people who frequented Belsize House when it was at the height of its popularity, as a matter of course attracted crowds of footpads to the roads by which it was reached. 'Twelve stout fellows completely armed,' it was announced in the advertisements of entertainments, regularly patrolled the London Road; and the number was soon afterwards increased to thirty. In fact, Hampstead was a rival of Hounslow Heath for highway robberies up to the beginning of the present century.

It is almost impossible for us to realise the terrorism under which our ancestors lived so long; and it seems incredible, in view of the robberies committed in London and the suburbs almost daily for nearly two centuries, that some system of constabulary was not much sooner adopted. But nevertheless, it is only within the last sixty years that the 'wicked and fatal profession of padding in the road' has been put down. The road between Kensington and London, for instance, was never decently safe until 1799, when a horse-patrol was first appointed. In the early years of the present century, robberies were constantly committed in Belgrave and Eaton Squares, then the Five Fields. A sort of volunteer military organisation was got up to protect the inhabitants of Islington, Kentish Town, and Marylebone; and the example was followed in other parts of London. But for the most part the public had to protect themselves; and such was the fear, which the ruffians of the road took good care to keep alive, that they did this after a helpless and half-hearted fashion.

As for the halo of romance which surrounded highwaymen as a class, this is scarcely to be wondered at, if we remember how completely they defied society. There were, it is said, many fair mourners for M'Lean, so that it must in those days have been looked upon as a feat to fire a pistol at a man like Horace Walpole, as he did in Hyde Park in November 1749. It is easier to appreciate the daring hardihood of Dick Turpin, who kissed Mrs Fountayn, the fashionable beauty of the season, in Marylebone Gardens. We can understand how such an act of gallantry would add to his reputation, and serve, if need were, to palliate such vulgar offences as robbery and murder.

It is customary to cry out against the penal code of the eighteenth century as repulsive in its severity, and there is an absurd amount of sympathy still wasted over the memories of highwaymen who richly deserved their fate. The number of broken-down gentlemen and bankrupt tradesmen who 'took to the road,' and so raised the 'profession' in the social scale, bore no proportion to the vulgar and depraved sections of the fraternity of thieves who pursued the trade systematically, now in the towns, now on the highways, now on the bridle-paths. The annals of highway robbery indeed show plainly that the 'gentlemen of the road' of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were really analogous to the burglars and pickpockets of our own times. Thomas Jackson's 'Recantation,' for all its grandiloquence, shows him to have been little more than a petty and pitiful rogue.

THE LOST BOND.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

I WAS articled to that eminent firm of solicitors, Messrs Gurney and Grafton, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, who, for the modest premium of three hundred guineas, allowed me to sit in their office and assist them with the work, with liberty to pick up law in the best way I could. Having duly served my time and passed all my examinations, I was declared by the examiners to be a duly qualified solicitor, entitled to charge a fee of six-and-eightpence for my advice.

I had not a large capital when I began my legal studies, and by the time I had finished my articles, it had become so much diminished, that I deemed it advisable to lose no time in setting to work to earn my own living. No doubt, the most prudent course for me would have been to obtain a situation with a firm of solicitors, in order to gain a little more experience; but I was young and inexperienced, and in a hurry to be my own master. I at once began to look about for a suitable locality in which to start business on my own account. This was a more difficult matter than I expected. I had no connections anywhere, and therefore had nothing either to guide or fetter me in my choice. London I left out of the question altogether, as being, in my opinion, the most difficult place for any one without influence to work up a practice in. Every place I visited seemed to be well supplied with gentlemen learned in the law, and to be in no need of further additions. However, after a good deal of inquiry and travelling about, I fixed upon

the quiet little market town of Barton in which to begin operations; and having taken an office in Church Street and engaged an office-boy, I notified to the inhabitants that I was ready to render them any legal assistance they might require, by affixing a brass plate on the door with my name and description inscribed thereon.

But the good people of Barton seemed to be either very peaceably inclined, or to be shy of strangers, for week by week and month by month went by, till six months had elapsed, and the business I had transacted had been practically nil, the little I had done being of a very unremunerative character. Meantime, the balance I had placed at the bank on settling at Barton was rapidly decreasing, the entries in my bank book being, unfortunately, all on the wrong side. In fact, I began to think I had made a mistake in setting up for myself so soon, and that the best thing I could do would be to try to obtain a situation.

I was sitting in my office one afternoon meditating on these things. I had been trying to read *Chitty on Contracts*, but I seemed unable to fix my mind on anything that day, and the book lay unheeded on the table before me. By degrees I fell into a brown-study, and was getting into quite a gloomy state of mind, when I was interrupted by the office-boy bringing in the letters. These consisted of a few bills and circulars, a requisition from the income-tax collector to fill up the amount of my income during the previous year, one or two private letters, and last, but not least, the *Law Times*. I soon disposed of the former communications, and having opened the 'Journal of the Law and the Lawyers,' prepared to refresh my mind with an account of the doings of the legal world during the week. But fate seemed against me to-day, for almost the first thing that caught my eye was an article on 'The Overcrowded State of the Legal Profession;' and when I had read, with a mournful kind of interest, an account of the alarming rate at which the profession had increased during the last few years, while the amount of fees, owing to the influence of recent legislation, was steadily diminishing, I quite agreed with the writer of the article that the profession was going to the dogs.

I threw the paper down in disgust, and walked to the window and looked out. It was a hot, drowsy afternoon, which seemed to have imparted its influence to the inhabitants, for business appeared to be almost at a stand-still, the only persons visible being a few tradesmen standing at their doors gossiping with their neighbours, or staring lazily at the opposite side of the street. Looking beyond the church, I could just catch a vision of green fields and shady trees, with here and there a glimpse of the river shining in the sun, looking delightfully cool and fresh, and making the room in which I was standing seem close and stuffy by comparison. I had just made up my mind to leave the office for the afternoon, and have a little fishing before tea, when the door opened and my office-boy entered again. 'Please, sir, Mr Thomas Jackson wishes to see you,' he said.

'Mr Thomas Jackson!' I exclaimed in surprise. 'Do you mean Mr Jackson of Oakfields Farm?'

'Yes, sir—*Farmer Jackson*,' answered the boy.

'Oh, well, ask him in,' I said, unlocking my drawer and pulling out my papers and pens, which I had just put away for the day. I knew Mr Jackson well by repute. He was a well-to-do farmer, who lived a few miles from Barton, and I was aware that he entertained a strong prejudice against lawyers, he having had a disagreeable transaction with a rather sharp firm of attorneys some years ago; and it was believed he would as soon have thought of flying as of having anything more to do with a lawyer. I therefore felt considerable curiosity as to what brought me the honour of a visit from him.

Mr Jackson entered the room rather hesitatingly, I thought. He was a stout, tall man, of about forty years of age, with a pleasant, good-humoured expression of countenance; but to-day I fancied there was rather an anxious expression on his face. After exchanging greetings, I motioned him to a chair on the opposite side of the table, and waited for him to inform me as to the nature of his business. After fumbling about in his breast-coat pocket, he drew out a narrow strip of paper and handed it to me. On examining this, I found it to be a writ issued by Mr Sharper Flint, a money-lender at Barton, against Mr Jackson, to recover the sum of one thousand pounds with interest on a bond given by Mr William Jackson (father of Thomas Jackson) to the said Sharper Flint for money lent by him, and was issued against Thomas Jackson, as executor of his father, who had died some two years before.

'Well, Mr Jackson,' I said, looking up, 'this is rather a disagreeable document. What is the meaning of it?'

'Well, that's just what I want to know,' said Mr Jackson. 'I never heard a word of any such claim before. I suppose it is some dodge of that rascally Flint to try and get money out of me.'

'You never heard of any such claim before,' I asked, 'although the writ states that the bond was given six years ago?'

'Not a word, sir,' answered Mr Jackson. 'I never dreamed of there being any such claim until yesterday, when the writ was served on me.'

'I suppose you were acquainted with your father's affairs?' I asked.

'Yes, sir. We discussed business affairs together constantly, and it was very seldom he did anything without consulting me. Indeed, now I remember he did speak to me, some years ago, about borrowing a thousand pounds, which he wanted for a temporary purpose, from Sharper Flint; but I advised him not to do so, as I had no faith in him; and he told me afterwards that he had decided to take my advice.'

'It certainly does seem strange,' I said. 'I should think it very unlikely that your father would have borrowed so large a sum without letting you know, and without leaving any trace of it among his papers. I suppose you have been through his books and papers?'

'Yes, sir; I went through them all at the time probate of the will was granted, and there is not a trace among them of any such sum having been borrowed.'

'Well,' I said, 'we are completely in the dark about it at present; and I have no materials to

go upon in advising you what course to pursue. I think the best thing will be for me to call on Messrs Crawley and Fox, Mr Flint's solicitors, and see what they have to say about the matter, and, if possible, get them to show me the bond on which they claim.'

'Yes, I think that would be the best way,' replied Mr Jackson; and accordingly it was arranged that I should see Messrs Crawley and Fox the next morning, and that Mr Jackson should call on me in the afternoon, when we could further discuss matters.

I called on Messrs Crawley and Fox the next morning as arranged, and on mentioning my business, was shown into the office of Mr Crawley, the senior partner, who, I was informed, had the conduct of the business.

Mr Crawley, a withered little gentleman, with the orthodox parchment-coloured face, was sitting at a table littered with deeds, briefs, drafts, and the miscellaneous papers which usually cumber a solicitor's table. As I entered, he looked up.

'Good-morning, Mr Crawley,' I said. 'I have called to see you about that matter of Flint v. Jackson.'

'O yes,' said Mr Crawley, leaning back in his chair and pushing his spectacles on to his forehead. 'You are acting for the defendant, aren't you?'

'Yes,' I said; 'and we are naturally very much astonished at the proceedings which you have commenced. My client informs me that he never heard of there being such a claim until he was served with the writ.'

'You don't say so!' exclaimed Mr Crawley, opening his eyes with real or well-feigned astonishment. 'Now, that's very extraordinary.'

'It is extraordinary,' I said; 'but it is quite true. Until yesterday, my client was not aware of the existence of any such claim. He has been through his father's books and papers, and can find no trace whatever of any such sum having been borrowed.'

'Dear me—dear me! that's a very extraordinary circumstance, now,' said Mr Crawley again.

'Yes,' I said; 'and before taking any steps in the matter, and either admitting or rejecting the claim, my client wishes to make a thorough investigation into the affair; and I have called to know if you will let me see the bond.'

'Oh, certainly, certainly,' said Mr Crawley—'no objection whatever;' and going to the safe, he took the document out and handed it to me.

It was a formal bond, drawn up in the usual words, by which 'the said William Jackson bound himself, his heirs, executors, and administrators, to pay the said Sharper Flint, his executors or administrators, on demand the sum of £1000, with interest at £5 per cent.:' and was signed and sealed by Mr William Jackson, and witnessed by Mr Winter, his solicitor. I examined the stamp, and looked at the date of the water-mark on the paper, but could find no flaw in the document at all; in fact, it seemed to be a perfectly valid and binding document, and to leave no loophole of escape.

'You will admit,' I said, 'that it is a very suspicious circumstance that Mr Flint should

never have mentioned the fact of his having any such bond, and should not even have applied for the interest.'

'Well,' said Mr Crawley, 'it is unfortunate that it has been left so long; but my client informs me that it was only intended to be a temporary loan, and he therefore did not include it among the amounts he had out on mortgage, and on which interest was payable regularly. In fact, it was overlooked till the other day, when he had a thorough stock-taking.'

I could not succeed in getting any further information, and therefore took my leave, not altogether satisfied with the result of my interview. I did not believe that Mr Sharper Flint was the man to forget that he had an amount of a thousand pounds due to him.

Mr Jackson called upon me, according to appointment, in the afternoon, and I reported to him what I had done.

'I must say,' I said, 'that so far, I do not see that we have any defence to the action. The bond purports to be witnessed by Mr Winter, your father's solicitor; and on the face of it appears to be a perfectly genuine document.'

'Never mind that!' said Mr Jackson, bringing his fist down upon the table. 'I feel certain that my father never had that money, and I mean to fight him, and make him prove his claim in court.'

'Well,' I said, 'I think it is too large an amount to pay without a strict investigation, especially considering the suspicious circumstances of the case; and I think it will be wiser to defend the action and let it go to trial; and in the meantime we must make a strict investigation, and get all the information we can.'

'You are right, sir,' said Mr Jackson; 'and you need not be too particular about the expense; I shan't mind paying the money so much, if they win it after a fair fight.'

I accordingly entered an appearance to the writ; and while the action was proceeding, I made vigorous inquiries in every quarter from which I thought information might be obtained. Mr Winter, the lawyer who witnessed the bond, had died about four years before, and his estate had been sold by the executors. All his papers had been destroyed, except a few which it was thought might be important, and which had been intrusted to the keeping of a Mr Corry, a solicitor at Barton. I called on the latter, and informed him of the proceedings taken against Mr Jackson; and he overhauled Mr Winter's papers, but found nothing which threw any light on the matter. I also found that all Mr Winter's clerks had left the town except one, named Rogers, who had filled the position of engrossing clerk, but who recollected very little about the matter. After thinking upon the subject, he said he thought he did recollect engrossing a bond from Farmer Jackson to Mr Flint; but he had engrossed so many documents in Mr Winter's office relating to different matters, that he could not remember any particular document; neither did he know the addresses of any of the other clerks. In fact, it seemed to be impossible to get any information about it in the town; and the only course appeared to be to find out the addresses of as many of Mr Winter's clerks as possible and ascertain if they knew anything

about the matter. But we did not wish the other side to get wind of what we were doing, lest they should place obstacles in our way; and therefore the investigation proceeded secretly and, as a consequence, slowly.

INDIAN TANKS.

BY A HINDU.

NOTHING is so dearly prized by the Indian villager as the *talao*, or tank, for its water is not only used for irrigation during the greater portion of the year, but is also the principal source of his domestic supply. There are some tanks which are formed by throwing a mound or embankment across a valley or hollow ground, so that the rain-water collects in the upper part of the valley, and, when required for the purposes of cultivation, is let out upon the low lands by sluices. Others, in hilly districts, are constructed by damming a stream where it passes through a gorge, and look almost like lakes. But the ordinary village tank in the plains is a small lake dug out of the surface of the soil, filled up mainly by the periodical rains. A few of these *talaos* are lined on all the four sides with cut stone, forming elegant works; but in an ordinary tank there are only two *gháts*, or masonry-built flights of steps, enclosed by low walls, going down a few feet under the water. At the head of the steps is a sort of terrace with backed seats, all of masonry. Besides being the usual staircases for drawing water, these *gháts* are used for bathing purposes, and as lounging-places in the evenings. The *talaos* are found principally in the Deccan, in Gujerat, and in Bengal. They are made at a considerable expense, being invariably the works of the Hindus, the wealthy and benevolent amongst whom lavish large sums of money on them. And princes vie with their opulent subjects in erecting in dry lands magnificent reservoirs, capable of furnishing water for the irrigation of large tracts of country—a work which renders their name venerable to the latest posterity.

In the hot season, the water shrinks rapidly, through continual drawing and by reason of evaporation, till in May there is hardly any left in the tank. At that time children, with their clothes tucked over the knee, delight to cross and recross the slippery bed, picking up with great glee the fish that still struggle for their existence in the muddy water of the hollows. Often the tank gets so dry that you can walk over it as easily as on a paved road. In many parts, the exposed surface is cultivated, and good wheat, peas, &c., grow in the drying mud.

Great is the joy of the people when, at the break of the rainy season, the tank begins to fill up again. In some parts, gay festivals, accompanied by curious ceremonies, take place at that time. Religious processions are formed to march to the temples in the surrounding groves, where offerings of flowers, fruits, and vegetables are made. Young damsels dance merrily on the banks; and boys rush into the rapidly filling tank, shouting and swimming about; while the aged and sedate stand by, looking on with a complacent smile. The dances which take place on these occasions, being spontaneous outbursts of heartfelt joy, are more lively and natural than

those of the professional dancing-girls; the accompanying songs, like the rhapsodies of the improvising bards, are wildly melodious and touching; and the air and figure of the dancers, wholly unstudied, have something weirdly picturesque and graceful in them. A big lady leads the dance, followed by a troop of blooming girls, who imitate her varied steps, which are always exact in time, and when she sings, make up the chorus in tunes wonderfully soft, but gay and lively.

A curious festival marks the time of the setting in of the rains in some parts of Bengal. It takes place not only on the large ponds, but also on the Ganges and on all its tributary streams. At five o'clock in the afternoon the bank becomes crowded with people, attired in gay costumes, looking on eagerly towards the water where the boats begin to move. These are all of a singular construction, and profusely decorated. Some of them are called 'peacock-boats,' from the resemblance of their make to the peacock; others, 'snakes,' being very long and narrow, and moving quickest of all; while many are decorated with the head of a horse and different devices. Idols and religious ornaments are placed in some of these boats, in the most commodious part of which are laid carpets, cushions, and pillows, covered with silk, satin, and *kinkhábs*, and fringed and embroidered with gold and silver; whereon are seated the men of rank and wealth, who are entertained by a man who dances, sings, and beats time to the oars, from which hang little tinkling bells.

But it is after the rains that the most enchanting scene is observed at a large tank, which is then full to the brim, and quite fifteen feet deep in the middle. It is an early hour in the morning. The serene cloudless sky lends a tender azure to the broad expanse of water, as it ripples under the breeze blowing on it, reflecting many a sun, as you look deep into it, flitting across from one side to the other. Close to the banks, the water assumes a deep green, the reflection of the overhanging branches of large trees, which stand on the edge, sheltering noisy little birds. In mid-water gaily swim a few couples of waterfowl, which dive among the bright lilies presided over by the lovely lotus. On the brink chirrup little birds, which timidly fly away directly they see a gorgeous peacock, radiant with joy at the sight of water, strut towards the edge, or a pair of snow-white cranes stalk forward, leading their young one between them. You see overhead the restless green flycatcher, the proud crowned hoopoe, the sly black crow, the scornful brown kite, and the poised gray kingfisher. Beyond the lake on the other side are the golden-brown stubble-fields; farther on are wide green sheets of wheat, gram, and other cereals, broken here and there by a deep-brown fallow, interspersed with stately trees—the peepul, the mango, the banian, and the palm—and clumps of bamboo or babul, through which peep the brown thatches and white roofs of the distant village.

While you have been contemplating the beauty of nature, the more interesting beauties of the village have dropped in on the *ghát* near you, most of them carrying a water-jar, which shows to advantage the graceful figures, draped in flowing robes of all colours. Among them you see an old woman with flaxen-white hair waddling near to the steps, propped on a stick, too feeble to carry

anything. Then there are matrons of forty or fifty accompanying their children; and young girls of twelve or sixteen wearing a quantity of ornaments. Taking a little rest, they go down the steps. While some perform their ablutions, and, standing chin-deep in the water, mutter prayers, others wash the household vestments, or, having finished their bathing, fill the jars, which they then balance skilfully on their heads or their waists. They leave the tank in little groups, the old women talking scandal, and the young ones whispering their love-affairs among themselves.

In the evening the village elders gather on the terrace, and, reclining comfortably on the seat, begin their daily gossiping in the intervals of smoking, while ill-clad little children gambol around on the ground. One group dilates passionately on the merits and faults of the two rival factions into which the villagers are divided; another discusses soberly the prospects of the crops and the course of prices: one party swears loudly at the vulture money-lender; another listens serenely to the religious discourse delivered by the village pandit. The shades begin to grow deeper; the cheerful and industrious ryots soon disperse home, followed a little later on by the idlers of the village.

THE TEXAN COWBOY:

HIS LIFE IN TOWN, ON THE TRAIL, AND ON THE RANCHE.

'GUESTS will please remove their pistols before entering the dining-room,' was the sign which met your eye as you stepped into the office of any of the hotels in Abilene, Kansas, in the early days when that town was the headquarters of the Texas cattle-trade for the United States.—'I'm a wolf, and it's my night to howl! I'm a bucking cayuse from Bitter Creek, wild and woolly and hard to curry! Whoop-pee! Every one take a drink!' were the words you could have heard uttered by some tipsy cowboy in any of the numerous drinking saloons in the same town almost any day or night during the season; and very often these words would be followed by shots from his revolvers, pointed in the air—just for the sake of hearing a noise, you know.

'Dance and move your feet quickly, you son of a gun, or I'll fill you so full of holes your mother will take you for a flour-sifter!' This exclamation was one often heard from one or other of the many whisky-wild frontiersmen who had picked on some greenhorn or 'tenderfoot' whom he desired to see dance, for the benefit of the crowd always to be found in the bar-rooms, and whose movements he accelerated by shooting into the floor in close proximity to his victim's feet.

'Down in time and make your game!' calls out the dealer sitting behind the faro table, at which from six to a dozen cowboys could always be found gambling, or, as they called it, 'bucking the tiger.'

'All hands around promenade to the bar! Take your partners for the next set!' shouts out the master of ceremonies, or 'herder,' as he is called, in the well patronised dance-house where cowboys, gamblers, frontiersmen, scouts, and

others whiled away the hours of night in wild carousal with the representatives of that class of women who would be found in such rough company.

Such is a picture of the frolics of the cowboy in town, who, just in from Texas by the old Chisholm Trail, has 'filled up' with fighting-whisky, which was considered the proper thing to do after his three or four months' drive across the vast prairies and swollen rivers *en route*. Here he is seen at his worst, with all the discipline maintained in camp by the foreman or 'boss-herder' removed; here he turns himself loose, to use his own expression, and acts as one of the wild cattle or horses which he is daily in company with would, if turned loose in a china-shop. From this standpoint, too, he is too often judged by people who have no idea of his life and the dangers he is surrounded with on the trail and range. In reality, the old-time cowboy is generally a wild, reckless, generous, big-hearted spirit, a rough diamond, thorough in everything he undertakes; rough, but honest; and in his camp his hospitality is proverbial. The cow-camp is a haven to the traveller, who is made welcome as he rides up, usually being greeted with the salutation: 'Light, stranger; chuck is just about ready, and I guess you can stow away right smart chance of it;' which being interpreted means: Alight; a meal is ready; and the host thinks his visitor can enjoy a good one.

The cattle he works with are the long-horned breed, raised on the vast plains of South-western Texas and New Mexico, which originally are supposed to have been introduced by the Spaniards. On these plains they are allowed to roam at will; each creature bears the brand of the owner on its side or hip; the only control exercised over them being at the yearly round-up, when the calves are branded, and such full-grown cattle gathered into a herd as are needed to send to the northern markets. These herds were until recently driven north by the cowboys crossing Red River, through the Indian nation and Southern Kansas, to the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad, or the Kansas Pacific or Union Pacific. The road travelled is called a trail, which from time to time, as civilisation pushed westward, was changed. The government have now, however, prohibited the opening up of any new trails from Texas northward, because the emigration has been so heavy into the West in late years as to render it impossible to drive large herds of cattle through Northern Texas and Kansas without retarding settlements. 'Life on the trail' really means the life the boys used to lead in years gone by on this great thoroughfare from Texas; while 'life on the range' is usually the term used in speaking of the life at present on the cattle-ranges in Wyoming, Dakota, Colorado, and Montana, where the original long-horns from the South have been bred with fine-grade cattle of the North, resulting in larger creatures, better fitted for beef; and although they roam at will over the prairies, yet are not so wild as their fellows raised through the South.

It was no unusual thing for the old-time cattle-kings of the South to brand several thousand calves each year; and their ranges, obtained through the old Spanish land-grants, extended

over several hundred square miles. On these ranges, the ponies—descendants of the Spanish barb imported from Spain, and turned loose generations since—used for the work run at large, and of course are as wild as the cattle. When the time arrives for the start to be made with a herd, the necessary number of these wild ponies are gathered, and the cowboys have eight or ten assigned to each one to ride during the drive; this necessitates good riding, courage, and recklessness. Each morning during the drive these ponies have to be lassoed and really rebroken; for a day or two of rest will be sufficient for them to forget the control obtained over them when being ridden before.

The cattle to be sent to market are driven into an enclosure called a corral, and a second brand, called a 'road-brand,' is burnt on their sides or hips. This is done in order that the cowboy may be able to distinguish those belonging to the herd he is attached to from those in other herds from the same range; for in years gone by, these southern cattle-owners often started two or three herds up the trail the same season, besides selling to dealers who operated between the ranges and the markets. The consequence of this branding is that many a creature will be seen with its sides and hips covered with different letters, figures, and characters—the brands of the different owners through which it has passed, until the hair is only visible in patches, the flesh being burned into ridges resembling a chess or backgammon board. After the road-branding is done, the herd—usually numbering from five to fifteen hundred head—is started on the trail, with an average of twelve cowboys to each thousand head, and a foreman; and followed by a huge wagon, loaded with flour, baking-powder, bacon, coffee, sirup, sugar, and salt—the provisions for the drive, which will occupy from two to four months. The teamster with the wagon also acts as cook for the camp; and although he would not pass muster in a first-class hotel or restaurant, yet a stranger would be astonished at the excellence of the meals he cooks in the open air despite the weather.

The distance usually travelled each day is from twelve to eighteen miles, according to the distance between water; for, when possible, the camp is made every night on the banks of a stream. The start each morning is made at sunrise, with a mid-day stop from about ten o'clock till two; then drive again till about five o'clock in the evening, the cattle being allowed to graze and drink at these stops. At dusk the cattle are gathered together, usually on sloping ground, and bedded down, as it is called, the cowboys riding around the group singing loudly, to quiet the cattle, which after a short time lie down to rest. Then all but two of the boys go to camp, spread their blankets on the ground, with the heavens for their only roof, and turn in to sleep, until each is wakened in his turn to keep guard over the sleeping cattle. This is called night-herding. If the weather is stormy, then the boys may look out for hard work; for the vivid lightning and loud thunder which visit these vast prairies are almost sure to frighten the wild cattle and madden them, until they start on a stampede, running at a furious rate, regardless of all obstacles, in a vain endeavour to get away from

the drenching rain and out of sight and hearing of the lightning and thunder.

At the first sign of a regular stampede, all hands are ordered out except the cook; the horses, which are kept saddled in readiness for an emergency, are mounted; and away to the front of the wildly running herd ride the cowboys, singing and shouting as they go; for, to a certain extent, the cattle will follow the human voice; and the object of the men is to lead the foremost cattle in a circle until they mix up with those in the rear of the herd; and as they crowd together—or mill, as it is called—they are checked in their mad race and gradually quieted. All the courage and nerve of the cowboy are required in handling a stampede; for if by any accident he is thrown from his horse, he will be crushed beyond all recognition by the sharp hoofs of the maddened brutes.

But once quieted, it does not follow that the herd will again go to rest; very often the first run is followed by others, each one more furious than the last, as the cattle become more frightened, until daylight. Then a count is taken; and if any are missing, as there usually are, not only cattle but men, the surrounding country is scoured for trails or fresh tracks leading away from the camp, which, when found, are followed by the man who discovers them, who, regardless of food, water, or sleep, is supposed to follow this clue until he overtakes the cattle the tracks are made by, the main herd being halted in the locality until all the strays have been brought in; or if only a few head are missing, the men who are sent to search for them are instructed to follow the main trail until they catch-up. Of course these searches mean long rides over a strange country; for often, after separating from the herd, a bunch of cattle will travel at the rate of twenty-five or thirty miles a day, usually in the direction of the range from which they were originally driven; and all the powers of endurance of the men are brought into requisition in a search of this kind, for no excuse will be taken by the foreman for the hunter's return without the cattle, except starvation really stares him in the face.

On the trail each day is a repetition of the previous one. In pleasant weather, the cowboy's life is not so hard; but in wet stormy weather he is continually in the saddle, wet through most of the time; and yet he is happy, with no other company for months than his own immediate companions. He never gets lonesome or homesick, but is always possessed of the same careless reckless spirit, which asserts itself so strongly when at the end of his drive he reaches the settlements and goes for a frolic to the town.

Life on the ranches in the north-western States and Territories differs from that on the trail in many respects, the most noticeable being, that instead of the ground for his bedstead, the heavens for a roof, and his saddle for a pillow, he has a comfortable house to live in—either a log-cabin or 'dugout,' according to the supply of timber in the neighbourhood—provided with large fireplaces, in which on a cold night the logs and pitchy pine-knots are heaped on, and where the boys can amuse themselves with cards or 'swapping lies,' as they call it, smoke, and have a good time generally, although their nearest

neighbour may be, and often is, twenty miles distant. Another difference—in stormy weather the cowboy on the ranche can usually stay in the house. Especially in the winter is his life an easy one, for at that season the cattle are pretty well left to shift for themselves, it being considered better not to drive cattle around at that season more than is necessary, as they need all their strength to keep alive through the storms, and to keep up their courage to hustle around and gather enough grass to keep them from starving, because there is no hay served to them except when running in very small herds, less than one hundred head.

The 'round-ups' in these ranges are made similarly to those on the southern, except that two are made yearly instead of one—the first, to brand the calves early in the spring and ascertain the losses sustained during the winter, which is called the general round-up, and is attended by all the cattle-owners, with their cowboys, who own herds in a certain section, probably being a hundred miles square. This is necessary, because in the north-west it is impossible to obtain large grants of land, as in Texas and Mexico; therefore, the cattle range on the public domain, and the owners build their ranches in the valley of some river, turn the cattle loose, and in the spring hunt them up at the general round-up. Then in the autumn the beef round-up takes place, when all the bullocks or steers over three years old are separated from the main herd and sent to market.

During the spring and summer months, especially at the round-up, the cowboys have to work hard; but not being engaged on one drive so long as they used to on the trail, they go to town more frequently, and consequently are not so wild when there as the old-timers on the Texas trails used to be. As this great north-west is settling up very rapidly and railroads being extended, the cowboy of the past is fast disappearing, and giving place to a perfectly civilised successor.

FAMOUS THEATRICAL RIOTS.

No candid critic can deny that of late years there has been a decided improvement in the *morale* of the histrionic art. This in the main has been brought about by men and women whose names are familiar to all lovers of the stage. The actors themselves, more than the frequenters of the theatre, have come in for a large share of public abuse; and yet it almost goes for the saying, when theatrical audiences are influenced by pure and noble motives, then it follows that those playing behind the footlights rise to the occasion. To understand the truth of our assertions, we need only take a hurried survey of one characteristic feature of the stage of sixty years ago—namely, its riots.

In the year 1679 two Cavaliers entered Lincoln's Inn Theatre, London, and attempted to set it on fire, because their greatest enemy, the Duchess of Portland, was in it at the time. The result of this attempt was a very serious affray, in which many people were injured. Again, in 1721, at the same theatre, while the play of *Macbeth* was in progress, a gentleman walked across the stage, the back of which at that period was seated for the public, to speak with a friend.

Of course the manager resented this sort of conduct, and for his pains was rewarded with a blow in the face. A brawl ensued; part of the audience supported the offender, and the other part the manager. Soon the two divisions of the house were engaged in a free fight; but the manager's division proved victorious, and expelled the other party. Matters, however, did not end here, for the marauders, reinforced from the outside, returned, smashed mirrors and mouldings, hurled lighted torches amongst the scenery, and refused to desist until compelled by the turning out of the military. In consequence of the riot, the theatre had to be closed for a week, and a guard stationed to prevent like occurrences in the future.

In 1754, Garrick, by his neglect of public sentiment, was the means of causing a serious riot. Britain and France at that time were at war; yet Garrick, without thought, engaged at great expense a number of ballet-dancers from the latter country. The consequence of the imprudent engagement was, that when the dancers appeared, a great uproar was begun by the occupants of the pit. The people who were sitting in the boxes sympathised with the dancers, and the gentlemen, urged by their ladies, descended with drawn swords into the arena. In spite of this, however, the pittites proved victorious, and clearing the theatre, destroyed everything. Thereafter, the rioters marched to Garrick's house in Southampton Street, Strand, where they attempted to do further damage, but were prevented by the military. When Garrick again appeared before the public, an apology was demanded of him; but he refused, declaring that he would rather leave the stage for ever. This threat had the desired effect.

However popular Garrick might be, he still was frequently the victim of tumults. Macklin the actor was the originator of the one we are about to narrate. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, had fallen into arrears, and a general 'strike' was declared by the actors, who pledged themselves to stand by each other. Fleetwood came to terms; but Macklin was made the scape-goat, for he and his wife were dismissed from the company. Garrick obtained a situation for the luckless pair, which was indignantly refused. Macklin published his imaginary grievances, which he affirmed originated in the conduct of Garrick. All impostors get a following of some kind; so did Macklin. Accordingly, the next time Garrick acted he was met with groans and hisses, and pelted with eggs and apples. So great was the tumult, that the curtain was dropped and the audience was dismissed. The following night, Fleetwood hired a company of roughs and prize-fighters; these he placed in the pit. As soon as the curtain rose, the disturbance began. Thereupon, Broughton, the leader of Fleetwood's improvised army, rose and said: 'Gentlemen—I'm told some people have come to interrupt the play; now, I've paid my money to hear it, and I advise them to go away quietly and not hinder my diversion.' These words were met with shouts of defiance; and fighting was the only alternative left to the mercenaries. Hats and wigs lay scattered about in all directions, and broken heads and noses were more common than otherwise. The hired men proved the victors; and after the

house was cleared of the disturbers, the remainder of the audience enjoyed the play in peace and quietness.

Not long afterwards, Macklin suffered similar treatment, but his superior did not value his talents at so high a rate as to warrant the services of a hired band; on the contrary, Macklin fell by his own devices, and was dismissed from the company.

In considering certain events in history, it is impossible not to be struck with the gullibility of humanity on certain occasions. What the generality do at times, the individual, without consideration, imagines correct. Often the curious habit displayed by the sheep is also observable in human opinion. Take the following. The Haymarket Theatre was the scene of a great riot in 1749. Throughout the city, posters announced that on a certain night a man in the Haymarket company would put himself into a quart bottle. The theatre was packed; but the conjurer did not appear. The audience, at first enraged, were easily appeased by the promise that on the following evening the performer would really appear, and use a pint instead of a quart bottle. The second night the audience was again disappointed. They had at length discovered their own stupidity, and were furious. The Duke of Cumberland, one of the occupants of the boxes, stood up with drawn sword, and advised the infuriated people to destroy everything within their reach. This was soon accomplished; and tearing down the trappings, they carried them into the street, where a large bonfire was kindled. It afterwards turned out that the hoax arose in the fruitful yet withal simple brain of the Duke of Montague.

The Duke of Cumberland was a great favourite with theatre-goers; and at his death, because certain persons appeared in the theatre without mournings, a riot took place, and was renewed, until the offenders against the public taste either absented themselves from the play or assumed the due mark of respect for the dead Duke.

The nineteenth-century theatre differs in many respects from that of the eighteenth. In the latter, the servants of gentlemen had some privileges. They had a right to remain in the seats of their masters till the latter arrived. The manners of the upper classes at that time were not altogether exemplary, and their lackeys followed suit, only they were more offensive. While sitting in the boxes, the footmen were allowed to spit or throw orange-peel into the pit; and when the appearance of their masters relegated them to the gallery, which privilege they had gratis, their conduct in no way improved. At length this gallery privilege was denied them, and flunkeydom was wroth. To give vent to their rage, the footmen congregated in vast numbers within the theatre. The uproar they caused put in the background all such past occurrences; and although the Prince of Wales was one of the audience, no heed was paid to him. The military were called out; fifteen of the disturbers were arrested, and next day suffered at the hands of the sheriff of London.

Mrs Siddons was once the victim of a cruel riot. On one occasion, while fulfilling an engagement in Dublin, a rumour got abroad that the great actress had refused to co-operate with her com-

pany in giving a benefit to an old Irish actor, West Digges. The rumour had its effect on the minds of outsiders, for when Mrs Siddons appeared, as Mrs Beverley in the *Gamester*, her reception was anything but flattering. This conduct upset her, and she fell fainting into the arms of John Kemble. The incident did not quieten the audience; but Mrs Siddons, recovering, acted on the advice of Sheridan, and made a very neat speech, which was received in silence. Never again was she the victim of an attack.

Edmund Kean once got involved in a love affair, and for his imprudence was severely criticised by the press, which went the length of advising his expulsion from the stage. Night after night the theatre was crammed; but the audience refused him permission to play, and everything went on in blind show. Kean was forced to retire to America; but bad luck also followed him there. His first engagement was at Boston, and the house was packed. Next night, only twenty persons attended, and Kean refused to allow the play to proceed. Some months afterwards, Kean again returned to Boston; but the Bostonians resolved to have their revenge. They refused to hear him; for whenever he appeared on the stage, he was met with showers of stones, bottles, bits of brass, and sticks. Poor Kean had to flee for his life. The rioters followed him to the back part of the theatre; and when they found he had eluded them, they betook themselves to his hotel, from which Kean escaped with great difficulty.

Macready visited the United States in 1849; but, unhappily, the partisans of Mr Forrest, an American actor, spread the report that the Englishman had hissed the American favourite while playing in London. In vain did Macready declare that the charge was false. Conscious of his innocence, he appeared as Macbeth in one of the New York theatres. When the curtain rose, Macready was greeted with thundering applause, as he thought. It was thunder in a sense, for it seemed to be noise without rational guides to its continuance or abeyance. He appealed to the American love of fair play; but all was without effect. Every kind of insult was heaped upon him; copper cents, eggs, apples, potatoes, lemons, and asafetida were thrown at his luckless person. It is said that chairs were hurled with great force on to the stage. The play of course was stopped.

Next night, the rioters returned; but a number of policemen were stationed amongst the audience, and these immediately expelled the turbulent spirits. The change of scene did not quell the disturbers, for in a short time they were howling round the walls of the building. The noise was deafening; but yet Macready never acted again as he did on that night. Matters came to such a pass that the military were marched to the scene. While sitting in the anteroom, Macready suddenly exclaimed: 'Hark! what's that? The soldiers have fired.' One volley followed another, and then the tumult subsided. News was then brought that several men had been shot. At once, Macready changed his clothes and walked away with the retiring audience. But although he went to a friend's house, his safety could not be insured; and he was forced to leave the city. An opportunity of doing this presented itself;

a doctor was about to drive to a dying patient in New Rochelle; but the actor took the surgeon's place, and thus escaped.

In 1809 a droll disturbance occurred at the Haymarket Theatre. Foote the actor had produced the burlesque, *The Tailors, or the Tragedy for Warm Weather*, and had thereby roused the wrath of the knights of the thimble and bodkin. So keenly did the tailors of the Metropolis feel the lampooning of the play that they sent a petition to the manager of the Company against its further production, promising at the same time that if the piece was changed, they would undertake to get a full house. The petition was spurned, as were also the threatening letters the manager received. When the play began, the first intimation the actors received of the determination of the tailors was a pair of scissors thrown at their heads. A reward of twenty pounds was at once offered to any one betraying the offender; but the only answer given to such an appeal was the hurling of other missiles. The magistrates and police were called in; they were powerless; but the Guards then stationed in London marched to the theatre and arrested nearly a score of the ringleaders.

The riots known by the name 'Old Prices' are the most notorious. Covent Garden Theatre was rebuilt in 1808; but somehow or other, the architects had managed to bring about some new changes of construction, which greatly displeased playgoers. The theatre was opened on the 18th September 1809 with a representation of the play of *Macbeth*, ending with a farce, in which the chief attraction was the well-known Madame Catalani. It was noticed when the curtain rose that throughout the audience there were scattered a goodly number of rough-looking fellows, bearing in their hands sticks and bludgeons. The overture was listened to without a murmur; but whenever Kemble stepped forward to recite the opening address, he was met with shouts to the following effect: 'Off, off! Old prices'—for the charge of admission had been raised—and 'Native talent.' Not a word of the play was heard; and Mrs Siddons fared no better than Kemble. As for the farce, it was even worse, and yet Catalani and Munden were taking part in its performance. Two magistrates appeared upon the scene, read the Riot Act, and ordered the people to depart; but the audience refused to move. Next morning, the *Times* supported the popular demand; and playgoers, encouraged from without, repaired night after night to the theatre, but refused to hear a single word. The actors were assured that the disturbance was not because of their actions, but simply from the fact that John Kemble, one individual, chose to fight John Bull.

On the third night, Kemble asked what was wanted. The reply was drastic enough. The stage was stormed, and the company had to take refuge where they could. But some of the actors unfastened the trap-doors of the stage, and in this way secured many of the disturbers, who were at once conveyed to Bow Street prison.

On the sixth night, Kemble proposed that the theatre accounts should be examined, so that the public might understand the reason for the heightened prices. The proposal was taken for victory, and a scroll of paper was unfurled by

some of the audience—the paper bore these words: 'Here lies the body of New Prices, who died September 23, 1809, aged 6 days.' The auditors appointed to examine the accounts were the Solicitor-general, the Recorder of the city of London, and the governor of the Bank of England. The result of their investigation showed that the net gain to shareholders amounted only to a little more than six per cent. For six years the receipts had been £365,983, and the expenditure £307,912, and added to this were twelve shares in the patent. Kemble, in view of these facts, felt justified in raising the prices, but terminated the engagement with Madame Catalani. The theatre was re-opened on the 10th of October; but rioting again was in the ascendant. Every one wore in his and her hat a piece of paper with the letters O. P. (old prices) printed on it. The pit became a pandemonium; playgoers, constables, soldiers, and actors fighting with each other. Kemble had to be escorted home by the military; but the crowds followed him and sang all night beneath his window.

During the scuffle, a Mr Clifford was seriously injured by the box-keeper, named Brandon. Against Brandon an action was raised, and Clifford won the case. The rioters were jubilant. They called a meeting, and with Clifford in the chair, pledged themselves to support every one injured as Clifford had been. While the meeting was proceeding, Kemble appeared on the scene, and stated that he would lower the prices, remove the obnoxious tier of boxes, and dismiss Brandon. John Bull had gained the victory, and was satisfied. So ended the notorious theatrical riots of Old Prices, they having lasted for sixty-one nights.

Well may we say that the times are changed. On the one hand we have the strange spectacle of a whole city taking a vital, nay, a personal interest in the drama; and on the other we see the passions of men roused to their keenest pitch with little regard to decency or order. The modern stage lacks the national interest, but it undoubtedly has made a great advance towards being a place for healthy and entertaining instruction both in the moral and social life of mankind.

'TILL DEATH DO US PART.'

In every Love-treaty, Death goes to the reckoning;
And now he is closing on yours and mine;
We have battled him bravely from line to line,
Till at last he is with us, his lean hand beckoning.

Nearer and nearer his shadow is blackening,
Slowly effacing our life's design;
In every Love-treaty, Death goes to the reckoning,
And now he is closing on yours and mine.

O Love! though my hand on the helm be slackening,
And a heart from a heart is hard to untwine,
Our dark night of sorrow brings brighter awakening;
The conqueror carries a message divine,
Of a treaty where Death has no part in the reckoning,
And Love evermore shall be yours and mine.

J. B. S.

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THE SWEATING SYSTEM.

It is many years since the publication of *Alton Locke* made widely known the horrors of the sweating system. This cruel industrial slavery had then been in existence a quarter of a century. Fifty years ago it was in full operation, and frequent notices of it may be gathered from books and newspapers of the period. Nor has the lapse of time brought with it the decrepitude of old age; on the contrary, as foreseen by Kingsley, the system has struck its roots deeper and extended its baleful influence more widely. We are indebted to the recently published Report on the Sweating System in the East of London, by Mr John Burnett, the labour correspondent of the Board of Trade, for many of the facts embodied in this article.

The sweating system is defined as 'one under which sub-contractors undertake to do work in their own houses or small workshops, and employ others to do it, making a profit for themselves by the difference between the contract prices and the wages they pay their assistants.' They undertake to do work at a certain price per garment, and hope to make a profit by the labour of, or by 'sweating,' those who work for them. The object of the sweater being his own gain, the inevitable tendency of the system is to grind the workers down to the lowest possible level. The scale of business of these sub-contractors varies greatly, many who are called sweaters employing only one or two assistants; while workshops in which ten, twenty, and even thirty and forty hands are employed, are common. The great mass of the workers, however, are employed in shops or houses where much fewer than twenty work, or it may be in the single room of the small sweater.

The system obtains widely in the tailoring trade, although it is not confined to it. But the clothing trade is one which is peculiarly adapted to 'sweating,' and it may therefore be taken as illustrative. The work can be done at home, and is also capable of an indefinite subdivision, which

it is the sweater's interest to foster. Under the old economy, the tailor was a skilled workman, regularly apprenticed, and trained to produce all kinds of garments from beginning to end. But the introduction of machinery, the increase of population, cheaper dress materials, and the development of the ready-made clothing trade, have altered all that. The complete tailor is being crushed out. The demand for cheap clothes has continually tended to bring down the rate of wages among the least skilful of the workers. Instead of the master tailor, his journeymen and apprentices, we have now men who only make coats or vests or trousers. Nor does the subdivision end here. 'We have cutters, basters, machinists, pressers, fellers, button-hole workers, and general workers, all brought to bear upon the construction of a coat.' The acquisition of one of these branches is so much easier than the whole trade, that multitudes of both sexes have flocked into the cheap tailoring trade as the readiest means of procuring employment. The market is flooded with labour, which has inevitably produced a reduction of prices, and thus the evils of the system are intensified. The competition produced by a labour market already congested by our home population, has been vastly increased during the last few years by the great influx of foreign immigrants. These aliens, chiefly German and Russian Jews, crowd into the East of London, and being totally ignorant of the English language, and mostly in a state of pauperism, eagerly clutch at the first opportunity of procuring a wretched subsistence. While learning some branch of the trade, they are chiefly supported by charity, and their former mode of life being such that they can subsist on much less than the English worker, the condition of the latter has become intolerable. So there has grown up in our midst a system which at its best is a grinding industrial slavery, and which now constitutes a grave social peril, and calls loudly for legislative interference.

The manufacturing clothier lets out his work to contractors. These middlemen, or contractors, sublet to other contractors, and so the work let

out in this way may pass through several hands in its course from the head contractor to the actual maker of the clothes. These middlemen are not called sweaters; it is only those who employ men, women, or children to work for them who are so denominated.

The practical working of the system may be best seen by taking the establishment of a small sweater newly commencing business. Mr Burnett thus describes it: 'First, he must have a work-room; this he finds by using the room, or one of the rooms, in which his family reside. He then obtains a sewing-machine, for which he pays two shillings and sixpence per week under the hire-purchase system. The sweater is now in a position to commence in earnest and organise his establishment. The work is already cut out for him by the head clothier or contractor. If he is able to "baste" the parts of the garment together, he probably does so himself. If not, he must employ a "baster." As a rule, the basters are men, but are sometimes skilled females. Next, he requires a machinist. Again, in the vast majority of cases men are employed, as the work is heavy, but women are also largely engaged in this capacity. A "presser" is also required. This is the heaviest kind of work in the trade, and men are invariably employed to do it. The sweater will also require the services of two or three female workers—one to work button-holes; one to do "felling;" and one as a learner, to make herself generally useful and to carry work between the warehouse and the workshop.'

Although the establishment of the small sweater is contrived to secure the greatest advantages from a subdivision of labour, it falls far behind that of the large sweater in this respect. Not only is the garment subdivided, but these sections are again subdivided so as to ensure, as far as human ingenuity can possibly do so, the maximum amount of work for the minimum of wages. With the exception of button-hole working, piecework is unknown in these shops. This would appear to be favourable to the workers, but in fact it operates in the opposite direction. So accurately can a worker's ability be gauged by a sweater, that a certain rate per day almost invariably means a certain amount of work. Where two or more hands are engaged on the same kind of work, they are seldom or never paid the same wages; each is paid accordingly as he produces. In this way subdivision is carried to its utmost limits. And this explains the absence of piecework, since by these means the worker is under a rule stimulating to production much more rigid than that of piecework.

The character of the workshops varies considerably. As already stated, the smaller sweaters use part of their own dwelling, where, in the vast majority of cases, the work is carried on under the most filthy and unsanitary conditions. In a small room not more than nine or ten feet square, heated by a coke-fire for the presser's irons, and lighted at night and often through part of the day by flaring gas jets, as many as six, eight, ten, and even twelve workers may be crowded. The regulations of the Factory Acts and Public Health Acts are flagrantly violated, nor can the law be enforced with the present mode of inspection. Somewhat better than these small house-shops are the workshops built over the

back-yards of houses, which are more spacious and better ventilated, though these also are generally far from clean, and but miserable places, in which men and women are huddled together without regard to decency or health. What life must be to the wretched beings who toil in these malodorous dens from morning to night, breathing the poisonous air, and spurred to the greatest stretch of physical effort by their taskmasters, can scarcely be imagined. They may exist; enjoy life they cannot; it can only be a prolonged misery. The condition of slaves is often far more tolerable.

As regards hours of labour, females and 'young persons' are supposed to be protected by the Factory Acts, which limit the hours of labour to twelve, less an hour for dinner and half an hour for tea. The hour for dinner is usually taken, but the half-hour for tea is commonly disallowed. If a woman were to insist upon it, she would be sent about her business. A beverage the sweater calls tea, or coffee, is sometimes provided for the workers if they require it; or they may prepare it themselves with such appliances as the work-room affords, but they must bite and sup between the stitches as best they can. The hours of labour are usually from eight to eight; but some of the sweaters are reputed to make their female workers begin at six in the morning, who have then a day of fourteen hours before them. Workrooms and bedrooms are so arranged that, if the inspector pays a visit suddenly after hours, women who are kept at work beyond the regular time are shut up in a bedroom, where the inspector has no right to go. The inspector is regarded as a common enemy among the sweaters, and as soon as he is seen in a locality where they abound, the fact is flashed throughout the neighbourhood with almost lightning speed; every one is on the alert, so that one or two unexpected visits are all he can make in one locality. Men often work sixteen hours a day, less the dinner and imaginary tea-hour. In some places the hours are shorter, but in others they work eighteen hours. The average is not less than fourteen hours, and this in shops where good work is done. Overtime is not recognised at all—however many hours the worker toils, it is all counted as one day. These are the hours of the busy season, which, however, only lasts three months in the year; the other nine the workers do not average half-time. And yet it is in the slack season that the men are often most cruelly victimised as to the hours they may be called to work. The sweater so arranges matters that all the work to be done must be got out the last three days of the week. He will send for his hands and tell them that so much work must be done by Friday night or Saturday morning. Work will then begin at seven on Thursday morning, and go on uninterrupted till Friday afternoon or evening. For this spell of thirty-three or thirty-six hours' work, the men receive two days' pay. If called upon to work fractions of a day, eight hours are half a day, and four hours a quarter.

The prices that are paid for work are so various that averages cannot be obtained, or if given, would be but misleading. The best idea, therefore, can be gained by citing actual cases. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that on the average there are only one hundred and ninety-two

working-days in the year in the trade. From the following case, some idea of the gains of a small sweater may be obtained. He was engaged in making postmen's tunics at two shillings each, which he considered a good price. He could turn out twelve coats per day, for which he received twenty-four shillings. He paid presser, four shillings and sixpence; machinist, five shillings; button-holer, two shillings and sixpence, from which she must find gimp and thread; feller, one shilling and threepence; total, thirteen shillings and threepence—leaving the sweater ten shillings and ninepence for his own labour, and for finding thread, soap, coke, and machine. This sweater employed his men from seven in the morning till ten at night. His gains do not appear exorbitant; but applying the same rates to a larger sweater, one employing three, four, or five machines, the profits soon become large.

Prices for making coats range from fifteen shillings down to ninepence. At the lowest price, it is inconceivable that much profit can be made; indeed, it can only be by paying the lowest wages and the most resolute slave-driving that the sweater can make his money. But a fair estimate may be made of a sweater's gains by taking the class of coat made for one shilling and twopence. On one of these coats, after paying for labour, a margin is left to the sweater of threepence-halfpenny. A sweater employing three machines would turn out forty coats per day, his profit being estimated at fifteen shillings and twopence. On post-office coats at two shillings each, such a sweater would clear from twenty to twenty-five shillings. These may be taken as fair samples of a middle-class sweater's profit. The large sweaters have the best work, with higher prices, and consequently make proportionately larger profits. They do not themselves work at the trade, but simply direct and manage the labour of others. The lower-class sweaters do the commonest work at the lowest prices; they exact the maximum amount of labour from their hands for the minimum of wages, and themselves are very little better off than their workpeople.

Mr Lewis Lyons, however, as the result of many years spent among the sweaters and a careful study of the system, places the gains of the sweater at a higher figure. He estimates the average number of hands employed in a sweater's den at twenty. These twenty hands would be expected to produce forty garments per day at three shillings each, their gross earnings thus being six pounds. The cost of labour, &c., to the sweater is put down at a little over fifty-one shillings—thus leaving three pounds eight shillings per day as his profit.

Some three or four years ago, an investigation was made, at the instance of the managers of Toynbee Hall, and a private Report was presented to them. When this inquiry was made, the question of foreign immigration had not arrived at an acute stage. Since then, that immigration has largely increased, producing some decline in prices for work, as a consequence of increased competition. The following cases cited from this Report will illustrate the condition of workers under the sweating system:

'Case 5 is a female coat-maker who works from eight A.M. to nine P.M., with an hour and a half

for meals. She can in good times make three shillings and fourpence a day.—Case 13 is a female waistcoat-maker who until recently got only fivepence to sixpence per waistcoat, but was then receiving ninepence to tenpence from a shop recommended by the Charity Organisation Society. Found twist, thread, gimp, and machine-cotton, which would cost about a halfpenny per waistcoat. She could not earn at the above lowest prices five shillings a week, even by working from seven A.M. to twelve or one A.M., and sometimes she sat up till four in the morning to finish work.—Case 17 was an English coat-baster and finisher, who could earn two shillings and eightpence per day of twelve hours, with an hour and a half for meals. Used to work from seven till ten until the Factory Act was rigidly enforced. She was employed by a Jewish sweater, and work was irregular. The shop was closed on Saturdays, and as she could not work on Sundays, she had only five days a week.—Case 39 was a female trouser-machinist, who took work from another woman, who had it from City and other houses. She was paid threepence a pair, and could do ten pair a day if she got up at six and worked till eleven or twelve.

'Case 45 is a female trouser-finisher, who is paid fourpence per pair for large thick trousers, which she gets from a woman in the same house, who herself gets it from a sub-contractor. She could make six or seven shillings per week at this work.—Case 46 is a female waistcoat-worker, who makes waistcoats at home for eight to nine shillings per dozen; but when work was slack, they went down to seven shillings. Had to find thread, which would cost eightpence per dozen. Earned from seven to thirteen shillings per week: the highest figure would mean twelve hours' work per day.—Case 47 is a trouser-maker, who can only earn one shilling and sixpence to two shillings per day, out of which she has to find thread.—Case 53 makes children's knickerbockers at three-halfpence a pair, and can earn five shillings and sixpence per week. She works for a woman in the neighbourhood where she lives.—Case 54 makes children's suits—coat and "knickers"—for fourpence-halfpenny, and twopence for finishing, but has cotton to find. Working ten or eleven hours per day, can make four shillings and threepence a week.—Case 54A is that of a woman of fifty-five and one of twenty-four, who made children's suits of two garments. The prices for making the whole, except a little braiding, done after the work is sent back, range from threepence to elevenpence, with cotton to find. One week they started at six in the morning and worked until midnight each day, and made much above the average on suits at three shillings per dozen. Their total was eight shillings and sixpence for the week, or four shillings and threepence each. Their average weekly earnings they estimate at three or three shillings and sixpence—enough to pay the rent of their one little room, and find them in tea and bread. Both women had been bound to this trade for three months, and one had given three months' work to learn it.'

It is exceedingly difficult to arrive at any estimate of the numbers employed by sweaters which would be approximately correct. There are in the East End, at a most moderate computation, two thousand sweaters. If each employ but ten hands on the average, this gives a total of twenty

thousand persons of both sexes enduring a most cruel and grinding slavery. An informal census taken by officers of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors about five years ago gave a total of London tailors as twenty thousand, fifteen thousand of whom were employed under the sweating system. Since then, the number has considerably increased, and may be fairly estimated at from eighteen to twenty thousand.

Such a condition of things as is disclosed by Mr Burnett's Report cannot but be a fruitful source of physical, moral, and social evils. By the attractions which the sweating system offers to cheap foreign labour, the labour market is overcrowded, and the native workers are being forced out of the trade by foreigners. These, generally arriving in a destitute condition, must ultimately become a tax on the ratepayers or on charitable institutions, besides rendering entirely null all efforts to relieve the congestion of the home-labour market by the emigration of English workpeople. The overcrowding in miserable workshops, the foul air and stench, the long hours of labour, and the wretched subsistence gained, are destructive alike of health and morals. It is said that fifty per cent. of the workers suffer from heart and lung disease, and that the strongest pressers and machinists are quite worn out in from eight to ten years.

The remedies suggested are—such amendments of the Factory and Workshop Regulation Acts as will make them applicable to men equally with women; an increase in the number of inspectors, to make the acts operative, instead of the dead-letter they too frequently are now; restraining the immigration of foreign labourers in a state of destitution, by the imposition of a poll-tax or some other mode; the establishment of large factories, where all the advantages of division and organisation of labour might be gained without the intervention of the sub-contractor. It is earnestly to be hoped that something may be done by legislation or otherwise for the unhappy beings who are held in such wretched slavery. But while the demand for cheap articles of clothing continues and grows, and the overcrowded labour market makes the struggle for existence yearly more intense, these social conditions are sure to be taken advantage of by the cupidity of avaricious men, and will, we fear, greatly neutralise the best meant efforts of legislators and philanthropists.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XVII.—BREAKING A HEART.

WHEN Warren Relf returned to Lowestoft, burning with news and eager at his luck, his first act was to call his sister Edie hurriedly out of Elsie's room, and proceed to a consultation with her upon the strange evidence he had picked up so unexpectedly at Almundham Station. Should they show it to Elsie, or should they keep it from her? That was the question. Fortune had indeed favoured the brave; but how now to utilise her curious information? Should they let that wronged and suffering girl see the utter abysses of human baseness yawning in the man she once loved and trusted, or should they sedulously and carefully hide it all from her, lest they break

the bruised reed with their ungentle handling? Warren Relf himself, after thinking it over in his own soul—all the way back to Lowestoft in his third-class carriage—was almost in favour now of the specious and futile policy of concealment. Why needlessly harrow the poor child's feelings? Why rake up the embers of her great grief? Surely she had been wounded and lacerated enough already. Let her rest content with what she knew so far of Massinger's cruel and treacherous selfishness.

But Edie met this plausible reasoning, after a true woman's fashion, with an emphatic negative. She stood out for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, come what might of it.

'Why?' Warren asked with a relenting eye.

'Because,' Edie answered, looking up at him resolutely, 'it would be better she should get it all over at once. It's like pulling a tooth—one wrench, and be done with it! What a pity she should spend her whole life long in mourning and wailing over this wicked man, who isn't and never was in any way worthy of her!—Warren, she's a dear, sweet, gentle girl. She takes my heart. I love her dearly already.—She'll mourn and wail for him enough anyhow. I want to disenchant her as much as I can before it's too late. The sooner she learns to hate and despise him as he deserves, the better for everybody.'

'Why?' Warren asked once more, with a curious side-glance.

'Because,' Edie went on, very earnestly, 'she may some day meet some other better man, who could make her ten thousand times happier as his wife, than this wretched, sordid, money-hunting creature could ever make any one. If we disenchant her at once, without remorse, it'll help that better man's case forward whenever he presents himself. If not'—She paused significantly. Their eyes met; Warren's fell. They understood one another.

'But isn't it selfish?' Warren asked wistfully.

Edie looked up at him with a profoundly meaningless expression on her soft round face. 'Selfish!' she cried, making her mouth small. 'I don't understand you. What on earth has selfishness to do with it any way? Nobody spoke about any particular truer and better man. You jump too quick. I merely laid on a young man in the abstract. From the point of view of a young man in the abstract, I'm sure I'm right, absolutely right. I always am. It's a way I have, and I can't help it.'

'Besides which,' Warren Relf interposed suddenly, 'if Massinger really did write that forged letter, she'll have to arrange something about it, you see, sooner or later. She'll want to set herself right with the Meyseys, of course, and she'll probably make some sort of representation or proposition to Massinger.'

'She'll do nothing of the kind, my dear,' Edie answered promptly with brisk confidence.—'You're a goose, Warren, and you don't one tiny little bit understand the inferior creatures. You men always think you know instinctively all about us women, and can read us through and through at a single glance, as if we were large print on a street-poster; while, as a matter of fact, you never really see an inch deep below the surface.—I'll tell you what she'll do, you great blind creature: she'll accept the forgery as if it

were in actual fact her own letter; she'll never write a word, for good or for evil, to contradict it or confirm it, to any of these horrid White-strand people; she'll allow this hateful wretch Massinger to go on believing she's really dead; and she'll cease to exist, as far as he's concerned, in a passive sort of way, henceforth and for ever.'

'Will she?' Warren Relf asked dubiously. 'How on earth do you know what she'll do, Edie?'

'Why, what else on earth *could* she do, silly?' his sister answered, with the same perfect conviction in her own inbred sagacity and perspicacity as ever. 'Could she go and say to him, with tears in her eyes and a becoming smile on her pretty little lips: "My own heart's darling, I love you devotedly—and I know you signed my name to that forged letter?" Could she fling herself on these Moxies, or Mumpsies, or Mixies, or Meyseys, or whatever else you call them, and say sweetly: "I didn't run away from you; I wasn't in earnest? I only tried ineffectually to drown myself, for love of this dear, sweet, charming, poetical cousin of mine, who disgracefully jilted me in order to propose to your own daughter; and then, believing me to have killed myself for shame and sorrow, has trumped up letters and telegrams in my name, of malice prepense, on purpose to deceive you. He's a mean scoundrel, and I hate his very name; and I want him for myself; so I won't allow him to marry your Winifred, or whatever else her precious new-fangled high-faluting name may be." Could any woman on earth so utterly efface herself and her own womanliness as to go and say all that, do you suppose, to anybody anywhere?—You may think so in your heart, I daresay, my dear boy; but you won't get a solitary woman in the world to agree with you on the point for one single minute.'

The painter drew his hand slowly across his cold brow. 'I suppose you're right, Edie,' he answered, bewildered. 'But what'll she do with herself, then, I wonder?'

'Do?' Edie echoed. 'As if *do* were the word for it? Why, do nothing, of course—be; suffer; exist; mourn over it. She'd like, if she could, poor, tender, bruised, broken-hearted thing, to creep into a hole, with her head hanging down, and die quietly, like a wounded creature, with no one on earth to worry or bother her. She mustn't die; but she won't *do* anything. All we've got to do ourselves is just to comfort her: to be silent and comfort her. She'll cease to live now; she'll annihilate herself; she'll retire from life; and that horrid man'll think she's dead; and that'll be all. She'll accept the situation. She won't expose him; she loves him too much a great deal for that. She won't expose herself; she's a great deal too timid and shrinking and modest for that. She'll leave things alone; that's all she can do.—And on the whole, my dear, if you only knew, it's really and truly the best thing possible.'

So Edie took the letter and telegram pitifully in her hand, and went with what boldness she could muster up into Elsie's bedroom. Elsie was lying on the sofa, propped up on pillows, in the white dress she had worn all along, and with her face and hands as white as the dress

stuff; and as Edie held the incriminating documents, part hidden in her gown, to keep them from Elsie, she felt like the dentist who hides behind his back the cruel wrenching instrument with which he means next moment in one fierce tug to drag and tear your very nerves out. She stooped down and kissed Elsie tenderly. 'Well, darling,' she said—for illness makes women wonderfully intimate—'Warren's come back.—Where do you think he's been?—He's been over to-day as far as Almundham.'

'Almundham!' Elsie repeated, with cheek more blanched and pale than ever. 'Why, what was he doing over there to-day, dear? Did he hear anything about—about— Were they all inquiring after me, I wonder?—Was there a great deal of talk and gossip abroad?—O Edie, tell me quick all about it!'

'No, darling,' Edie answered, pressing her hand tight, and signing to her mother, who sat by the bed, to clasp the other one; 'nobody's talking. You shall not be discussed. Warren met Mr Meysey himself at the Almundham Station; and Mr Meysey was going to Scotland; and he said they'd heard from you twice already, to explain it all; and nobody seemed to think that—that anything serious in any way had happened.'

'Heard from me twice!' Elsie cried, puzzled. 'Heard from me twice—to explain it all! Why, what on earth did he mean, Edie? There must be some strange mistake somewhere.'

Edie leant over her with tears in her eyes. It was a horrible wrench, but come it must, and the sooner the better. They should understand where they stood at once. 'No, no mistake, darling,' she answered distinctly. 'Mr Meysey gave Warren the letter to read.—He's brought it back. I've got it here for you. It's in your own hand, he says.—Would you like to see it this moment, darling?'

Elsie's cheek showed pale as death now; but she summoned up courage to murmur 'Yes.'

It seemed the mere unearthly ghost of a *yes*, so hollow and empty was it; but she forced it out somehow, and took the letter. Edie watched her with bent brows and trembling lips. How would she take it? Would she see what it meant? Would she know who wrote it? Could she ever believe it?

Elsie gazed at it in dumb astonishment. So admirable was the imitation, that for a moment's space she actually thought it was her own handwriting. She scanned it close. 'My dear Winifred,' it began as usual, and in her own hand too. Why, this must be just an old letter of her own to her friend and pupil; what possible connection could Mr Meysey or Mr Relf imagine it had with the present crisis? But then the date—the date was so curious: 'September 17'—that fatal evening! She glanced through it all with a burning eye. Great heavens, what was this? 'So wicked, so ungrateful: I know Mrs Meysey will never forgive me.'—'By the time this reaches you, I shall have left White-strand, I fear for ever.'—'Darling, for heaven's sake, do try to hush this up as much as you can.'—'Ever your affectionate, but heart-broken ELSIE.'

A gasp burst from her bloodless lips. She laid it down, with both hands on her heart. That signature, ELSIE, betrayed the whole truth.

She was white as a sheet now, and trembling visibly from head to foot. But she would go right through with it; she would not flinch; she would know it all—all—utterly.

'I never wrote it,' she cried to Edie with a choking voice.

'I know you didn't, darling,' Edie whispered in her ear.

'And you know who did?' Elsie sobbed out, terrified.

Edie nodded. 'I know who did—at least, I suspect.—Cry, darling, cry. Never mind us. Don't burst your poor heart for want of crying.'

But Elsie couldn't cry yet. She put her white hand, trembling, into her open bosom, and pulled out slowly, with long lingering reluctance—a tiny bundle of water-stained letters. They were Hugh's letters, that she had worn at her breast on that terrible night. She had dried them all carefully one by one here in bed at Lowestoft; and she kept them still next the broken heart that Hugh had so lightly sacrificed to mammon. Smudged and half-erased by immersion as they were, she could still read them in their blurred condition; and she knew them by heart already, for the matter of that, if the water had made them quite illegible.

She drew the last one out of its envelope with reverent care, and laid it down side by side with the forged letter to Winifred. Paper for paper, they answered exactly, in size and shape and glaze and quality. Hugh had often shown her how admirably he could imitate any particular handwriting. The suspicion was profound; but she would give him at least the full benefit of all possible doubts. She held it up to the light and examined the water-mark. Both were identical—an unusual paper; bought at a fantastic stationer's in Brighton. It was driving daggers into her own heart; but she would go right through with it: she must know the truth. She gave a great gasp, and then took three other letters singly from the packet. Horror and dismay were awakening within her the instincts and ideas of an experienced detective. They were the three previous letters she had last received from Hugh, in regular order. A stain caused by a drop of milk or grease, as often happens, ran right through the entire quire. It was biggest on the front page of the earliest letter, and smallest and dimmest on its back fly-leaf. It went on decreasing gradually by proportionate gradations through the other three. She looked at the letter to Winifred with tearless eyes. It corresponded exactly in every respect; for it had been the middle sheet of the original series.

Elsie laid them all down on the sofa by her side with an exhausted air and turned wearily to Edie. Her face was flushed and feverish at last. She said nothing, but leaned back with a ghastly sob on her pillow. She knew to a certainty now it was Hugh who had done this nameless thing—Hugh who had done it, believing her, his lover, to be drowned and dead—Hugh who had done it at the very moment when, as he himself supposed, her lifeless body was tossing and dancing among the mad breakers, that roared and shivered with unholy joy over the hoarse sandbanks of the bar at Whitestrand.

—It was past belief—but it was Hugh who had done it.

She could have forgiven him almost anything else save *that*; but *that*, never, ten thousand times never! She could have forgiven him even his cold and cruel speech that last night by the river near the poplar: 'I have never been engaged to you. I owe you nothing. And now I mean to marry Winifred.' She could have forgiven him all, in the depth of her despair.—She could have loved him still, even—so profound is the power of first-love in a true pure woman's inmost nature—if only she could have believed he had melted and repented in sackcloth and ashes for his sin and her sorrow. If he had lost his life in trying to save her! If he had roused the county to search for her body! Nay, even if he had merely gone home, remorseful and self-reproaching, and had proclaimed the truth and his own shame in an agony of regret and pity and bereavement.—For her own sake, she was glad, indeed, he had not done all this; or at least she would perhaps have been glad if she had had the heart to think of herself at all at such a moment. But for him—for him—she was ashamed and horrified and stricken dumb to learn it.

For, instead of all this, what nameless and unspeakable thing had Hugh Massinger really done? Gone home to the inn, at the very moment when she lay there senseless, the prey of the waves, that tossed her about like a plaything on their cruel crests—gone home to the inn, and without one thought of her, one effort to rescue her—for how could she think otherwise?—full only of vile and craven fears for his own safety, sat down at his desk and deliberately forged in alien handwriting that embodied Lie, that visible and tangible documentary Meanness, that she saw staring her in the face from the paper before her! It was ghastly; it was incredible; it was past conception; but it was, nevertheless, the simple fact. As she floated insensible down that hideous current, for the sea and the river to fight over her blanched corpse, the man she had loved, the man who had so long pretended to love her, had been quietly engaged in his own room in forging her name to a false and horrible and misleading letter, which might cover her with shame in the unknown grave to which his own cruelty and wickedness and callousness had seemingly consigned her! No wonder the tears stood back unwillingly from her burning eyeballs. For grief and horror and misery like hers, no relief can be found in mere hysterical weeping.

And who had done this heartless, this dastardly, this impossible thing? Hugh Massinger—her cousin Hugh—the man she had set on such a pinnacle of goodness and praise and affection—the man she had worshipped with her whole full heart—the man she had accepted as the very incarnation of all that was truest and noblest and best and most beautiful in human nature. Her idol was dethroned from its shrine now; and in the empty niche from which it had cast itself prone, she had nothing to set up instead for worship. There was not, and there never had been, a Hugh. The universe swam like a frightful blank around her. The sun had darkened itself at once in her sky. The solid ground seemed to fail beneath her feet, and she felt herself suspended alone above an awful abyss, a

seething and tossing and eddying abyss of utter chaos.

Eddie Relf held her hand still; while the sweet gentle motherly old lady with the snow-white hair and the tender eyes put a cold palm up against her burning brow to help her to bear it. But Elsie was hardly aware of either of them now. Her head swam wildly round and round in a horrible phantasmagoria, of which the Hugh that was not and that never had been formed the central pivot and main revolving point; while the Hugh that was just revealing himself utterly in his inmost blackness and vileness and nothingness whirled round and round that fixed centre in a mad career, she knew not how, and she asked not wherefore. 'Cry, cry, darling, do try to cry,' both the other women urged upon her with sobs and tears; but Elsie's eyeballs were hard and tearless, and her heart stood still every moment within her with unspeakable awe and horror and incredulity.

Presently she stretched out a vague hand towards Eddie. 'Give me the telegram, dear,' she said in a cold hard voice, as cold and hard as Hugh Massinger's own on that fearful evening.

Eddie handed it to her without a single word.

She looked at it mechanically, her lips set tight; then she asked in the same cold metallic tone as before: 'Do you know anything of 27 Holmbury Place, Duke Street, St James's?'

'Warren says the club porter of the Cheyne Row lives there,' Eddie answered softly.

Elsie fell back upon her pillows once more. 'Eddie,' she cried, 'oh, Eddie, Eddie, hold me tight, or I shall sink and die!—If only he had been cruel and nothing more, I wouldn't have minded it; indeed, I wouldn't. But that he should be so cowardly, so mean, so unworthy of himself—it kills me, it kills me—I couldn't have believed it!'

'Kiss her, mother,' Eddie whispered low. 'Kiss her, and lay her head, so, upon your dear old shoulder! She's going to cry now! I know she's going to cry! Pat her cheek: yes, so. If only she can cry, she can let her heart out, and it won't quite kill her.'

At the words, Elsie found the blessed relief of tears; they rose to her eyes in a torrent flood. She cried and cried as if her heart would burst. But it eased her somehow. The two other women cried in sympathy, holding her hands, and encouraging her to let out her pent-up emotions to the very full by that natural outlet. They cried together silently for many minutes. Then Elsie pressed their two hands with a convulsive grasp; and they knew she would live, and that the shock had not entirely killed out the woman within her.

An hour later, when Eddie, with eyes very red and swollen, went out once more into the little front parlour to fetch some needlework, Warren Relf intercepted her with eager questioning. 'How is she now?' he asked with an anxious face. 'Is she very ill? And how did she take it?'

'She's crying her eyes out, thank Heaven,' Eddie answered fervently. 'And it's broken her heart. It's almost killed her, but not quite. She's crushed and lacerated like a wounded creature.'

'But what will she do?' Warren asked, with a wistful look.

'Do? Just what I said. Nothing at all. Annihilate and efface herself. She'll accept the position, leaving things exactly where that wretched being has managed to put them; and so far as he's concerned, she'll drop altogether out of existence.'

'How?'

'She'll go with mamma and me to San Remo.'

'And the Meyseys?'

'She'll leave them to form their own conclusions. Henceforth, she prefers to be simply nobody.'

GLACIERS.

THE primary origin of glaciers is not to be found, as is popularly supposed, in northern latitudes of the earth, but in those regions that lie nearest the equator. When knowledge on this subject was not so complete as it is now, men thought that, through ultra-boreal changes on and about the earth, the phenomenon of glaciation would be greatly increased; that northern glaciers would slowly creep down to the south, and southern ones establish themselves farther northward, while the snow-line on mountains of all latitudes would be at a much less altitude, and thus wider areas of land and ocean would permanently be covered with a cold ice-mantle.

But glaciers have their origin in heat, and not in cold, great as the paradox may appear. Twenty-three degrees north and south of the equator, the sun generates more heat than anywhere else on the globe. In these zones, where the sun's rays strike the earth almost vertically, the land becomes highly heated, and gives off much heat to the atmosphere in junction with it; the seas also absorb a large amount of heat, and radiate it into the atmospheric strata that lie upon their surface. Expanded by heat, and consequently made lighter, the substrata of air rise into the higher regions of the atmosphere, laden with an aqueous vapour, gathered chiefly from the surface of the oceans, but also in part from the moisture of the land, as well as from rivers and the wide surfaces of large inland lakes. When these vapours and air-currents reach an altitude in the atmosphere that physically admits of it, they spread themselves out horizontally, and strong air-currents, charged with vapour from the seas beneath, set out in the direction of the north and south poles. To occupy the vacuum occasioned by these upper air-currents, lower currents flow into the equatorial regions from the chilly atmosphere around the poles. Thus, a system of air-circulation is established, the equator being the pulsating heart of the whole movement.

The length of time snow remains upon the ground is mainly dependent upon altitude and latitude combined. It is obvious that above the snow-line, where more snow falls during winter-time than is thawed in the summer months, snow must accumulate to an enormous thickness. The weight of such an accumulation is beyond estimation. Snow is not, in the regions of which we

spread, spread out over a level plain, but is piled upon the steep slopes of mountain sides, and laid along the various inclines of the valleys; and through the power of gravitation, the higher fields of ice and snow press hard upon the lower ones, and the whole mass, lying upon hard rocks at various angles to the horizon, slowly moves down to lower levels. Thus, the higher regions are relieved of their crushing weight, the valleys are prevented from being filled with snow to the top of the highest peak in the range, and a glacier is born.

A glacier is constituted of two parts: that portion of it which is above the snow-line is termed the *névé*; and that part of it which reaches out into the valleys below, sometimes in winter into cultivated fields, is the glacier proper. Through the labours of Professors Agassiz and Forbes, and in later years of Tyndall, we have revealed to us many interesting facts about the motions of glaciers. In 1827, Professor Hugi of Soleure made a series of experiments upon the Unteraar glacier in the Bernese Oberland. In order to shelter himself from the bitter cold, he built a hut on one of the medial moraines; in 1830 he found by measurement that it had moved downward three hundred and thirty feet. In 1836 it had moved from its position in 1827, two thousand three hundred and fifty-four feet. In the year 1841 it was found four thousand seven hundred and twelve feet from its original position. Professor Agassiz built a place for shelter on the same glacier in 1840; and two years afterwards found it had moved downwards four hundred and eighty-six feet. These facts place beyond all doubt the motion of glaciers.

Crevasses are a notable feature on the surface of glaciers, and perform an important function. The 'regelation' theory of glaciers is, 'that the ice of glaciers changes its form and preserves its continuity under pressure which keeps its particles together. But when subjected to tension, sooner than stretch, it breaks, and behaves no longer as a viscous body.' By the sufficient application of pressure, it is possible to mould ice into any shape whatever as easily and as completely as clay: press two pieces of ice together, and immediately they mutually cohere by what is termed regelation, or in fact a kind of welding. The surface of a glacier is often covered with deep fissures, that yawn in the face of the tourist, and make travelling very difficult. Many of these crevasses are of gigantic proportions, while others are so small that a man may leap across them. In passing over uneven ground, pressure and tension are brought into play in various parts of the body of the glacier. While travelling over a hollow in its bed, the surface becomes concave; while its bottom, conforming to the rock-surface over which it is passing, has a corresponding convex form. As ice has the properties of a solid body besides behaving as a viscous one, pressure is thus brought to bear on the surface of the glacier. But in passing over a ridge, it is obvious that the surface will not be under the power of pressure, but of tension. 'Sooner than stretch, it breaks;' therefore, a crevasse in the ice is formed, and according to the magnitude of the irregularities of its bed will be the fissures of a glacier. Now, as the crevasse is stationary, and the ice is in slow motion, it follows that all ice

in the line of motion with and above the crevasse must pass over it. At the point where the tension becomes powerful enough, a huge piece of ice snaps off from that side of the crevasse nearer to the *névé*, and falls over to the other side, where, by regelation, it coheres to the solid mass, and moves down with the body of the glacier.

On the Glacier du Géant, one of the larger tributaries of the Mer de Glace, is a fine example of the formation of these crevasses. Near the juncture of the Géant glacier with the Glacier des Périades, at the foot of the Aiguille Noire, the former slowly moves over a precipice, forming a magnificent ice *cascade*. Above the cascade, which happens to be just above the snow-line, the *névé* is covered with a sheet of fine snow, which stretches, with a comparatively even surface, up picturesque valleys to the higher Alpine peaks. Below the fall, the ice is fairly smooth. But, says Professor Tyndall, 'as we approach the fall'—from the Mer de Glace—'the smooth and unbroken character of the glacier changes more and more. We encounter transverse ridges, succeeding each other with augmenting steepness. The ice becomes more and more fissured and confused. We wind through tortuous ravines, climb huge ice-mounds, and creep cautiously along crumbling crests, with crevasses right and left. The confusion increases, until further advance along the centre of the glacier is impossible.' Immediately above the cascade, the crevasses yawn terrifically; and the locality is very dangerous on account of the great blocks of ice continually falling over the precipice, and from one side of a crevasse to the other; but farther away, the snows of the Col du Géant strike the eye, an unbroken plain of white fine snow.

On the broad surface of the Mer de Glace are at least six lines of loose rubble running parallel to the course of the valley. These are termed 'moraines.' Closely examined, they are found to be composed of fragments of rock of all sizes and shape, and correspond in texture and composition with the rocks higher up the valley. These moraines range from thirty to a few feet in height, and measure various widths across the base. Their origin is easily explained. Below the *névé*, the glacier flows through valleys bounded by bare rocks, cutting a sinuous course round precipitous promontories and beneath steep cliffs, skirting the foot of acute slopes. Rain and other moisture have penetrated the faces of these cliffs during summer-time and early winter; and when the winter fairly sets in, the moisture is frozen. Frozen water expands; therefore, this ice forces open large fissures in the surface of the rocks. When the ice melts in summer-time, the cohesive element has gone, and the portions of rock, forced from their position by the insinuation of this moisture and its subsequent crystallisation, fall from their position on to the surface of the glacier. As the surface is in constant motion, every part of it becomes covered with a rough irregular fringe of this debris. This is termed a 'lateral' moraine, and it forms on both sides of a glacier.

It is of importance to note that from beneath the snout of every glacier there issues a muddy stream. This arises partly from subglacial liquefaction, and partly from surface-water that finds its way down to the glacier's bed. In winter, these

streams are reduced to dribblets; but in summer, owing to the greater waste of ice, they burst into foaming streams of considerable size. Many glaciers have large lakes upon their surfaces, and, through small fissures in the ice, water from them drains through to the rocks beneath. They are formed of the summer surface-drainage of the glacier, and occur in temporary hollows in the ice. Sometimes the course of a surface-stream of water is blocked up from various causes, when a small reservoir is formed. It often occurs that these lakes break down the temporary barriers that keep them in their beds; then the whole mass of water rushes down towards the glacier's snout, a foaming torrent, flooding every hollow, cutting a course through all obstructing surfaces, and altering the configuration of a glacier's surface in a few hours. Continuing in its wild course, the stream *below* the glacier is swollen beyond its banks by this flood, and its bed is cut deeper and wider by the turbulent waters, and sometimes wide tracts of country are flooded before the burst reservoir is exhausted. Some of the most famous rivers in the world take their rise from these glacier streams. The grand and beautiful Rhine flows from beneath an Alpine glacier; and the turbulent Rhone has a similar source. The Po and the Garonne are both glacial rivers. The sacred river of the Hindu—the broad deep Ganges, a worshipped god—is but the flowing *muscus* of a glacier's snout away in the Himalayan chain! Many other rivers also have their rise at the foot of glaciers; so that in this respect these ice-streams exert considerable influence on the countries in which they are located.

We can never gain a perfect idea of the power invested in glaciers. In weight they have great power to grind and furrow rocks over which they slowly move. A broad river gliding peacefully through a picturesque valley cuts its shingled bed lower and wider, till in the march of ages the configuration of a country is greatly altered. Before a river, rock is but clay. But compared with glaciers, rivers are impotent. A river transports mud in suspension, and along its bottom pebbles are rolled with pleasant music to the sea; but a glacier bears on its cold bosom blocks of solid rock over wide tracks of land, and its pebbles are huge boulders.

It is in Greenland that glaciers reach the maximum of their modern power and grandeur. Although, in main characteristics, Greenland glaciers and Alpine ones have great similarity, in detail and ultimate results they differ considerably. The whole of the northern continent, though mostly unexplored, is thought to be covered with snow and ice, except in places where local conditions modify climatic influences, so that the cold is somewhat less severe. Frost phenomena are so severe, that all attempts to explore the country any great distance from the coast have been attended with scanty success or absolute failure; while the more successful attempts to master the polar seas have been singularly devoid of real good, though full of arduous and romantic adventure. These boreal conditions cause great variation in the result of Greenland glaciation, as against glaciation in every other part of the world except the extreme south. The snouts of all Alpine glaciers are at a considerable elevation above the sea; but in Greenland, the glaciers

creep down to the very coast-line, and often even push themselves out along the bottom of the cold sea. Along the Greenland coast, in about sixty-two degrees thirty-two minutes north latitude, a glacier projects outward along the bottom of the sea fully a mile from the shore, forming a break-water of crystalline masonry. Some of these northern glaciers terminate at the coast-line in a perpendicular wall of ice. Professor Norden-skiöld while exploring in Greenland met with one of these walls three thousand feet in height. In the Alps, glaciers terminate by liquefaction, and deposit across the valley at the point where the glacier ceases to be, a huge terminal moraine; but in Greenland and other northern countries, where the snow-line reaches down to the sea, the glacier terminates through quite different causes, and in terminating, produces very different effects. The ice-stream does not end its course in liquefaction; but if it strikes the sea where there are cliffs of very considerable altitude, it projects bodily over the edge, until, by force of gravitation, huge pieces snap off and, falling into the sea, are floated away by southern currents into warmer climes, when liquefaction takes place. It is obvious that no terminal moraine can ever be formed under these conditions, because the debris on the surface of the glacier, as well as that frozen into its mass, is carried southward with the floating ice.

But most northern glaciers terminate through other conditions than these. Where the coast-line is a comparatively low one, the ice cuts its way down to the sea-level, and then the glacier ploughs its way along the sea-bottom for considerable distances. Thus, a submarine valley, corresponding in depth, width, and shape to the body of the glacier, is formed and occupied by the ice. Now, ice is lighter than water, and floats with about three-fourths of its body under water; therefore, if a glacier twelve hundred feet in thickness projects into deep sea-water, having only fifty feet of its surface above the waves, a great strain is felt somewhere in resisting the buoyancy of the water. If the ice be not sufficiently strong, a huge piece will snap off from the glacier's end, and immediately the laws of relative density will have free and full effect, and the detached ice will float buoyantly on the waves with about three hundred feet of its surface above water. This ideal case illustrates what really does occur; and the ice thus detached becomes an iceberg, floating steadily into the warmer waters of more southern oceans. As these bergs move southward, they continue to melt away, and the debris which they carry is deposited irregularly over the length and breadth of northern seas; yet not so irregularly as would at first sight appear, because there are certain oceanic zones in which the water reaches a higher temperature than in other localities of the sea; and when a fleet of stately bergs enter such a region they melt very rapidly, and deposit along the ocean-floor of that locality a large amount of detritus. The Gulf-stream affects the action of ice in the northern hemisphere in this manner: icebergs sailing southward from the reaches of Baffin Bay, whence most of the ice of the Atlantic proceeds, suffer comparative waste till they enter the warm waters of this stream, at which point liquefaction rapidly occurs, and the history of the berg is soon cut off; consequently, the bottom of the sea all along the northern verge of this Gulf-

stream will be covered with debris of Greenlandic rocks, and the development of this glacial drift will be of greater proportion in that specific zone than in other sub-localities of the Atlantic.

THE LOST BOND.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

SHORTLY after the action commenced, I happened to want a cupboard in my room altered, and sent over to Mr Watkins the builder, asking him to send a man over to do the work. Accordingly, one afternoon Mr Jolly, a carpenter in his employ, made his appearance with his tools, and set to work to make the necessary alteration. He seemed to be of a talkative disposition, and after making sundry observations about the weather and relating some of the gossip of the neighbourhood, he remarked: 'It's curious in what queer places lawyers' papers get stowed away sometimes—ain't it, sir?'

'Well, yes,' I replied; 'I suppose they do get into unlikely places sometimes.'

'Yes, sir, you are right,' said Mr Jolly. 'For instance, I was doing a job at Mr Flint's the other day, and I found a document in the most unlikely place you would think of—a very important document too—in fact, a bond for a pretty large amount.'

I gave a start as the recollection of the bond in the case of Flint v. Jackson flashed across my mind. It might be that I had at last stumbled upon some information which might throw light upon the matter; so, controlling my feelings, I said, in as calm a voice as I could command: 'O yes, I suppose you mean Farmer Jackson's bond for one thousand pounds?'

'Why, sir, how in the world did you come to know anything about it?' asked Mr Jolly in surprise. 'Mr Flint told me not to mention the matter to anybody.'

'Oh, I daresay,' I said; 'but you see we do know about it; and we have reason to believe that an attempt is being made to obtain money from Mr Jackson by false pretences; and unless you tell me all you know about the matter, I shall consider you as aiding in the attempt; I must therefore ask you to tell me what you know about it.'

'I am sure I don't wish to harm Mr Jackson in any way,' said Mr Jolly. 'I thought the only reason for keeping it secret was that it was a private matter; and if it will do Mr Jackson any good, I am willing to tell you all I know about it.'

'Yes,' I said, 'it is most important to Mr Jackson, and I must ask you to tell me all you know.'

'Well, sir,' said Mr Jolly, 'you see, Mr Flint wanted some alterations made to a desk he has in his office, and among other things he wanted the drawers divided into different-sized partitions, so as to hold papers of various sizes; and I went there one morning, before any one had come to the office, to do the work. Well, I took one of the drawers out of the desk to put the divisions in, and after I had done so, I happened to look into the compartment from which I had taken it, and there I saw a document crushed up against the back, which had evidently fallen

over the end of the drawer. I pulled it out and looked over it, and found it was a bond from Mr William Jackson to Mr Sharper Flint for one thousand pounds. As I was examining it, Mr Flint came in, and I showed him the document and explained how I had found it. He took it from me and examined it, and said: 'O yes; I am very glad indeed you have found it. I have missed this bond for some time, and it might have put me to serious inconvenience if I had lost it.—Here is a sovereign for your trouble; and I should be glad if you would not mention the circumstance to anybody, as it is a private matter, which I should not like talked about.'

So far, this recital did not appear to contain anything likely to help us, but seemed rather to confirm Mr Flint's story of his having mislaid the bond; but the next sentence of Mr Jolly put a different complexion on the matter. 'You see,' he said, 'I knew that desk used to belong to Mr Winter, and when I saw his name on the bond, I thought it might be one of his papers.'

'What?' I said. 'Do you mean to say that that desk formerly belonged to Mr Winter?'

'Yes, sir,' answered Mr Jolly. 'He bought it at the sale of Mr Winter's effects. I remember the desk well, as I was at the sale when he bought it.'

This last information seemed indeed to be of a more important nature, since, if the desk formerly belonged to Mr Winter, it was possible that the bond might have been lost while it was in his possession.

'Well,' I said, 'we have reason to believe that that bond does not belong to Mr Sharper Flint at all, but that he is illegally trying to extort money from Mr Jackson on it—in fact, he has commenced proceedings against him to enforce it. Will you be prepared at the trial to swear to all that you have stated to me to-day?'

'Yes, sir; I shall be prepared to swear to every word of it.'

'Then, I shall depend on you,' I said; 'and I must ask you not to talk about the matter till after the trial.'

'Right you are, sir—mum's the word,' answered Mr Jolly; and shortly afterwards, having finished his job, he took his departure.

As for me, I hurried at once to Farmer Jackson's house at Oakfields and gave him an account of what I had heard. 'I tell you what my suspicion is,' I said. 'That bond was one of Mr Winter's papers; it was never given to Mr Flint at all; and he did not know of its existence till Jolly found it in the way I have told you.'

'That's it, sir, you may depend upon it,' said Mr Jackson, giving me a slap on the back that nearly knocked me down. 'By George! sir, we'll defeat the scoundrels yet.'

'Not so fast, not so fast,' said I cautiously. 'That is my suspicion; but I do not think it is sufficient to obtain a verdict in a court of justice. You see, we have no evidence at all that it did not belong to Mr Flint, and that it was not lost while it was in his possession. What we must do is to try to discover the whereabouts of some of Mr Winter's clerks and see if they remember anything about it. If the bond was mislaid while

it was in Mr Winter's possession, it is highly probable that some of them would have heard something about it. Rogers seems to remember very little about the matter. However, we may as well go and see him again and try and jog his memory.'

Accordingly, we went over to Rogers' house and found him in.

'Rogers,' I said, 'cannot you remember anything more about that bond? Do you remember whether it was mislaid or not?'

'Not that I heard of,' answered Rogers. 'But I have been thinking the matter over, and I think the most likely person to be able to give you information about it would be Mr Carter, Mr Winter's manager.'

'Where does he live?' I asked.

'Ah, that's the point,' answered Rogers. 'I am sorry to say I do not know. He left here when Mr Winter died, and went to London; but I don't know his address.'

'And you are quite certain you recollect nothing about it yourself?' I asked.

'Quite,' answered Rogers. 'I have been looking the matter up; and I remember now that I was ill for three or four months just about the time the bond is dated; and if anything special occurred in connection with it, I think it must have been while I was absent from the office.'

'Well,' I said to Mr Jackson as we were leaving, 'we must use our utmost endeavours to get hold of Mr Carter; but it would be as well to set to work quietly, so as not to alarm the other side. We might set a private detective to work; but it is so long ago since Mr Carter left, that there might be some difficulty in getting on the track; so I think the best way will be to advertise in a few of the London papers first; and if that fails, we can employ a detective.'

It was accordingly arranged that I should do this, and I set to work to consider the best way of carrying it into effect. I deemed it advisable not to direct any answers that might be received to the advertisement to be sent to any one in Barton; but I knew a young solicitor who was in practice in London; and after some consideration, I concocted the following advertisement:

'Will Mr Carter, who formerly resided at Barton, kindly communicate with Mr Edward White, Solicitor, Bell Yard, Doctors' Commons.—By doing so, he will greatly oblige.'

I inserted this advertisement in two or three of the London papers; and was extremely pleased, a few days afterwards, to receive a letter from Mr White, stating that Mr Carter had called on him with reference to the advertisement; that he was with a firm of solicitors in the City, and would be happy to see me and give me any information in his power.

As may be conjectured, I lost no time in running up to town and calling on Mr Carter. I found him to be a frank, gentlemanly man, of prepossessing appearance, who willingly told me what he knew of the matter. I informed him of the action taken by Mr Flint, and the circumstance of the finding of the bond by Jolly, and asked him if he could throw any light on the matter.

'Well, yes,' he replied; 'I remember that bond very well—in fact, it was I who drew it. Mr William Jackson intended borrowing a thou-

sand pounds from Mr Sharper Flint, and gave us instructions to prepare the bond. He called in and executed the document; but told us not to part with it until we heard from him again, as he had not quite made up his mind as to whether he would borrow the money. Mr Winter accordingly placed the bond in his drawer. A few days afterwards, we received a letter from Mr Jackson saying that he had determined not to borrow the money, and asking us to destroy the deed. Mr Winter searched through the drawer for the bond; but, to his surprise, it was nowhere to be found. We searched through the office high and low, but could find no trace of it; and as far as I know, it was never discovered.'

'Thank you very much,' I said. 'That explains the whole matter; and if we may rely upon your assistance at the trial, I think we shall have no difficulty in substantiating our defence.'

'Oh, certainly. I shall be happy to render you any assistance in my power,' said Mr Carter; and having again thanked him for his information, I took my departure.

We succeeded in unearthing two or three more of Mr Winter's clerks, who remembered the circumstance of the bond being lost and an unsuccessful search being made for it. Having now something definite to go upon, I set to work with a will, and pleadings and affidavits and notices followed one another, till the papers began to accumulate on my table in a manner dear to every lawyer's heart. Mr Jackson's neighbours, however, shook their heads rather doubtfully when they heard that he had intrusted his case to me. Mr Flint was a sharp man, they said, and so was Mr Crawley; and it was not likely that a young solicitor like myself without experience could be a match for them.

The longest pleadings must come to an end some time, and eventually we 'joined issue,' and notice of trial was given, and I began to prepare my first brief. How hard I worked at it, and what affectionate care I lavished upon it! I thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night, and consulted every book and case bearing on the subject I could lay my hands on; and when at last it was completed, and fairly written out on brief-paper, I considered it to be a work of art.

The trial was fixed to take place at the next assizes in the neighbouring town of Leighton; and you may be sure that I and Mr Jackson and our witnesses were there in good time. After some other cases in the list had been disposed of, the case of Flint v. Jackson was called on. Mr Elsdon, Q.C., and Mr Sefton appeared for the plaintiff; and Mr Herbert, Q.C., and Mr Lumley for the defendant. Mr Elsdon opened the case on behalf of the plaintiff. He stated that the action was brought to recover the sum of one thousand pounds, advanced by Mr Sharper Flint to the defendant, Mr Jackson, for which the bond in question had been given. Mr Elsdon here produced the bond, which our counsel, after examining, admitted. Mr Elsdon continuing, stated that the money due on that bond had never been paid, and as the document was admitted, he did not see what defence there could be to the action, and he would therefore not waste the time of the court by any further comment, but would

at once call upon the plaintiff to give his evidence. Mr Flint thereupon stepped into the witness-box and swore that he had advanced Mr William Jackson the sum of one thousand pounds, on the security of the bond which had been produced—that that sum had never been repaid to him, but that the whole of it was still due and owing. Mr Herbert cross-examined him pretty sharply as to whether the money had actually been advanced, and as to how he got possession of the bond; but he stuck to his story, and stepped down from the witness-box with his evidence unshaken.

Mr Herbert addressed the court on behalf of the defendant. His learned friend, he said, had stated that he did not see what defence there could be to the action; but if that were so, he was afraid the plaintiff had not been so frank with his legal advisers as he should have been. On the contrary, he considered that we had a perfectly good defence to the action, and he hoped to prove not only that the money had never been advanced, but that the bond had been obtained by fraud, and that Mr Flint had no right to it whatever. He then called Mr Jolly, who explained the way in which he had found the bond; and also swore that the desk in which he had found it formerly belonged to Mr Winter, Mr Jackson's solicitor. The plaintiff's counsel apparently did not think much of this evidence, and allowed Mr Jolly to step down without any cross-examination. Mr Carter then stepped into the box, and stated the circumstance of the bond having been prepared by him while he was in Mr Winter's employ, of the letter from Mr Jackson stating that he had determined not to borrow the money, and requesting Mr Winter to cancel the bond, and of the unsuccessful search for that document. He also stated that, as far as he knew, the bond had never been found. The plaintiff's counsel evidently thought this more serious, and subjected Mr Carter to a rigorous cross-examination, but failed to shake his evidence in the slightest degree. Two or three more of Mr Winter's clerks confirmed Mr Carter's evidence as to the bond having been lost; and Mr Jackson deposed that he had been through his father's books and papers and found no trace of any such sum having been borrowed, and that his father had consulted him some years ago as to borrowing a sum of money from Mr Flint, but had afterwards stated that he had determined not to do so.

Mr Herbert, again addressing the court on behalf of the defendant, submitted that the evidence which he had adduced proved that the money had never been advanced, and that the bond had never been given to Mr Flint. Mr Elsdon replied on behalf of the plaintiff, and endeavoured to make light of the evidence which had been given.

The learned judge shortly summed up the case for the jury. He stated that the question for them to consider was whether the money claimed had ever been advanced by the plaintiff to the defendant, or whether it was a fraudulent claim on a bond to which the plaintiff had no right, in which latter case they were to find for the defendant. The jury then retired to consider their verdict.

I had been so interested in watching the case, that I had noticed nothing else, but I now looked

towards the place where Mr Sharper Flint had been sitting, and found that he had disappeared. In a few minutes the jury returned to the court, and amid a profound silence the clerk of the court asked them the usual question: 'Gentlemen of the jury, are you agreed upon your verdict?'

'We are,' answered the foreman.

'Do you find for the plaintiff or the defendant?'

'For the defendant.'

I heaved a sigh of relief; and happening to look behind me, saw Farmer Jackson, the anxious expression which he had worn lately gradually giving way to his old look of good-natured contentment.

The judge having ordered the verdict to be entered for the defendant, expressed an opinion that Mr Flint ought to be prosecuted for fraud. Accordingly, as soon as I left the court, I obtained a warrant for his apprehension; but we were too late, for we found that he had absconded, taking with him all the money and portable securities he could lay his hands on. We traced him as far as Mudford, a junction about thirty miles from Barton; but there we lost all trace of him. However, he left ample property to satisfy all his creditors, so nobody was a loser by his flight.

Since that time, I have had no reason to complain of want of practice, as the case brought my name prominently before the notice of the public, who were pleased to give me more credit for the successful result obtained than I perhaps deserved. They were confirmed in this opinion by my friend Mr Jackson, who lauded the way in which I had conducted the case, and attributed no small part of his success to my efforts. He and I continue excellent friends to this day. He generally contrives to run up a moderately long bill every year, and a few days after I send it in, he calls on me with a cheque for the amount, and we have a chat over old times.

LEOPARDS AT HOME.

BY AN OFFICER'S WIFE.

MANY people spend a great part of their lives in India without seeing anything of the wild beasts and snakes with which it abounds. My experience was very different. I passed only a few years in the country; but I happened to come frequently in contact with its savage denizens, and among other adventures I had several opportunities of viewing leopards in their wild state.

Before the beautiful Himalayan sanatorium of Dalhousie had increased to its present proportions it consisted chiefly of a girdle of habitations clustering round the Bukrota, or lower hill, and a few scattered houses dotted about on the higher mountain, Terah. One of these latter we took for the season by advertisement without having seen it; and I was somewhat dismayed, on arrival, to find how lonely and exposed the situation was. However, the magnificent view of the snowy range from the veranda consoled me, and I quickly set to work to make the bare rooms as habitable as possible. 'I fear few of our friends will take the trouble to mount up to this eyrie to visit us,' I lamented. But the very next evening we were to have a visitor we little desired.

In an Indian bungalow every bedroom has a small anteroom attached in which the important function of bathing is performed. The floor is of cement and uncarpeted, to allow of splashing; and round the tub are placed the *ghurras*, or earthen pots of water which are required for the bath. The little room has always two doors, one opening on the outer air, to admit the bheesti with his supply of water; the other opening into the bedroom. On the evening in question, just as dusk was falling, I had finished the unpacking of a box in my bedroom and was moving away, when I fancied I heard a slight sound in the bathroom. It was an unusual hour for the bheesti's visit, so I opened the door, and, to my horror, saw just in front of me the beautiful sleek back of a large leopard, which was crouching on the floor and drinking out of one of the *ghurras*. The room was so small that I found myself quite close to the leopard, and could indeed have touched the spots on its glossy coat from where I stood. I was too frightened to move, and stood perfectly still; and fortunately for me, the outer door by which the creature had entered still stood wide open, and with a single bound, it cleared the threshold and disappeared up the hillside. Had the door blown to, or been closed from the outside by a servant, the animal would have had no resource but to seek an exit by the doorway in which I was standing, and the knowledge of my narrow escape made us very careful ever after about shutting up early in the afternoon.

A few nights later we were wakened by hearing the watchman call out loudly that there was a leopard in the veranda; and we ran to the window in time to see the waving of the branches where the beast had sprung out among the trees. The bearer, who was lying rolled up in his blankets in the same veranda, slept soundly on meanwhile, unconscious of his proximity to the stealthy-footed creature. These leopards are cowardly creatures, and will never attack a human being if they can avoid it; their special fancy is for little dogs; and they will so haunt the neighbourhood of any house where dogs are kept, that the greatest care is necessary to prevent the little quadrupeds falling victims to the big ones.

As the weather became better, they grew less bold, and it was only towards the end of the season that we saw them again. When snow fell on the farther hills they were driven to seek food lower down, and then again they began to infest the station. Often in the month of October, when coming home late at night, I have heard the hoarse sort of purring noise they make as they rub their sides, like huge cats, against the trunks of trees. The men carrying my *dandi* (light palanquin) would then step out, and talk very loud, to keep up their courage, while the mate would flourish his lantern and shout. No leopard would come near so noisy a party; and the only danger on such occasions is of the men taking a panic and dropping the *dandi*, when the situation would be awkward. This, however, never happened to me; and I was equally fortunate when riding.

One evening we were riding quietly home in the short gloaming, when a large animal jumped from the jungle above into the road close in

front of us. It ran swiftly along the road for a short distance, and then disappeared. My companion advised that we should hurry a little, as our horses seemed uneasy, so we trotted on; and when we came to the spot where we had lost sight of the leopard, there it was lying on the outer edge of the narrow mountain road, its eyes blazing like green lamps in the dusk, and its body half hidden in the grass and shrubs. I was mounted on a small pony, and could not help fearing the wild beast might spring upon us as we had to pass so close to it; but it lay quite still. When we had passed, I looked anxiously round, and saw it rise and walk off calmly into the underwood. My companion assured me the real danger was not from any onslaught on the part of the leopard, but lest our horses should take fright and bolt with us along the narrow path in the uncertain light.

On another occasion we were not so fortunate. I had been to a picnic luncheon with some friends in a glade near the lovely valley of Kujiar. We walked back, having our dandis carried behind us; and when dusk began to fall we put the dogs which had accompanied us into the dandis, knowing it was no longer safe for them to run by our side. At length one lady became tired, and called for her *dandi*. It was brought, and set down for her to enter. As it touched the ground, the little dog jumped out to welcome his mistress; but in a moment his pretty gambols were cut short. Like a flash, a great creature sprang into the road, and snapping up poor little Prim, vanished with the rapidity of thought down the steep hillside. We felt thunderstruck, and stood for some moments in horrified silence, gazing down into the bushes where the gliding form had disappeared; but nothing was to be seen or heard. The elastic tread of the leopard left no sign or track; and so noiselessly had it passed, that we could not tell whether it had slipped at once to the bottom of the ravine, or whether it was then lying only a few feet below us, hidden in the brushwood. The latter we imagined to be the case from the sudden silence that fell upon the other dogs, which, instead of whimpering as before and rebelling against their imprisonment, now cowered, mute and terrified, in the cushions of the several dandis. Poor Prim must have been killed by the first clutch of the cruel claws, for he never uttered a single cry. We hurried home, grieving much over his dreadful fate, and the gentlemen of the party immediately returned to the spot with their rifles and beaters; but nothing was then to be seen of the leopard.

Shooting-parties were frequently organised about this time; but they were not often successful, owing to the dense jungle that covered the slopes, and the impossibility of following the quarry even when sighted. The best chance was for a solitary sportsman to spend a night in a tree; but the leopards, though so bold in seeking their prey under safe circumstances, were extremely cautious when danger was at hand, and would generally leave the bait untouched near which their unseen enemy lurked. Traps, too, were placed on a low spur towards Bukloh, which they were known to frequent; but very few were caught there that year.

I will conclude with an exciting ride experienced by a young police-officer, who, being

suddenly summoned to investigate a case at a village some miles from the station, started off on his stout hill-pony, accompanied by his favourite large retriever. After going a short distance, he noticed that the dog, instead of running about as usual, was keeping close to the pony's heels; and from a continuous rustle in the vegetation along the side of the road, he soon perceived that a leopard was keeping pace with them. Having no weapon but a hunting-crop, he could take no offensive measures; but calling to the dog, he induced it to keep close below the girths on the side farthest from its foe. The dog seemed quite to understand the position, and never abandoned the shelter thus formed; and thus the village was reached in safety, though the leopard, which was evidently hungry, only relinquished the pursuit when the mud walls surrounding the little town were actually entered. Both horse and dog were much fatigued by the long race along the steep hill-road, the rider having been afraid to slacken pace for a moment lest the leopard should thus have time to make a spring. He was a patient and persevering leopard, and doubtless dined well that night, though not, I am glad to say, on our friend's fine retriever.

IN A TURKISH CITY.

THIRD PAPER.

It is a sweltering hot day, one of the first hot days of the early spring. Yesterday, the rain was descending in torrents, and the greater part of the street was a watercourse, but to-day all the clouds have cleared off, the sun is shining fiercely; and as a consequence of yesterday's rain, the roads and streets are delightfully clean. Not that it matters much to me what the roads are like, for I must perforce remain in to-day to receive visits, as it is the feast of Easter, and all the notabilities of the town will file in and out of my little cottage all day long, exchanging compliments, and imbibing vast quantities of my tobacco-smoke and coffee. I was up early this morning; but the natives were too many for me, and I had to eat a hurried breakfast between relays of Christian merchants, all shy and silent, all in their best clothes, and all, as I know only too well, with prospective axes to grind.

I had a cessation during the hour of the high celebration at the Roman Catholic cathedral; but the end of the function was all too soon announced by another caller. I hear him stumbling up the staircase, and then Achmet opens the door, and shows in the son of one of the principal Christian merchants who visited me this morning. At first I hardly recognise the youth, he seems so utterly changed, and, what is rather unusual on his part, looks rather ashamed of himself. A couple of months ago he returned from Venice, where he had been educated, determined to comport himself in everything like a European. He then wore a short cutaway coat, trousers very tight in the leg, and very loose round the ankle, a shirt-collar cut half-way down his chest, and a billycock hat with a very narrow brim on the top of his bushy curls. He was more European than the Europeans in those early days, and spoke of his compatriots as *questa gente*, and affected the airs and graces of the modern Italian youth. But alas!

the ridicule of his friends and relations has changed all this, and he now presents himself before me in a short scarlet jacket embroidered with black silk, and so tight in the arms and back that he can hardly stoop. An enormous pair of dark calico knickerbockers covers his person from the waist to the knee, while his lower extremities are clothed in white cotton stockings and elastic-sided boots. On his head is balanced the flat red fez with its heavy blue silk tassel; in fact he has taken advantage of the Easter festivities to put on the garb of his race and class, and to discard the Frankish dress he once held so dear. He notices my ill-concealed look of astonishment, and excuses himself somewhat awkwardly for resuming the national dress, by no means making the matter better by saying that he did not come with his father that morning because we who have lived in Europe do not care for such early visits, and he thought that he could converse more freely without the presence of *questa gente*. He makes these remarks proving his superiority to the rest of his race in good Italian, and as a still further proof, after a few false starts, continues his remarks in French.

I had noticed when he entered that he seemed to be walking as if he had peas in his boots, and he presently volunteers an explanation of this unfestiveal-like state of things, by observing: 'Je ne puis pas chaminer beaucoup; mes bottes sont trop strettes.' He smiles feebly as he confesses to his vanity, and wipes his hands nervously with a red cotton handkerchief after the manner of his kind.

The conversation languishes while he is composing a fresh atrocity in French; and I am almost in despair of getting rid of him, when a sudden martial clanking strikes upon our ears, the great double gates are thrown wide open, and the Vali Pasha of the vilayet stalks into the little courtyard, surrounded by his staff. At the sight, my pseudo-Frankish acquaintance starts to his feet unmindful of the tightness of his boots, and crushing his half-smoked cigarette—the fourth or fifth—into the brazen ashpan, declares he must be off now, as he has so many calls to make, and escapes just in time to salaam to the pasha in my little entrance hall.

Achmet, with an air at once consequential and deprecatory, bows in the Vali Pasha and his followers, and then, bustling about the room with his peculiar cat-like tread, contrives to get rid of the old cigarette ashes in some mysterious way, and places a clean ashtray by each guest. As the Vali Pasha enters, I step forward to greet my guest upon the threshold and lead him to the seat of honour, at the same time begging his suite to seat themselves. While the faithful Achmet is making a fresh brew of coffee, let me try to describe my visitors.

The governor-general, Hussein Pasha, is a tall, thin, gray-haired old gentleman, who has seen service in the Crimean and other wars. I say 'gentleman' advisedly, for everything about him, from his small and well-kept hands and his carefully trimmed gray beard, to his shapely and well-shod feet, shows him to be a polished, well-bred Turk of the best school. No one can be more courteous in his manner, or more happy and unconventional in the compliments he pays. He speaks no language but his own, not even

French; and those who know the Turk will agree that he is all the better for that ignorance.

Riza Pasha, his second in command, is a very different man. Tall and stout, his handsome face has the appearance of belonging to one who is always struggling against sleep, and who only keeps awake out of deference to his companions. He speaks English fluently in a soft fat voice, and is a man of some wealth and influence. In the late wars, he commanded a battalion; and the Dalmatian doctor who accompanies him to-day is fond of making sneering remarks—behind his back—about the general's courage.

The third pasha is completely unlike the other two. He is very short, and has the reputation of being a brave man, nor is he at all loth to blow his own trumpet upon all and every occasion. But what chiefly distinguishes him is that he is certainly the ugliest, and probably the vainest man in the whole city. He also speaks English with great facility, having spent three years in London learning mining engineering. After mastering this subject, he returned to Constantinople, where he was promptly commissioned by the government to translate an English medical work into Turkish. Beyond this, his English and mining knowledge have done him no good, except that the former has enabled him to prove himself a jovial companion to every Englishman he meets.

The other two are interpreters; one of Corfiote extraction, and the other the Dalmatian doctor mentioned above. Both speak French, Italian, Turkish, and Greek with equal facility, and, what is more, think in any one of these languages indifferently. The Corfiote has no special characteristics except a way of looking stealthily out of the corners of his eyes, and a very heavy moustache. The Dalmatian is a fine tall handsome man, who has attached himself to Hussein Pasha as a sort of unofficial interpreter, and is fond of making a butt of the third pasha, whose name is Hakki, upon every safe opportunity.

But now the trusty Achmet enters, and with his right hand upon his heart, presents the tray bearing the cups of fragrant coffee. We all six lay aside our cigarettes for a moment and sip the steaming liquor out of the tiny cups. As I have to drink a cup of coffee with each relay of visitors all through the day, my gratitude to the man who invented little cups is only equalled by my detestation for the miscreant who made it a rule of etiquette that the host should drink coffee or sip sherbet every time a fresh jorum comes in for his guests. Under the influence of coffee, the first stiffness of our intercourse wears off, and the doctor begs the Vali to tell Hakki Pasha to show me how they preach sermons in England. Hakki looks somewhat disconcerted, and the Vali is too much of a gentleman to press him; but the doctor, who has no such scruples, tells me in French—translating into Turkish, for the Vali's benefit, as he goes along—that Hakki Pasha sometimes at the Konak gets upon a chair and preaches a sermon that he once heard in England condemning all Turks, Jews, infidels; and heretics to everlasting punishment—the point of the story of course being the placing Turks and infidels in the same category. The doctor is a Christian of some nondescript kind himself, but in Mohammedan

society is more Turkish than the Turks. The Vali hastens to turn the conversation, and says: 'Tell the English Bey, Hakki Pasha, how they gave you sugar in England!'

Hakki's little eyes light up with the spirit of fun, and he begins at once, screwing up his caricature of a face, and acting every part of his recital; while the Vali Pasha, who has heard the story a hundred times before, follows it in the unknown tongue, and nods approval at the right places, which are vividly indicated by the narrator's wonderful gestures.

'When I was in England learning engineering,' says Hakki Pasha, 'I was in a boarding-house near the school, and the landlady was very mean with the sugar. You know we in the East like a good deal of sweet, and so, when she sent me my cup of tea with only two lumps of sugar in it, I used to send it back and ask for more. Then she would search out the smallest lump of sugar in the basin, and hold it out to me between her finger and thumb'—suiting the action to the word, and looking with head on one side and screwed-up eyes at his finger and thumb, which he pinched together as tight as possible, to indicate the very smallest piece of sugar—'she used to hold it like that, and say, "Is that too much for you, Hakki Bey?"'

As he reaches the cream of the joke, we all laugh, not loudly or uproariously, but in a dignified and subdued manner, as people who have heard the story before, and hope to hear it again, and the little pasha says: 'That is how they give you sugar in England!'

Since exchanging compliments with me on entering, Riza Pasha has not uttered a word, and now he only smiles sadly and continues an admiring inspection of his varnished boots between the puffs at his cigarette. The Corfiote, after some conversation with his chief, informs me that the Vali has lately procured some wonderful new fishing-tackle from England and is anxious to try it. He knows that all Englishmen catch fish, and so begs the favour of my accompanying him upon his fishing expedition. He enlarges upon the excellence of his new tackle, till at last Hakki Pasha, not to be outdone, says: 'I often catch fish; but my way is quicker and catches more fish than His Excellency's'—at the same time pulling two or three little cartridges out of his capacious coat pocket.

'What is that, *effendim*?' says the Corfiote.

'Dynamite,' replies Hakki cheerfully, slipping the cartridges back into his pocket. 'I catch plenty of fish with them!'

I confess to feeling uncomfortable. I should not have been so amused at that sugar story if I had known that the little poacher had dynamite cartridges shaking about in his great pockets, and murdered fish in so unsportsmanlike a manner.* Moreover, he has already burned two holes in his coat sleeve, and made a horrible odour by smoking his cigarette so short that it singed his moustache; and there is no knowing what the next burning stump may set fire to. However, no one stirs. If it is written in the Book of Fate that

* Perhaps this nefarious accomplishment of Hakki's was acquired as part of his mining education in England, it being well known to anglers that in Scottish rivers, and probably in English ones too, dynamite is so used by some miners.—Ed.

we are to be destroyed to-day or to-morrow, it is useless our attempting to prevent it. I can see that the two interpreters do not like the dynamite any more than I do; but they say nothing, knowing that any remark would probably make the pasha do something foolish out of bravado. I am not sorry when the Vali rises to take leave; and as I accompany him to the door, he presses me to come on a fishing expedition in the course of the week. I accept with the mental reservation to keep as far from Hakki Pasha and his malpractices as possible. The Turkish soldiers, who have been chatting, smoking, and drinking coffee with Achmet down below, spring to 'attention;' and so, with many parting expressions of friendship, the pasha and his suite clank out of my little courtyard, and leave me to await the arrival of fresh visitors.

DEATH-TRAPS.

It is high time that the truth about drain-traps, or, as we have called them, 'death-traps,' were told in unmistakable language. In the first place, 'trap' is a misnomer, except in the sense that it catches the unwary, or those without experience in sanitary engineering. Call it a siphon if you like, since it is merely a vertical bend in a pipe where water will collect; or even a water-lute or hydraulic seal; but not a 'trap,' since the poisonous gas that gets into it on the one side escapes on the other—not quite one's idea of a snare. In the next place, far from forming a safeguard against the presence of sewer-gas in our homes, these so-called traps are the means of spreading broadcast in them those deadly germs that occasion suffering and death. A siphon even, when kept always full, is but a slight security, since gas will pass through the water by absorption in dangerous quantities, escaping through any crack or flaw that may exist in the pipes within. Water absorbs gas under pressure, or, in other words, becomes impregnated with it; and will consequently, in any form of trap, give it off on the side not under pressure—the house side.

A trap has no business *inside* a building. Another monstrosity is the ventilating pipe from the main, to say nothing of its hideousness, and which as often as not pours its fever-laden breath through attic and dormer windows or down chimneys. It would really seem in some cases as if the sewer-gas were bottled up simply as an excuse for erecting one of these unsightly appendages, and so to deceive the uninitiated, who when looking over a house at once exclaim: 'One point in its favour is that the drains are all right, for, look! there is the ventilating pipe.'

It only remains to explain the remedy, which, we believe, emanated from Mr Norman Shaw, R.A. In place of the usual advice, 'See that the drains of your house are properly connected with the main,' we would say, 'See that they are disconnected from it.' Fix a four or six inch iron pipe in some convenient position against the outer wall of the house, reaching from the basement right up to the eaves. Leave both ends entirely open. Into it lead, by the shortest route, but avoiding sharp turns, all the pipes from water-closets, baths, sinks, &c., as well as the overflow pipe from the cistern. Let this iron pipe do duty

also as the down-pipe for rain-water, leading the roof-gutters so as to discharge into its upper end. Let the lower end discharge through a movable grating into a small cemented chamber, and directly over the mouth of an earthenware pipe, through which the contents will flow into the main drain. Some three or four feet from the chamber, between it and the main, insert an earthenware siphon, so as to bar to some extent the passage of gas from the sewer. There will be a constant draught through the main pipe, owing to the air above moving at a greater velocity than that below. The atmosphere is always in motion, even in the most secluded valleys and the narrowest lanes of cities: it never moves at a less speed than a foot and a half per second.

By doing away with traps, we at once get rid of the numerous sources of danger and annoyance occasioned by their use. It is well known that when two or more water-closets are built one above the other—all discharging into the same soil-pipe—the traps of the lower ones are liable to be emptied of water, unsiphoned, by the rush of water from above acting like a piston, making suction behind it, thus opening up direct communication with the main drain. Unoccupied houses no longer suffer from disused traps becoming emptied by evaporation. We get rid of the many little accumulations of water more or less polluted, which are dotted all over the house. Expensive and intricate articles of sanitary pottery, always somewhat complicated and getting out of order, are unnecessary. The frequent chokings, especially in large barracks, hospitals, and asylums, are unknown. And lastly, we are not made to suffer for any carelessness or scamping of the plumber's work.

Nature in all her workings is beautifully simple, and the more nearly we imitate her in our endeavours to assist her, the more satisfactory will be the result. The golden rules in drainage are—(1) Let the system be simple. (2) Let it be as much exposed and as easily got at as possible. (3) Never bottle sewer-gas.

TRIOLETS.

WE used to watch the white moon's car,
And count the twinkling stars together;
We used—alas, the days are far—
We used to watch the white moon's car!
There must have risen a baleful star,
For now I sigh, in changed weather;
'We used to watch the white moon's car,
And count the twinkling stars together.'

'Twas but a dash of autumn rain
The wet wind from the west was blowing;
It seemed like tapping on the pane,
'Twas but a dash of autumn rain.
Up in my heart hope sprang again,
And set long deadened pulses glowing—
'Twas but a dash of autumn rain
The wet wind from the west was blowing.

M. FALCONER.

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LONDON STONE.

FEW people, probably, have ever seen London Stone, and it is safe to say that many are even unaware of its existence above ground. Cannon Street is not the locality in which one would look for antiquities, whatever Candlewick Street may have been. The changes made after the Great Fire—when the street was levelled, and with it most of the steep water-side lanes—and the revolution of 1847 have made it almost impossible to realise the lie of the ground. Mansions, we know, once stood on the banks of the Walbrook; and Cannon Street was once the most fashionable of the City thoroughfares. It stood high, although it was not the highest ground within the walls, if we can believe the quaint distich on the figure in Pannier Alley: 'When you have sought the City Round, Yet still this is the highest ground.' But the boy with the bunch of grapes dates only from 1688—twenty-two years after the Great Fire; and it is at least possible that before it was levelled by Sir Christopher Wren, the roadway by Cannon Street Station was one of the finest sites in the City, and that any prominent landmark placed here would be visible from the rising ground outside the walls. Here stood London Stone. Its sole remaining fragment, a cubic foot of oolite, is built into the wall of the church of St Swithin and St Mary Bothaw, in a niche protected by an iron grating.

The relic is seldom noticed, even by the most inquisitive of country cousins. During the greater part of the year, a fruit-stall largely obscures it from the public view. Hanks of twine are twisted round the iron grating, and on the Stone itself rest piles of paper bags. The combined effects of smoke and dirt, weather and wear, are telling upon it to such an extent that there seems to be some danger of its disappearing altogether; and the fact possesses for the superstitious an ominous significance. For London Stone shares with the Stone of Scone a venerable tradition. Everybody knows the Scotch superstition, that wherever the Stone brought from the Abbey of

Scone, and now in Edward's Coronation Chair in Westminster, is, there will the Scots be supreme. Regarding London Stone there is likewise an old saying to the effect, that 'so long as the stone of Brutus is safe, so long shall London flourish.' London Stone has already passed through so many vicissitudes, that there is reason to hope it will survive for some little time to come, so that there is still hope for the prosperity of the metropolis.

The Stone stood formerly, if not originally, as to which we know little, on the south side of the street, and there it remained down to the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was moved to the north side and placed close to the kerb. Fifty years later it was condemned as 'a nuisance and obstruction,' and only escaped being destroyed in consequence of the enterprise and energy of Mr Thomas Maiden, a printer of Sherborne Lane. It was, it seems, owing to his initiative that it was encased within another stone and set back against the wall of the church. But even in this position it was not allowed to rest in peace; and not until it was built into the wall did the outcry against it subside. The monument has dwindled in size until it is little larger than a paving cobble; and if its vestiges are to be preserved, it is high time that more care was bestowed upon its guardianship.

London Stone appears more than once in history. Myth and legend apart, there is plenty of evidence to prove that it once possessed a curious importance. We may perhaps look askance at the tradition which declares it to have been brought from Troy by Brutus, and laid by him on the altar of the Temple of Diana. There is much that is apocryphal about the story that it is the veritable stone on which the British kings took the oaths on their accession. It may even be doubtful whether this is the real palladium of London, notwithstanding the old proverb. But we have no need of legendary lore to show that the stone dates back to a long antiquity. Saxon charters speak of it in terms of respect, if not of veneration. The manuscript gospel book

given to Christ Church, Canterbury, by Athelstan, refers to it as a well-known landmark. Every one remembers that half London was burned in the first year of Stephen, and the chroniclers record, as if of course, that this first broke out in a house 'near London Stone,' so that it must then have been one of the lions of London. Henry FitzAlwyn, again, the famous and first mayor of London, was popularly known as 'the draper of London Stone;' and Lydgate in the *London Lackpenny* relates how he 'went forth by London Stone throughout all Canwick Street.' There is, too, no reason to doubt that this is the Stone on which Jack Cade, after he had stormed London Bridge, struck his bloody sword, exclaiming: 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city'—a story for which Shakespeare is as high an authority as Holinshed, and which seems to show that the Stone was at that time still popularly associated with the government of London. It is also clear that it had come to be one of the recognised places for the promulgation of edicts at the latter end of the sixteenth century. 'Set up this bill at London Stone. Let it be doone solemnly, with drom and trumpet; and looke you advance my collour on the top of the steeple right over against it'—runs a passage in *Pasquil and Marforius*. And again we read: 'If it please them these dark winter nights to sticke uppe their papers uppon London Stone'—from all of which it appears that in those days it fulfilled functions which were a little later discharged in most places, as they still are in some, by the town pump. That it was once of considerable size, we know from Stow, who describes it as in his day 'pitched upright, a great stone fixed in the ground very deep, fastened with bars of iron, and so strongly set, that if carts do run against it through negligence, the wheels be broken, and the Stone itself be unshaken.' Sir Christopher Wren, too, who examined its foundations during the rebuilding of Cannon Street after the Great Fire, gave it as his opinion that it had once been a considerable monument.

From all this, it will be seen that London Stone from Saxon times down to the middle of the last century needed no apologist; whatever its original purpose, it filled through all these centuries a place of no little honour. The theory that it was formerly the *milliarium*, or milestone, from which the Roman roads were measured, has nothing improbable in it. From its present position, which is only a few yards off its earlier and presumably original site, it stood in the middle of Watling Street, which ran through the City from Ludgate along the present Watling Street and Budge Row to the Walbrook, which it crossed by a bridge, and then branching off by London Stone, continued along the Langbourne to Aldgate. And whether, as believed, the Stone was close to one of the gates in the western rampart of the citadel, it may well have been taken as a leading landmark on the great highway, if it was not, as Camden considered, the great central milestone. It may, indeed, have been originally a pillar set up in the centre of the Forum of Agricola's station. There is a similar stone of the time of Hadrian, which was found on the side of the Roman fowsway near Leicester. But adjoining its foundations, when these were unearthed after the Great Fire, were discovered some tessellated pavements and other

extensive remains of Roman buildings. These seem to show that it must have once been more than a mere pillar, like the *milliarium aureum* erected in the Forum at Rome by Augustus. The central landmarks common in Roman cities were of very various form. At Constantinople, for instance, the *milliarium* was an 'eminent building' with many statues; so that, although the records are silent, the fragment of oolite which is now preserved, after a fashion, in the wall of St Swithin's Church may have been part of the central pillar of some massive building in Roman times. As to its dating farther back still, we have nothing to guide us, for here all is conjecture. It is, of course, perfectly possible that the Romans found the Stone there, and utilised it after their own fashion. They were, we know, quick to make the most of the labours of the Britons: many a famous highway was British before it was Roman. Watling Street itself was a forest lane in British times. The Romans widened it, and made it part of their grand route from Kent to the Severn. There is, it is true, some reason for thinking that the track originally did not enter the city at all, but, following the line of the Edgware Road, crossed the Oxford Road at Tyburn, and then ran, by way of Park Lane and Mayfair, on through St James's Park until it crossed the Thames by Stanegate Ferry. It was, according to this view, only diverted so as to pass through the city after London had become a place of importance, and possibly after the building of the first London Bridge; and this was certainly not before the Roman occupation. But whatever its origin may have been, there is no manner of doubt that London Stone possesses claims to be preserved which require no superstitious or sentimental sanction.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XVIII.—COMPLICATIONS.

ELSIE spent a full fortnight, or even more, at Lowestoft; and before she vacated her hospitable quarters in the Relfs' rooms, it was quite understood between them all that she was to follow out the simple plan of action so hastily sketched by Edie to Warren. Elsie's one desire now was to escape observation. Eyes seemed to peer at her from every corner. She wanted to fly for ever from Hugh—from that Hugh who had at last so unconsciously revealed to her the inmost depths of his own abject and self-centred nature; and she wanted to be saved the hideous necessity for explaining to others what only the three Relfs at present knew—the way she had come to leave Whitestrland. Hungering for sympathy, as women will hunger in a great sorrow, she had opened to Edie, bit by bit, the floodgates of her grief, and told piecemeal the whole of her painful and pitiable story. In her own mind, Elsie was free from the reproach of an attempt at self-murder; and Edie and Mrs Relf accepted in good faith the poor heart-broken girl's account of her adventure; but she could never hope that the outer world could be induced to believe in her asserted innocence. She dreaded the nods and hints and suspicions and innuendoes of our bitter society; she shrank from exposing herself to its sneers or its sympathy, each almost equally distasteful to her delicate

nature. She was threatened with the pillory of a newspaper paragraph. Hugh Massinger's lie afforded her now an easy chance of escape. She accepted it willingly, without afterthought. All she wanted in her trouble was to hide her poor head where none would find it; and Edie Relf's plan enabled her to do this in the surest and safest possible manner.

Besides, she didn't wish to make Winifred unhappy. Winifred loved her cousin Hugh. She saw that now; she recognised it distinctly. She wondered she hadn't seen it plainly long before. Winifred had often been so full of Hugh; had asked so many questions, had seemed so deeply interested in all that concerned him. And Hugh had offered his heart to Winifred—be the same more or less, he had at least offered it. Why should she wish to wreck Winifred's life, as that cruel, selfish, ambitious man had wrecked her own? She couldn't tell the whole truth now without exposing Hugh. And for Winifred's sake at least she would not expose him, and blight Winifred's dream at the very moment of its first full ecstasy.

For Winifred's sake? Nay, rather for his own. For in spite of everything, she still loved him. She could never forgive him, but she still loved him. Or if she didn't love the Hugh that really was, she loved at least the memory of the Hugh that was not and that never had been. For his dear sake, she could never expose that other base creature that bore his name and wore his features. For her own love's sake, she could never betray him. For her womanly consistency, for her sense of identity, she couldn't turn round and tell the truth about him. To acquiesce in a lie was wrong, perhaps; but to tell the truth would have been more than human.

'I wish,' she cried in her agony to Edie, 'I could go away at once and hide myself for ever in America or Australia or somewhere like that—where *he* would never know I was really living.'

Edie stroked her smooth black hair with a gentle hand; she had views of her own already, had Edie. 'It's a far cry to Loch Awe, darling,' she murmured softly. 'Better come with mother and me to San Remo.'

'San Remo?' Elsie echoed. 'Why, San Remo?'

And then Edie explained to her in brief outline that she and her mother went every winter to the Riviera, taking with them a few delicate English girls of consumptive tendency, partly to educate, but more still to escape the bitter English Christmas. They hired a villa—the same every year—on a slope of the hills, and engaged a resident governess to accompany them. But, as chance would have it, their last governess had just gone off, in the nick of time, to get married to her faithful bank clerk at Brixton; so here was an opportunity for mutual accommodation. As Edie put the thing, Elsie might almost have supposed, were she so minded, she would be doing Mrs Relf an exceptional favour by accepting the post and accompanying them to Italy. And to say the truth, a Girton graduate who had taken high honours at Cambridge was certainly a degree or two better than anything the delicate girls of consumptive tendency could reasonably have expected to obtain at San Remo. But none the less the offer was a generous one, kindly meant;

and Elsie accepted it just as it was intended. It was a fair exchange of mutual services. She must earn her own livelihood wherever she went; trouble, however deep, has always that special aggravation and that special consolation for peniless people; and in no other house could she possibly have earned it without a reference or testimonial from her last employers. The Relfs needed no such awkward introduction. This arrangement suited both parties admirably; and poor heart-broken Elsie, in her present shattered condition of nerves, was glad enough to accept her new friends' kind hospitality at Lowestoft for the present, till she could fly with them at last, early in October, from this desecrated England and from the chance of running up against Hugh Massinger.

Her whole existence summed itself up now in the one wish to escape Hugh. He thought her dead. She hoped in her heart he might never again discover she was living.

On the very first day when she dared to venture out in a Bath-chair, muffled and veiled, and in a new black dress—lest any one perchance should happen to recognise her—she asked to be wheeled to the Lowestoft pier; and Edie, who accompanied her out on that sad first ride, walked slowly by her side in sympathetic silence. Warren Relf followed her too, but at a safe distance; he could not think of obtruding as yet a male presence upon her shame and grief; but still he could not wholly deny himself either the modest pleasure of watching her from afar, unseen and unsuspected. Warren had hardly so much as caught a glimpse of Elsie since that night on the *Mud-Turtle*; but Elsie's gentleness and the profundity of her sorrow had touched him deeply. He began indeed to suspect he was really in love with her; and perhaps his suspicion was not entirely baseless. He knew too well, however, the depth of her distress to dream of pressing even his sympathy upon her at so inopportune a moment. If ever the right time for him came at all, it could come, he knew, only in the remote future.

At the end of the pier, Elsie halted the chair, and made the chairman wheel it as she directed, exactly opposite one of the open gaps in the barrier of woodwork that ran round it. Then she raised herself up with difficulty from her seat. She was holding something tight in her small right hand; she had drawn it that moment from the folds of her bosom. It was a packet of papers, tied carefully in a knot with some heavy object. Warren Relf, observing cautiously from behind, felt sure in his own mind it was a heavy object by the curve it described as it wheeled through the air when Elsie threw it. For Elsie had risen now, pale and red by turns, and was flinging it out with feverish energy in a sweeping arch far, far into the water. It struck the surface with a dull thud—the heavy thud of a stone or a metallic body. In a second it had sunk like lead to the bottom, and Elsie, bursting into a silent flood of tears, had ordered the chairman to take her home again.

Warren Relf, skulking hastily down the steps behind that lead to the tidal platform under the pier, had no doubt at all in his own mind what the object was that Elsie had flung with such fiery force into the deep water; for that night on the

Mud-Turtle, as he tried to restore the insensible girl to a passing gleam of life and consciousness, two distinct articles had fallen, one by one, in the hurry of the moment, out of her loose and dripping bosom. He was not curious, but he couldn't help observing them. The first was a bundle of water-logged letters in a hand which it was impossible for him not to recognise. The second was a pretty little lady's watch, in gold and enamel, with a neat inscription engraved on a shield on the back, 'E. C. from H. M.,' in Lombardic letters. It wasn't Warren Relf's fault if he knew then who H. M. was; and it wasn't his fault if he knew now that Elsie Challoner had formally renounced Hugh Massinger's love, by flinging his letters and presents bodily into the deep sea, where no one could ever possibly recover them.

They had burnt into her flesh, lying there in her bosom. She could carry them about next her bruised and wounded heart no longer. And now, on this very first day that she had ventured out, she buried her love and all that belonged to it in that deep where Hugh Massinger himself had sent her.

But even so, it cost her hard. They were Hugh's letters—those precious much-loved letters. She went home that morning crying bitterly, and she cried till night, like one who mourns her lost husband or her lost children. They were all she had left of Hugh and of her day-dream. Edie knew exactly what she had done, but avoided the vain effort to comfort or console her. 'Comfort—comfort scorned of devils!' Edie was woman enough to know she could do nothing. She only held her new friend's hand tight clasped in hers, and cried beside her in mute sisterly sympathy.

It was about a week later that Hugh Massinger, goaded by remorse, and unable any longer to endure the suspense of hearing nothing further, directly or indirectly, as to Elsie's fate, set out one morning in a dogcart from Whitestrand, and drove along the coast with his own thoughts, in a blazing sunlight, as far as Aldeburgh. There, the road abruptly stops. No highway spans the ridge of beach beyond: the remainder of the distance to the Low Light at Orfordness must be accomplished on foot, along a flat bank that stretches for miles between sea and river, untrodden and trackless, one bare blank waste of sand and shingle. The ruthless sun was pouring down upon it in full force as Hugh Massinger began his solitary tramp along that uneven road at the Martello Tower, just south of Aldeburgh. The more usual course is to sail by sea; and Hugh might indeed have hired a boat at Slaughden Quay if he dared; but he feared to be recognised as having come from Whitestrand to make inquiries about the unclaimed body; for to rouse suspicion would be doubly unwise: he felt like a murderer, and he considered himself one by implication already. If other people grew to suspect that Elsie was drowned, it would go hard but they would think as ill of him as he thought of himself in his bitterest moments.

For, horrible to relate, all this time, with that burden of agony and anguish and suspense weighing down his soul like a mass of lead, he had had to play as best he might, every night and morning, at the ardour of young love with that girl

Winifred. He had had to imitate with hateful skill the wantonness of youth and the ecstasy of the happily betrothed lover. He had had to wear a mask of pleasure on his pinched face while his heart within was full of bitterness, as he cried to himself more than once in his reckless agony. After such unnatural restraint, reaction was inevitable. It became a delight to him to get away for once from that grim comedy, in which he acted his part with so much apparent ease, and to face the genuine tragedy of his miserable life, alone and undisturbed with his own remorseful thoughts for a few short hours or so. He looked upon that fierce tramp in the eye of the sun, trudging ever on over those baking stones, and through that barren spit of sand and shingle, to some extent in the light of a self-imposed penance—a penance, and yet a splendid indulgence as well; for here there was no one to watch or observe him. Here he could let the tears trickle down his face unreprieved, and no longer pretend to believe himself happy. Here there was no Winifred to tease him with her love. He had sold his own soul for a few wretched acres of stagnant salt marsh: he could gloat now at his ease over his hateful bargain; he could call himself 'Fool' at the top of his voice; he could groan and sigh and be as sad as night, no man hindering him. It was an orgy of remorse, and he gave way to it with wild orgiastic fervour.

He plodded, plodded, plodded ever on, stumbling wearily over that endless shingle, thirsty and footsore, mile after mile, yet glad to be relieved for a while from the strain of his long hypocrisy, and to let the tears flow easily and naturally one after the other down his parched cheek. Truly he walked in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. The iron was entering into his own soul; and yet he hugged it. The gloom of that barren stretch of water-worn pebbles, the weird and widespread desolation of the landscape, the fierce glare of the mid-day sun that poured down mercilessly on his aching head, all chimed in congenially with his present brooding and melancholy humour, and gave strength to the poignancy of his remorse and regret. He could torture himself to the bone in these small matters, for dead Elsie's sake; he could do penance, but not make restitution. He couldn't even so tell out the truth before the whole world, or right the two women he had cruelly wronged, by an open confession.

At last, after mile upon mile of weary staggering, he reached the Low Light, and sat down, exhausted, on the bare shingle just outside the lighthouse-keeper's quarters. Strangers are rare at Orfordness; and a morose-looking man, soured by solitude, soon presented himself at the door to stare at the new-comer.

'Tramped it?' he asked curtly with an inquiring glance along the shingle beach.

'Yes, tramped it,' Hugh answered with a weary sigh, and relapsed into silence, too utterly tired to think of how he had best set about the prosecution of his delicate inquiry, now that he had got there.

The man stood with his hand on his hip, and watched the stranger long and close, with frank mute curiosity, as one watches a wild beast in its cage at a menagerie. At last he broke the solemn silence once more with the one inquisitive word, 'Why?'

'Amusement,' Hugh answered, catching the man's laconic humour to the very echo.

For twenty minutes they talked on, in this brief disjointed Spartan fashion, with question and answer as to the life at Orfordness tossed to and fro like a quick ball between them, till at last Hugh touched, as if by accident, but with supreme skill, upon the abstract question of provisioning lighthouses.

'Trinity House steam-cutter,' the man replied to his short suggested query, with a sidelong jerk of his head to southward. 'Twice a month. Very fair grub. Biscuit an' pork an' tinned meats an' sich like.'

'Queer employment, the cutter's men,' Hugh interposed quietly. 'Must see a deal of life in their way sometimes.'

The man nodded. 'An' death too,' he assented with uncompromising brevity.

'Wrecks?'

'An' corpses.'

'Corpses?'

'Ah, corpses, I believe you. Drowned. Heaps of 'em.'

'Here?'

'Well, sometimes. On the north side, mostly. Drift with the tide. Cutter's man found one only a week or two ago, as it might be Saturday. Right over yonder, by the groyne, to windward.'

'Sailor?'

'Not this time—gal—young woman.'

'Where did she come from?' Hugh asked eagerly, yet suppressing his eagerness in his face and voice as well as he was able.

'How should I know?' the man answered with something very like a shrug. 'They don't carry their names an' addresses written on their foreheads, as if they was vessels. Lowestoft, Whitestrang, Southwold, Aldeburgh—might 'a been any on 'em.'

Hugh continued his inquiries with breathless interest a few minutes longer; then he asked again in a trembling voice: 'Any jewelry on her?'

The man eyed him suspiciously askance. Detective in disguise, or what? he wondered. 'Ask the cutter's man,' he drawled out slowly, after a long pause. 'Taint likely, if there was any jewelry on a corpse, he'd leave it about her for the coroner to claim, till he'd brought her up here, is it?'

The answer cast an unexpected flood of light on the seafaring view of the treasure-trove of corpses, for which Hugh had hardly before been prepared in his own mind. That would account for her not having been recognised. 'Did they hold an inquest?' he ventured to ask nervously.

The lighthouse-man nodded. 'But what's the good?—no evidence,' he continued. 'Not identified. They mostly ain't, these here drowned bodies. Jury brought it in "Found drowned." Convenient vardick—saves a sight of trouble.'

'Where do you bury them?' Hugh asked, hardly able to control his emotion.

The man waved his hand with a careless dash towards a sandy patch just beyond the High Light. 'Over yonder,' he answered. 'There's shiploads of 'em yonder. Easy digging—easier 'an the shingle. We planted the crew of a Hamburg brigantine there in a lump last winter. Went ashore on the Ooze Sands. All hands drowned—

about a baker's dozen of 'em. Coroner comes over by boat from Orford an' sits upon 'em here on the spot, as you may term it. That's consecrated ground. Bishop ran down and said his prayers over it. A corpse couldn't lie better nor more comfortable, if it comes to that, in Kensal Green Simmetry.'

He laughed low to himself at his own grim wit; and Hugh, unable to conceal his disgust, walked off alone, as if idly strolling in a solitary mood, towards that desolate graveyard. The lighthouse-man went back, rolling a quid in his bulged cheek, to his monotonous avocations. Hugh stumbled over the sand with blinded eyes and tottering feet till he reached the plot with its little group of rude mounds. There was one mound far newer and fresher than all the rest, and a wooden label stood at its head with a number roughly scrawled on it in wet paint—'240.' His heart failed and sank within him. So this was *her* grave!—Elsie's grave! Elsie, Elsie, poor, desolate, abandoned, heart-broken Elsie.—He took off his hat in reverent remorse as he stood by its side. O heavens, how he longed to be dead there with her! Should he fling himself off the top of the lighthouse now? Should he cut his throat beside her nameless grave? Should he drown himself with Elsie on that hopeless stretch of wild coast? Or should he live on still, a miserable, wretched, self-condemned coward, to pay the penalty of his cruelty and his baseness through years of agony?

Elsie's grave! If only he could be sure it was really Elsie's! He wished he could. In time, then, he might venture to put up a headstone with just her initials—those sacred initials. But no; he dared not. And perhaps, after all, it might not be Elsie. Corpses came up here often and often. Had they not buried whole shiploads together, as the lighthouse-man assured him, after a terrible tempest?

He stood there long, bareheaded in the sun. His remorse was gnawing the very life out of him. He was rooted to the spot. Elsie held him spellbound. At length he roused himself, and with a terrible effort returned to the lighthouse. 'Where did you say this last body came up?' he asked the man in as careless a voice as he could easily master.

The man eyed him sharp and hard. 'You seem precious anxious about that there young woman,' he answered coldly. 'She floated alongside by the groyne over yonder. Tide throwed her up. That's where they mostly come ashore from Lowestoft or Whitestrang. Current sweeps 'em right along the coast till they reach the ness; then it throws 'em up by the groyne as reg'lar as one o'clock. There's a cross-current there; it's that as makes the point and the sandbank.'

Hugh faltered. He knew full well he was rousing suspicion; yet he couldn't refrain for all that from gratifying his eager and burning desire to know all he could about poor martyred Elsie. He dared not ask what had become of the clothes, much as he longed to learn, but he wandered away slowly, step after step, to the side of the groyne. Its further face was sheltered by heaped-up shingle from the lighthouse-man's eye. Hugh sat down in the shade, close under the timber balks, and looked around him along the beach where Elsie had been washed ashore, a lifeless

burden. Something yellow glittered on the sands hard by. As the sun caught it, it attracted for a second his casual attention by its golden shimmering. His heart came up with a bound into his mouth. He knew it—he knew it—he knew it in a flash. It was Elsie's watch! Elsie's! Elsie's! The watch he himself had given—years and years ago—no; six weeks since only—as a birthday present—to poor dear dead Elsie.

Then Elsie was dead! He was sure of it now. No need for further dangerous questioning. It was by Elsie's grave indeed he had just been standing. Elsie lay buried there beyond the shadow of a doubt, unknown and dishonoured. It was Elsie's grave and Elsie's watch. What room for hope or for fear any longer?

It was Elsie's watch, but rolled by the current from Lowestoft pier, as the lighthouse-man had rightly told him was usual, and cast ashore, as everything else was always cast, by the side of the groyne where the stream in the sea turned sharply outward at the extreme easternmost point of Suffolk.

He picked it up with tremulous fingers and kissed it tenderly; then he slipped it unobserved into his breast-pocket, close to his heart—Elsie's watch!—and began his return journey with an aching bosom, over those hot bare stones, away back to Aldeburgh. The beach seemed longer and drearier than before. The orgy of remorse had passed away now, and the coolness of utter despair had come over him instead of it. Half-way on, he sat down at last, wearier than ever, on the long pebble ridge, and gazed once more with swimming eyes at that visible token of Elsie's doom. Hope was dead in his heart now. Horror and agony brooded over his soul. The world without was dull and dreary; the world within was a tempest of passion. He would freely have given all he possessed that moment to be dead and buried in one grave with Elsie.

At that same instant at the Low Light the cutter's man, come across in an open boat from Orford, was talking carelessly to the underling at the lighthouse.

'How's things with you?' he asked with a laugh.

'Pretty much alike, and that stodgy,' the other answered grimly. 'How's yours?'

'Well, we've tracked down that there body,' the Trinity-House-man said casually; 'the gal's, I mean, as I picked up on the ness: an' after all my trouble, Tom, you wouldn't believe it, but, hang it all, there ain't never a penny on it.'

'No?' the lighthouse-man murmured interrogatively.

'No, not a farden,' the fellow Bill responded in a disconsolate voice. 'Wy should there be, neither? That's 'ow I puts it. 'Tain't a nob's. Turns out she warn't nobody, after all, but one o' these 'ere light-o'-loves down yonder at Lowestoft. Must 'a been a sailor's Poll, I take it. Threwed 'erself in off Lowestoft pier one dark night, might be three weeks gone or might be a fortnight, on account of an altercation she'd 'a bin 'avin with a young man as she was keepin' company with.—Never seen a more promisin' nor a more disappointin' corpse in my born days. Wen I picked 'er up, says I to Jim—"Jim," says I, as confident as a churchwarden, "you may take your davy on it she's a nob, this gal, by the mere look o' 'er, an

there's money on the body."—Wy, 'er dress alone would 'a made any one take 'er for a genu-wine lady.—An' 'ow does it turn out? A bad lot! Just the parish pay for 'er, an' that in Suffolk. If it 'adn't bin for a article or two in the way of rings as fell off 'er fingers, in the manner o' speakin', an' dropped as I may say into a 'onest man's pocket as 'e was a-carryin' 'er in to take 'er to the mortuary—wy, it do seem probable, it's my belief, as that there 'onest man might 'a bin out a shillin' or so in 'is private accounts through the interest he'd 'a took in that there worthless an' unprincipled young woman.—Corpses may look out for themselves in future as far as I'm concerned. I've 'ad too much of them; they're more bother'n they're worth. That's just the long an' the short of it.'

RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES:

IN RESPECT TO CHOICE OF SECURITIES.

THERE is considerable misapprehension as to the responsibility of trustees for the sufficiency of property on which any part of trust funds may be invested. Generally, it is supposed that if they act under the advice of a professional valuer, they are safe; but this is a proposition which must be accepted with considerable caution, as it is by no means of universal application. Of course, it is well understood that the terms of the investment clause must be strictly observed. If power is only given to invest upon government or real security, no other investments can be safely resorted to. But when the trust-deed gives no specific directions as to investments, the scope for discretion which is thus left open must be judiciously exercised, for if negligently exercised, the trustees are personally responsible. There have recently been two or three cases which have been calculated to impress upon the trustees concerned this truth in an unforgettable manner. Sir George Jessel, the late Master of the Rolls, laid down one rule in words easily remembered, saying: 'A trustee ought to conduct the business of the trust in the same manner that an ordinarily prudent man of business would conduct his own affairs.' With the strict observance of the power of investment and of this rule, a trustee will generally be safe; but in too many instances there may be found a laxity in the way in which trust business is conducted, which is highly dangerous to the pecuniary interests of the trustees. Perhaps, the simplest way of impressing the requisite lesson upon the minds of trustees will be to consider a typical case which was recently confirmed on appeal from the vice-chancellor, and which strikingly illustrates the danger to which we have referred.

A testator bequeathed a certain sum of money to his executors and trustees upon trust, to invest the same upon (amongst others) real securities in England or Wales. Part of the money was lent on mortgage of certain freehold cottages, and although the security was ultimately found to be insufficient, in consequence of depreciation in value after the money was lent, the trustees were not held personally responsible in respect thereof, as they could not foresee what was to happen in future; and it was held that the security was a proper one at the time when the

money was invested. Of course, if they had acted very negligently in the matter, they could have been required to make good the loss.

The other and larger portion of the trust money was lent upon a so-called security of a very different class. The property in this case consisted of a brickyard and premises appurtenant thereto, including the usual buildings, sheds, &c. The owners of the property had given for it twice the amount of money which they borrowed from the trustees; and the valuer employed by the latter was of opinion that it was a good security for the amount required. And here we may remark that the valuer did not value the property as he ought to have done, or stated in his valuation what he considered the value thereof, in order that the trustees might make their own calculations as to whether they could or could not safely make the advance required. On the contrary, he merely said that he considered the property a good security for the amount required to be advanced, and entered into some speculative remarks as to the improvement in their business which the mortgagers might accomplish with the use of additional capital, which was about the most injudicious thing which he could have said. It does not require much practical knowledge of the business of brickmaking, which involves the carrying away of the estate in small portions, to come to the conclusion that the more bricks are made out of a limited area the sooner the land will be so greatly reduced in value as to be altogether inadequate as a security by way of mortgage for a sum which could safely be advanced upon the land and be allowed to remain so long as it was intact.

It was strongly argued on behalf of the persons beneficially interested under the will, that this was not a proper security on which the trustees ought to have invested, because the real security, apart from the business carried on by the mortgagers, was utterly insufficient for the purpose. The power to lend upon real security authorised such investments as might be dependent upon the value of the freehold property, apart from the uses to which it might be put. But when the trade prospects of the owners of the land had to be taken into account in order to estimate the sufficiency of the security, then the line was passed; the security was not properly a real security, but one which depended for its sufficiency upon the success of the business and the personal covenant of the borrowers, which reduced the better (or larger) part of the security to the level of a personal security. Apart from the fact of the brick-clay being in course of exhaustion, it appeared that for any other purpose than the particular trade of brickmaking this land would not have been at any time a sufficient security for the sum advanced thereon.

And here we may explain what is the proper course for trustees to pursue with respect to the valuation by a professional valuer. The value ought to be given apart altogether from the question as to the amount which could be safely advanced thereon; and then, if the property consisted of agricultural land, the trustees might safely advance any sum not exceeding two-thirds of such amount; if of houses with gardens and other usual appurtenances, the advance ought not to exceed one half of the amount of the valuation.

As to any securities involving special risks, trustees had better have nothing to do with any such, unless they are substantially indemnified in respect thereof by the beneficiaries, or by some person or persons on their behalf. In the present case, the tenant for life wished the trustees to withdraw the money from government security, on which it had been invested, and to put it out on mortgage, which they did; but she did not in any way indemnify them in respect of any loss which might happen to the trust money in consequence of such change of investment.

A few years after the money had been lent on the brickyard, the mortgagers were adjudicated bankrupt; and thereupon it was discovered that the property (apart from the business which had gone) was not of sufficient value to enable the mortgagees to recover the amount due to them for principal money, interest, and costs; and thereupon they were called upon to make good the loss occasioned by their injudicious investment, the plaintiffs in the action being the tenant for life, at whose request the money had been sold out of consols, and her children. It did not appear that the lady had done anything to make herself personally responsible, beyond requesting the trustees to find an investment that would yield her a larger return than consols; she had neither seen the property nor in any other way formally approved of the security, and the children were infants respectively under the age of twenty-one years, and therefore incapable of interfering.

After hearing counsel on both sides, the court held that the trustees had not acted as prudent men would do in their own affairs, and therefore that they must be held responsible for the loss. The buildings upon the land were practically of no value, as they were no longer wanted where they stood, and would not be worth the expense of pulling down, taking away, and erecting elsewhere. And as to the land itself, it was not available for agricultural purposes. Everybody who knows anything about property knows the practical disadvantages of an exhausted brickyard with its excavations and mounds. The judge adopted the view expressed by counsel for the plaintiff, that the money was not in fact advanced upon real security at all, but upon the chances of a business being successful, although the basis of the security was, in fact, freehold land, and therefore real security to that extent. The following passages from the judgment of the learned Vice-chancellor may be quoted as being easily remembered by other trustees than those so unpleasantly mixed up with the case in question: 'Were the trustees, giving them credit for good intentions, justified in lending so large a sum of money without a certain and clear prospect, by legal proceedings or otherwise, of getting it back, of which I do not see that they had the slightest chance? Are trustees justified in lending money on a trade, on the hazard whether it be successful or not? I think not.' But, inasmuch as the trustees had not been guilty of any misconduct, having only made a mistake, they were not ordered to pay the costs of the proceedings, but only to make good the loss which has been, or will eventually be sustained by their ill-advised advance on the brickyard.

One point is to be borne in mind. If money were advanced by trustees upon a farm which was a sufficient security, and afterwards, by the depression in agriculture, the farm became so depreciated in value as to be insufficient, the loss having been occasioned by circumstances which they could neither control nor foresee, they would not be held responsible, as was illustrated by the decision as to the cottages in the case now before us. But what they are to be held answerable for is the advancing money on property of which the value depends upon the then owners being able to continue their business and being successful therein; that is to say, upon security which is not *real*, but is personal, uncertain, and manifestly unreliable.

The law regulating the responsibility of trustees may for all practical and popular purposes be looked upon as identical throughout the United Kingdom. Decisions of the House of Lords have swept away one by one the immunities which Scotch trustees were at one time supposed to enjoy. Many Scotch trust deeds declare that trustees shall not be liable for omissions, and only each for his own intromissions; but notwithstanding such apparent immunity, which has for its object to induce trustees to accept of an unpaid and often thankless office, no trustee is *safe* who does not either obey the express directions of the trust deed, or exercise as lively an intelligence and as vigilant a discretion as he would or could exercise in the management of his own affairs. No safeguard whatever can prevent courts of law from breaking in upon and inflicting penal consequences upon gross negligence in the discharge of a duty which has been deliberately undertaken.

THE POLRUAN FERRYBOAT.

POLRUAN is a quaint small fishing village, straggling up the side of a hill so steep that it is marvellous none of the houses slip off its slope into the cool green waters of the harbour. Polruan is small; it is moreover dirty, and pervaded with odours which may be as health-inspiring as the inhabitants maintain, but which for all that are disagreeable to a stranger. Further, the houses are so inextricably entangled one with another that it is hardly possible to take three steps from the door of any one without finding yourself in your neighbour's kitchen; and the small space on which the village stands is beset with such a labyrinth of courtyards, alleys, and passages ending in dead walls, that strangers rarely venture to traverse it without a guide. That such precautions against going astray are necessary does not seem to the inhabitants of Polruan to be a reproach. They do not invite strangers to their village: they regard them with suspicion, and think it a pious duty to discourage their visits. In truth, why should strangers visit Polruan? It has no architectural beauty; it is not even clean; the harbour on which it stands is better seen from the larger older town on the opposite shore. The inducements to set foot on Polruan pier are therefore slight; and it follows that whoever does so, not having immediate and urgent business in the place, must be impelled by some disreputable motive. He must, for instance, be a tax-collector or an exciseman, or at least

in the interest or pay of one or other of those persons; and it thus becomes the plain duty of every inhabitant to baffle him. Polruan desires nothing from the outside world. It supports its own Dissenting chapel, of which the minister dwells in a whitewashed cottage at the head of the town; it has its own shop, wherein everything can be bought which it is good to buy, and even some things which it is not; it has its inn down by the quay; and it sends its fish across the harbour to the town, maintaining for that purpose a ferryboat at its own proper charges. A more self-centred community does not exist in the west country, nor one of which, for its individuality and determined opposition to improvement, that west country has more reason to be proud.

In October, if the weather has not broken, life is very pleasant at Polruan. The air is still soft and warm, though there is an inspiring freshness in it which makes the blood dance and tingle, and turns that bodily exercise into a happiness which in the sultry summer-time was a fatigue too great to be endured. The sea is ruffled by light fresh breezes, and clouds and sunshine chase each other across the surface of the water. But the October sun stood in a very different sky when, on a certain windy afternoon some twenty years ago, Thomas Arthur, minister for a whole generation of the little whitewashed chapel above the town, stood in his garden gazing at the storm-tossed harbour with an air of disappointment on his face. The air was full of sound, and the great gusts which tore down the valley were lashing up the waters of the harbour into foam. The sky bore that sullen look which is the sure precursor of storm, and the most inexperienced landsman could have foretold that rough weather was at hand.

'The day is too bad; I must give it up,' he said, and turned regretfully back upon the gravelled path which led to his own front door. He could not at once prevail on himself, however, to abandon the expedition he had planned, and on reaching his threshold, turned again to the gateway, where he stood looking out, a tall, bent, weak-chested man, very little fit to make his way through such a storm as was then brewing. He had not stood at his gate more than five minutes, when a quick step came round the corner by the wall of the coastguard station, and a laughing voice exclaimed: 'Do look at him! Isn't he miserable!—Why, Uncle Tom, has the wind blown away your "copy," as you call it? Or has the soot come down the chimney and driven you out of your study? What has happened, or what hasn't happened? Something important, surely, if it requires such a woe-begone face.'

It would have been a very gruff old curmudgeon who could have answered this string of questions testily, they were put with such a winning smile, and the lips which asked them were so full and red. Susan Arthur was not accustomed to meet with peevishness from the men whom she blessed with her society; and if at other times the charm of her manner was wont to soften the most leathery hearts, who could have resisted her on this stormy afternoon, when her dark hair was blown from under her hood about her face, and the exertion of walking against the wind had caused the blood to mantle richly in her cheeks? She opened the white gate whilst she was still

speaking, and closing it again behind her, she slipped her arm beneath her uncle's and walked beside him.

'What is it, Uncle Tom?' she asked more seriously.—'Aunt Elizabeth is not ill?'

'Not more so than usual, my dear,' Mr Arthur answered. 'She sits beside the fire year in year out; and whether the sun blazes or the frost lies on the roof, she pokes the fire just the same and complains of cold.'

Susan laughed. 'Well, if it isn't Aunt Elizabeth, what is it? You're all right, I suppose, or you wouldn't be out in this weather. You want to go somewhere, and you can't. Tell me all about it.'

She certainly was a very charming girl; and the old minister cheered up perceptibly under the inspiring influence of her downright manner.

'Well, the fact is,' he began confidentially.—'You won't understand me, I know—but there is a man called Tertullian'—He stopped and looked at Susan, as if he did not know how to complete his sentence.

'Not in Polruan, Uncle Tom,' she answered decidedly; 'nor in Trewint, nor in Polgedre, nor anywhere at all in these parts. Of that I am sure.'

'No, no! You are too hasty, child. I didn't say in these parts: he lived in Rome.'

'Dear, dear!' exclaimed Susan. 'Then there is no help for it, because you can't go there.'

'I knew you wouldn't understand me,' said Mr Arthur feebly; 'and I don't know how to make you. It's a book, child—a book that I want sorely; and I could have got it if I had been able to get across to the town. But it is going to rain, and the day is much too stormy for me.'

'Of course it is,' his niece replied promptly. 'Could you buy it at the post-office, and how much would it cost?—Two shillings?'

Mr Arthur stared at his niece aghast. The idea of a copy of Tertullian lying for sale on the counter at the post-office among the collections of picture gift-books for Sunday schools, and the gaudy railway novels which stood in place of literature in the town, was almost more than his preoccupied mind could grasp.

Susan burst into laughter on catching sight of his expression. 'Never mind, Uncle Tom; I see I am all wrong. We haven't any intellects in Polruan, you know, and we don't understand these things. But I am going across the harbour now in a few minutes; and if you just tell me where to get the book and write down the name for me, you shall surely have it to-night.'

'My dear child, you are the kindest girl!' Mr Arthur broke out. 'If you only knew how you have relieved my mind! I could get it myself to-morrow, very likely; but to-morrow wouldn't do as well for me. I want to refer to it now, while the ideas are in my head.'

'Of course you do. I understand that very well. You shall have it, uncle—never fear.'

'But the weather, Susan!' Mr Arthur interjected, seized with a fresh despair. 'A storm is creeping up. It is very rough already; I can't let you go in this weather.'

'Pooh, pooh! It isn't so bad as all that. I don't think much of a little wind. And see, the sun is coming out.'

Indeed, at that moment there was a slight break in the clouds, and a few sickly rays struggled forth, casting a dull reflection on the broken water.

'It does seem to be improving,' said her uncle. 'Perhaps the wind may drop.'

'It is dropping already; the storm is over,' said Susan cheerfully. 'How I love a windy day! How glorious it is to feel all the used-up air that we have breathed for weeks driven far away out to sea, and great streams of fresh clean wind rushing in from heaven knows where! It takes a day like this, Uncle Tom, to make one feel alive.'

'I am glad you like it,' Mr Arthur said fretfully. 'A very few such days would make me feel dead. But come into the house, child; I will write you down the name of the book.' He led the way into the small front parlour of his house, where a fragile old lady with gray hair sat rocking herself to and fro before the fire. She held her knitting in her hand, but was not working, and appeared, in fact, to be more asleep than awake.

'How are you to-day, Aunt Elizabeth?' said Susan. 'I am going over to the town on an errand for my uncle: can I get anything for you?'

'Take care of yourself, Susan,' the old lady answered drowsily. 'You had much better not go. It is very rough. Harken to the wind!' She held up her hand; but the wind had lulled, and there seemed for the moment to be a dead calm out of doors.

'There isn't any wind, my dear,' Mr Arthur interposed hastily.—'Susan will be back long before the storm comes down, if you don't keep her now.—Here Susan; I have written two lines to Dr Fisher about the book; he will understand what I want.'

'I shouldn't go if I were you, Susan,' Mrs Arthur murmured, as if she were talking in her sleep. 'I know all about the weather. It began just like this when the revenue cutter was wrecked ten years ago.'

'I'm not afraid.—Good-bye, aunt;' and to Mr Arthur's intense relief, Susan slipped out of the room and, with a parting wave of her hand, ran down the hill towards the ferry.

Her uncle went out again into the garden—he wanted to satisfy himself that the girl had really started. From the hill on which his house stood there was an uninterrupted view of the harbour, though the quay from which the ferryboat set out was hidden by the houses on the lower part of the hill. Allowing ten minutes for her to reach the quay, that would be five turns along the garden walk. The boat was not on the water or at the further side, so there should be no delay.

The five turns had extended to fifty, however, and Mr Arthur's patience was spent before he saw the heavy ferryboat emerge from beneath the houses. He had many times before watched the passage of the boat; it was, in fact, a customary amusement with him to look out for it and to try to recognise at a great distance the persons who were sitting in it; but never did he remember to have seen it so lightly laden. There was no other passenger but his niece, and yet the boat made way very slowly. The sea was

evidently rougher than he had thought; more than once a wave broke into the boat, which pitched and rolled in a way that must have made the labour of rowing very heavy. The muscles of the ferryman's back and shoulders were of iron, however; and at last Mr Arthur had the satisfaction of seeing the boat draw near the quay on the opposite shore. It was already growing dusk; and he went indoors to await the return of his niece with what patience he could muster.

Meantime, Susan made her way up the steep streets towards the rectory. She walked as quickly as she could, for the passage had proved so much rougher than she expected, that she was anxious not to be overtaken by nightfall before she could cross back again to Polruan. Moreover, the abatement of the wind proved to be deceitful, for it was already blowing as hard as ever, and the momentary gleam of sunlight was now quite obscured. The door of the rectory was opened by an old woman in a scrupulously neat black silk dress, who welcomed her visitor joyfully.

'Tis Susan Arthur, I declare!—Well, child, I'm pleased to see you. But what did you mean by coming over when the wind is so high?—Come in out of the weather. I was just going to tea, and the splitters are but now made.'

Dr Fisher's housekeeper—by him called Tabitha, and by the rest of the world Mrs Pascoe—was a cousin of the Arthurs by the mother's side; and Susan was a constant visitor of hers. The old lady led her guest into the comfortable little parlour at the back of the house, which was devoted to her sole use, and drew her over to the hearth, on which a bright fire was blazing.

'Why, what's this?' she said suddenly, holding up her hand to the light.—'Child, you're wringing wet. Have you been in the water?'

'The sea was very rough, and the waves broke over the boat, Mrs Pascoe. 'Tis of no consequence.'

'Perhaps it isn't to you, my dear, but it is to your friends, whether you catch cold and die, or not. What your mother was thinking of, to let you cross in this weather, I can't imagine.—But now you are here, you shan't stay wet.'

'Dear Mrs Pascoe,' Susan entreated, 'don't ask me to change my dress. It will take so long to dry, and I really want to get back.'

'Stuff and nonsense! You're not going back till you have had your tea; and the dress will dry very well by that time.'

Mrs Pascoe was used to carrying her point; and in a very few minutes Susan was arrayed in a warm dress many sizes too large, while her own was emitting clouds of steam before the kitchen fire.

'And what has brought you here, child?' asked the housekeeper, when these arrangements had been completed. 'Not but what I'm very glad to see you; and I wish you would come oftener; for 'tis a lonely life we lead here, and that's the truth of it. Though I'm not dull, because I always said that when a woman's got her Bible and her knitting she's got as much as is good for her; and if there isn't some poor person that wants warm knitted things, there's always one's soul calling out for food. But there's a day now and then when I think I'd like well enough to have some one but the girl to talk to; for that's all I have, now Dr Fisher spends his days so much

at the Hall and only comes home for his bed. He's there to-day, and has been every day this week.'

'Is he not at home? O dear, how unfortunate! I've got a note from my uncle for him.'

'Give it me now, then,' said the good-natured old woman. 'I'll send it up by one of the boys. You'll not like to wait till the doctor comes in.'

She went out on her errand; and Susan, as she waited for her return, listened uneasily to the roaring of the wind, which had certainly risen in the last half-hour.

'Tis a bad night,' said Mrs Pascoe as she re-entered the room. 'Pray God there may be no poor sailors wanting his help before day.—Susan, you'll not go back to-night.'

'I must, indeed, thank you. They don't know at the farm that I have come; and besides, I promised my uncle he should have the book he wanted. 'Tis one he is asking Dr Fisher to lend him.'

'And why can't he wait till to-morrow? Is a book worth risking lives about?'

'There's never been an accident on the ferry; it's as safe as the high-road. Anthony Williams has crossed too often to be afraid of any weather; and I've known much worse nights than this.'

Mrs Pascoe shook her head. 'Well, George can't be back for half an hour yet,' she said, 'so we haven't any need to hurry.—And how is Cousin Jane?'

Susan unfolded her budget of home news; and the two women chatted comfortably for a long time, while outside the dusk deepened into night, and the sullen roaring of the wind served only to increase the comfort of the fireside by which they sat. The delay was not wholly pleasant to Susan, however; she was anxious to complete her errand and be gone. At last the door opened and a comely servant-girl brought in a note, which Mrs Pascoe opened at once.

'It's all right,' she said. 'I'm to give you the book. It's on the third shelf in the library, the doctor says.'

She took the lamp from the table and led the way into Dr Fisher's study. The shelves were long and deep; the titles, in faded gilding on the backs of the books, were hard to read in the dim light; and the Latin words in most of them puzzled both Susan and the housekeeper sorely. The right volume was found at last, and wrapped carefully in many folds of brown paper, to protect it from damage on the journey. Susan resumed her own dress and made ready to depart.

'I don't like your going at all,' the housekeeper said. 'Susan, you shan't cross the ferry to-night. Listen to the wind! As like as not, Anthony Williams won't go.'

'He'll go for me,' the girl answered; 'and I must get back, thank you.—Oh, I don't think much of this. It isn't half so bad as I thought.—Good-night, Mrs Pascoe; and thank you for your trouble.'

Susan was right in saying she did not mind the weather. From her childhood it had been her delight to go out with any boatman who would take her; and she feared a rough sea as little as any fisherman in her native village. Still, as she went down through the precipitous streets, a half-wish crept into her heart that she had accepted her old friend's offer and remained at

the rectory. The night was certainly much wilder than the day had been. The wind met her at every corner like a solid wall, moving forwards almost irresistibly, so that more than once she staggered back into a doorway and had almost fallen. The air was filled with noise; there was a steady roar overhead, and with it was mingled at intervals a loud sound of rending, which put Susan in mind of one of her childish fancies, picturing the storm-wind as an old man of gigantic size, higher than the mountains, who strode by striking in fury hither and thither with his club.

It was desolate enough, she felt, to be out in such a storm, with the wide harbour between herself and home. The streets of the town were empty, save where beneath the projecting upper story of the inn a group of sailors stood silently together; and the moon, breaking suddenly through the wild black clouds, threw a flood of cold light upon the scene, increasing thereby, as Susan thought, its loneliness tenfold. It was not so much that the town by night was not familiar to her, or that she was unused to go about alone; but the sense that there was some resistless power in the air, against which humanity might set forth all its strength in vain, awed her. She shuddered, hardly knowing why, at each fresh blast of the storm; and this was not from fear, for she dreaded nothing palpable, but from a vague sense of insignificance, of absolute impotence, in the face of such a tempest. She hurried forward, clasping the book with which she was charged tightly to her breast, until she reached the quay whence the ferryboat started, and came in sight of the storm-tossed harbour, and the lights of Polruan on the hill beyond.

Those lights were a comfort to her: they were like friendly messages sent to her from her home. She could clearly detect the gleam proceeding from her uncle's house, doubtless from the room in which he was sitting even at that moment anxiously expecting her return, impatiently wondering what could keep her, fretting at the hindrance imposed on his work by the delay in obtaining the book without which he could not proceed.

'Dear uncle, I will not fail you,' Susan said aloud, as if she thought her words could travel over all the intervening distance.

A woman from Polruan, whom Susan knew well by sight, was standing on the quay, watching for the boat, and turned towards her on hearing her speak.

'Do'ee see un, Miss Arthur?' she asked. 'I can't make un out. He wouldn't be coward enough to go home to bed without coming back, surely.'

'I see the boat,' Susan answered. 'He has to fetch a long way up past the church. The tide must be very strong.—It's ebbing, isn't it?'

'Turned at six o'clock, and it's running cruel strong.—'Tis a bad night, sure enough.'

In a few minutes the boat grated against the landing-slip, and Anthony Williams leaped out to make the moorings secure.

'If you be going back to Polruan,' he said sulkily, 'you'll get so wet as if you were swimming. There's not a dry thread on me, so I tell'ee.' Then, as he recognised to whom he was speaking, he added in a changed tone: 'Why,

it's never you, Miss Susan! Your uncle's in a pretty twitter about you. He's been down to the pier three times—so John Trebilcock says—to know if you're not back. But John told him at last you'd stay all night, as like as not.'

'Well, you see, John was wrong, for I am here, and I mean to go across. So, please start as soon as you can, for it's late enough already.'

''Tis all very well to talk,' the man grumbled. 'If you'd had to pull up as far as the horse-ferry and down again with the ebb running like a chain all the while, you'd not be in such a hurry.'

'Go on and get your dram, Anthony Williams,' the other woman interposed. 'You're poor souls, all you men, with no pluck in you till you're heartened up.—Go along with you now, and get it over quickly.'

If this taunt was intended to withhold the boatman from the inn and to induce him to start at once, it failed of its effect, for Anthony slouched off in the direction of the *Lugger* without attempting a reply; and it was twenty minutes before he returned and cast off the moorings of the boat.

With a few powerful strokes of the oars, Anthony got the boat headed well up the harbour, and then bade his son, a lad who had been waiting in the town for his father's arrival, to put the sail up. This was no sooner done than the wind struck the stretched canvas with the force of a battering-ram, causing the boat to heel over till the gunwale was but a hairbreadth above the water. At the same moment showers of spray were torn from the crests of the waves and flung over the boat, drenching the passengers from head to foot. Susan seized a dipper and began to bale; but there was no danger, and the boy laughed exultantly from the new pleasure of driving through the rough sea so surprisingly fast. The church lay behind them already; almost before they saw it they were off the timber-yard, and in another moment that also lay behind them and the new quay slipped quickly by. The boy sat holding the sheet in his hand; he dared not fasten it, for if at the very moment when that sharp hissing, like the pattering of rain, ran along the water, he had not let out sail, the squalls would have capsized the boat most infallibly.

'You boy,' Anthony shouted, after one of these sudden gusts, 'take care that sheet doesn't get jammed, or as sure as God's in heaven, we shall be drinking salt water in five minutes.'

They were within sight of the point at which Anthony intended to tack, when suddenly the sail fell flapping against the mast and the boat quivered and seemed suddenly to lose way. Instantly, almost before they realised the wind had suddenly chopped round, the boat was rolling in the trough of the sea, and the waves breaking over her threatened momentarily to sink them. Anthony cursed loudly; and while he tugged and strained at the oars in order to get the boat's head round, he shouted to his son to lower the sail, and to his passengers to bale for their lives. The boy was perfectly cool, and managed to drop the sail incredibly quickly; and Anthony having succeeded in getting the boat round, their imminent danger was past, almost before Susan understood that she had been nearer to death than she would ever be again until that day when the last barrier

of all is broken and the step taken which can never be retraced.

She had quite sufficient experience in the management of a boat to understand, however, that the chances of their reaching Polruan or being driven out to sea were something less than even. Young Williams had seized the other pair of oars, and was strong and muscular for his age, while his father was a man of immense power; but their united efforts served only to keep the boat's head straight. They seemed to make no progress. After a quarter of an hour of strenuous exertion, Susan, marking their course by the lights of the ships anchored in the harbour, noticed that they had perceptibly lost ground. Anthony also had evidently observed this; for he began to glance uneasily over his shoulder, and to tug more heavily at the oars, throwing back his immense chest with a vigour that showed he felt the need for every power he possessed.

Still the boat slipped slowly down the harbour; and it was manifest to every one on board that the position was growing serious. Young Williams leaned back and said something to his father, at which the latter nodded; and as they passed near a schooner which was riding at anchor, both father and son pulled vigorously with their right oars so as to pass as close to the vessel as possible, and shouted at the same moment: 'Ahoy! Heave a rope's-end this way.'

Two men ran to the bulwarks of the schooner on hearing the shout; and one of them comprehending the situation at a glance, seized a coil of rope and sent it whirling through the air in the direction of the boat. It was too late, however; the rope fell short; and as they slipped away from the friendly faces of the sailors, still moving with that deadly motion towards the open sea, where, sooner or later, unless some help reached them, they must inevitably founder, a kind of despair took possession of them all.

A strange thrill trembled through Susan's heart when, looking up towards Polruan, her eye caught the light in her uncle's window, beaming across the angry sea as quietly as if all things were at peace; and with a quick mental flash she saw him sitting in his comfortable study, a wood-fire blazing on the hearth, and Aunt Elizabeth slumbering in her easy-chair. Her mouth quivered and her eyes grew wet; for the first time her courage almost failed her. She put her weakness resolutely aside, however, and began to reckon up the chances for their lives. It needed no long head to do that. There was but one more vessel in the harbour, and unless some help came from it, they might as well lie down in the bottom of the boat at once and let the first wave swamp them.

At this moment she noticed young Williams was taking off his oilskins and his seaboots. Was it all over, then? she wondered; and was he about to try swimming, as a last chance for his life? She glanced round to see if her fellow-passenger had noticed this significant action; but the woman was apparently stupefied with fear, her head bowed between her hands, and saw nothing of what was going on. Suddenly, Anthony and his son stood up together while the boat was yet at some distance from the ship, and shouted with their full force.

There was an immediate answering hail; and as they passed within range, a rope was flung to them. It also fell short; but the lad, without the slightest hesitation, hurled himself into the sea with his whole length in the direction where it fell, and grasping it like grim death, was hauled on board by his father more than half drowned.

There was a cheer from the sailors who witnessed this plucky exploit; and in a few minutes both passengers and crew of the unfortunate ferryboat were safe on board the gunboat *Palmurus* of Her Majesty's navy. The lieutenant in command received the women with the greatest courtesy, and pressed his cabin on them for the night, offering at the same time, if they preferred it, to send a boat's crew ashore with them. Susan resolutely declined to stay; and in half an hour she found herself once more with the firm rough stones of Polruan quay beneath her feet, and a sensation of thankfulness and joy in her heart which nothing in her life had ever before aroused. She hurried up the hill towards her uncle's house, still clasping tight the precious copy of Tertullian, wet, exhausted by excitement as much as by fatigue, feeling as if she had but just awaked from a terrible dream, and was not yet in touch with reality again. When she reached the white gate, she paused to wonder whether she was really the same Susan Arthur who had stood there talking with her uncle so gaily only five hours before. Then she glanced down at the harbour, and saw in the moonlight that the storm was fiercer than ever; and trembled as she remembered how frail the hope was which an hour ago stood between her and death; and how, but for the pluck and coolness of young Williams, those waves would even then have been dashing her to pieces against the rocks.

Her uncle's windows were quite dark. She knocked, but there was no reply. He had grown tired of waiting for his Tertullian; and as he had evidently gone to bed, Susan laid the book within the porch, where it would be protected from the rain, and went home, wondering—as many wiser people than she have vainly wondered—whether it is really after all worth while to go out of one's way to do a kind action.

BOYISH FREAKS.

WHAT a strange world of his own is that in which a boy lives. His parents he can see are necessary; but they hold inconvenient theories respecting cleanliness and education, which clash sadly with his notions of pleasure and freedom. But he consoles himself by thinking when he grows up he will do as he pleases. How happy he is in the world of his imagination. Everything about him excites him to activity and mischief. He is proof against the fearful gastronomic experiments he makes on himself, and triumphs over numerous accidents and adventures with which he meets, for nothing seems to hurt him. He is ever acting on a small scale the heroes of the boys' books that fire his imagination; and he looks with wondering contempt on any calling tamer than that of a soldier, hunter, admiral, or pirate, in one of which exciting professions he will distinguish himself before long. There is a certain element of pathos in such childish yearnings, not less on account of the simplicity of the dreams,

than because of the artlessness of the methods with which their realisation is attempted.

The little fellow who was lately sent home to Liverpool by the Rhyl police commenced his quest of adventures early, being only nine years old. He left his parents on a Tuesday, walked all night, and reached Chester on Wednesday morning, drenched to the skin. Determined to put as great a distance as possible between himself and his parents, he walked straight on to Rhyl, a distance of fifty miles, in very bad weather. Here, on Thursday, he was found huddled up in a corner fast asleep, and next day was sent home.

The love of youthful adventure was further exemplified in two boys, aged respectively fifteen and sixteen, who not long since set out walking from Manchester to Liverpool. When near that city, however, their hearts seemed to have failed them, and one of them sent a postcard to his mother stating where they were and saying they had decided to return. As they were passing through Warrington on their way back, they were detained by an inspector at the police station. On the two youths were found a couple of loaded and capped pistols and ammunition, and a list of books, including *Jack Sheppard*, *Paul Girard the Cabin-boy*, *Hard Times*, and *Life in the Wilds*. The adventurers were relieved of their weapons and sent home.

It is this early devouring of cheap literature, not often so well selected as some of the books named, which leads to similar boyish expeditions to our seaport towns whence the cabin-boy or stowaway is to commence his world-dazzling career of gore and glory. Liverpool has frequently had the chance of being thus distinguished, and the landing-stage officials—who, strange to say, do not seem to appreciate the honour—have grown quite experienced in 'spotting' the embryo pirate or slaver looking about for a chance to embark. It is lucky for such young delinquents if the spirit of adventure does not lead them to appropriate other people's cash to defray expenses of preparation and the unromantic but necessary passage-money. It is not many months since two youngsters were noticed, by one of the experienced officials before mentioned, walking up and down the landing-stage in a mysterious, expectant manner. As their overcoats had a very bulky appearance, their observer became suspicious, and questioned them. The youths' unsatisfactory answers finally led to their being detained and examined. It was another instance of youthful adventure. The bulky overcoats concealed leather belts, which contained revolvers and ammunition. The would-be hunters were further provided with money and tickets for America, and confessed it was their intention to live in the backwoods. A telegram to their parents led to the youths being taken home, probably, ere long, to thank their rescuers for putting a stop to their little romance.

These youthful escapades become more serious when the actors in them have been tempted to relieve their employers' cash-drawers in order to fit out an expedition. This was the case in the next instance brought before our notice. The sandy watering-place of New Brighton, at the Mersey's mouth seems in many boys' opinions to constitute a perfectly legitimate place for enact-

ing Robinson Crusoe, and to be in a vague way associated in their minds with American prairies, the Australian bush, and Pacific island shores. Here two juvenile adventurers attracted the attention of the police to themselves by the magnificent way in which they were parting with money amongst the various amusements to be found there. They were discovered to be in possession of those dangerously fascinating toys, revolvers and cartridges, the usual 'penny-dreadful' serials, watches and jewelry, besides over thirteen pounds in cash, which they could not properly account for, so they were sent back to Birmingham to explain matters.

On another occasion, five boys, whose ages varied from ten to fourteen years, got into trouble through camping-out in the same attractive place. A policeman observed a light underneath a large overturned boat on the shore. Such an unusual circumstance at once attracted him to the spot. He peeped beneath this improvised hut, and found our five Crusoes, who had dug a hole in the sand, and entered their retreat after the manner of an Eskimo. They had placed lighted candles at different parts of the boat, and were seated on some straw eating apples, and some were singing comic songs. Here was a happy scene of romantic boyhood to be rudely interrupted by the prosaic appearance of a commonplace policeman, just as they were commencing a glorious career of camping-out. They had all run away from home, as they informed the officer, who had a deal of trouble in persuading them to come out of their wigwam.

Another lad from a manufacturing town had still more romantic ideas. Arrived in Liverpool, he first amused himself by driving about in a cab all day. His next proceeding was to rig himself out in a new suit of clothes, and of course to purchase the inevitable revolver, without which no hero is genuine. More ambitious than the usual New Brighton adventurers, he then took passage in a Manx steamer and landed in the Isle of Man. There he wandered into the interior, and found the solitude of the mountain district brought back descriptions of similar scenery in his favourite books. Our little traveller rambled about for a few days, camping-out in a primitive rough-and-ready kind of way, and evidently intended to lead the life of the hunters so fascinatingly described in boys' libraries. With this view he began to stalk the game of the country, which in that island happens to be no more wild or formidable than the mountain sheep. Whether he partook of many mutton-chops, or looked forward to arraying himself in a woolly suit in the true Crusoe style, history is silent. But as the discovery of the carcasses of several bullet-perforated sheep by farmers in the neighbourhood, led to the youthful Nimrod's arrest, we presume the want of time alone prevented him from developing into a full-bloom specimen of the lone-scout or solitary-hunter type.

The effect on the youthful imagination of melodramatic tales is still more striking in America, where both opportunity for, and examples of, similar exploits are not wanting. The miscreants brought into activity by the ten-cents tales of criminal life distinctively known as 'dime novels,' are themselves known as 'dime-novel brigands.' Three members of this class, we are told, were

brought before the police magistrate of Harlem, and were shown to have formed themselves into a band, which, after establishing itself in a mountainous district, was to carry off and hold to ransom beautiful maidens and wealthy tourists. Before making for the hills, the youthful banditti plundered the hotel in which they had passed the night; more, on principle, it would seem, than with a mere view to profit, for their booty consisted only of thirty-six bedroom door-keys. It appeared from a ledger found in their possession that they had begun business with a capital of two hundred dollars, 'made at New York.' But most of this sum had been spent before they reached the mountains; and an entry made the second day after their arrival on the scene of their intended exploits, showed that 'things already looked blue.' On the third day, the juvenile robbers found it necessary to pawn their solitary pistol; and the only act of highway robbery they succeeded in committing was the theft of some food left on the road by some workmen. Even this little adventure got them into trouble with a magistrate; but the police with good-natured contempt raised a subscription to pay their expenses back to New York. Thus the heroism of their expedition has been very effectively washed out. But while cheap sensational tales circulate amongst imaginative youths, we are not surprised to find these boy-brigands of America rivalled by the boy-burglars in this country. As it is with would-be heroes, not criminals, we are now dealing, we omit any further examples of the latter class.

Our subject receives further illustration from the effect that the exploits of the cowboys of Buffalo Bill in London and Texas Joe in Liverpool produced on many of our juveniles. To be a cowboy became the rage, and every lad who could get hold of his mother's clothes-line for a lariat or his father's wide-awake for a sombrero practised throwing the lasso, till not a dog could prowl the streets without a good chance of being suddenly 'yanked' off its legs by a flying rope. The shrill yells of these lads and the loud cracks of their toy-pistols, making day and night hideous, acted as a continual advertisement for the Wild West Show. Numberless letters were written by schoolboys modestly offering to join the cowboy troupe. One Liverpool lad wrote: 'I hear every day that you wants boys So I should like to see you in private. I have tried to get 3 pence to come and see you Because I am sure you would like me I can sing fence shoot I dont mean to say as I am a marksman but I know how to handle one. I am waiting for an answer.' Another says: 'I herd you wanted a few boys to join your compy. I will make a bargain with you if I suit you to do anything you may want me to do as long as you keep me in clothes and food I will go with you without wagers except a few pence for pocket-money.'

The majority of the epistles represent more than one applicant, one of them being signed by no fewer than eight lads. Two other youths wrote: 'We would like to go back with you to America and if you refuse us we should feel it greatly. . . . We like the cowboys their ways and deeds very much indeed. Please dont refuse us and believe us both to be two true cowboys

on your permission.' The picturesque costume of the ladies of the troupe seems to have proved alluring to a few of their own sex, who expressed their willingness to abandon a dull life in Liverpool for the dangers and excitements of a sojourn in the Far West, and offered themselves as wives for the cowboys. Such are a few extracts from letters of many who are eager to forsake friends and country in order to seek adventures of which they have only been accustomed to read in thrilling romances. The fact that these applicants' services were not needed will doubtless be a source of satisfaction to most of them in years to come.

The youth who lately provided himself with dagger, revolver, and bowie-knife, and commenced his journey Wild Westward by travelling from London to Liverpool, is another instance of this fascination.

Not long since two youngsters disappeared from Hull, and it was suspected that they had made their way to Liverpool. A detective on their track stopped the two runaways as they were leaving a shipping office where they had taken passage for Texas. They had evidently made up their minds to embark on a regular buccaneering expedition, as they were fully armed with revolvers, daggers, and large knives, and were provided with watches and money.

But it is sea-adventures that are naturally more attractive to the youths of this country than the exploits of hunters, scouts, or cowboys. Few young would-be Crusoes show such determination in running away to sea as the Birkenhead boy, who, when only five years old, hid himself away on board a Dublin steamer, and since then had stowed away to Ireland five times. He had also been caught on board the Isle of Man steamers. He then disappeared, and it was found that he had stowed away on the *City of Chester*, and had gone to New York. There he was captured, and sent home. Although only eight years old, his mother is in constant fear he will run away again. Some months ago he stowed away on one of the Hall line boats, such is his love for the sea. He is a sharp promising boy, though a regular rambler, and the magistrate, to whom the mother had applied for advice, gave him a chance of behaving better by making him return to school.

But some of these youths were quite eclipsed in daring recklessness by a fisherman's son, a youngster in his teens, who rowed a boat from a harbour on the south coast of England, and calmly proceeded to board a pilot cutter that at the time had no watch on board. Although it was blowing hard, he managed to hoist the sails, and before long was flying down the Channel. It was a couple of days or so ere he was discovered, though the boat being observed to behave in rather an unseamanlike manner, albeit the youth had handled her wonderfully all things considered. What his feelings were during those hours of solitary cruising, we do not know, nor how he managed to feed, keep watch, sleep, and navigate all by himself; but boys have an extraordinary faculty for enjoying themselves whenever there is a spice of danger or hardship. However, his happiness was no doubt complete when he observed the sails of the pursuing pilot-boats which eventually appeared in his wake. Before they overhauled and brought him back, he would pro-

bably at the time enjoy all the excitement of fancying he commanded a crack piratical craft, and was crowding all sail to escape a squadron of men-of-war.

But as curious an adventure of boy-voyagers is that with which we conclude. One foggy night a Thames police galley was pulling off the shore of North Greenwich, when the inspector in charge made out a boat in the mist which seemed to be in inexperienced hands. On running alongside the boat, she was found to contain four boys, none of whom were over fifteen years of age. It was a late hour in December for lads to be amusing themselves in a small craft, so the inspector asked them what they were doing there. The boys said they had been lost in the fog, which was very dense about this time, and further added, that they had come from Blackfriars, and were making their way to Gravesend, when they lost their bearings. Some parcels were observed in the boat, and the inspector inquired what was in them. They replied that one contained biscuits, but they did not know what was in the others. On this the inspector opened the parcels, and among other things found a pistol, a quantity of bullets, some powder in a flask, a box of percussion caps, a quantity of biscuits, a box of stationery, a packet of candles and some matches, a teapot, a teakettle, a lock with fittings, a bullet-mould, a small compass, a song-book, and several copies of boys' illustrated serials. On one of the lads was found a revolver; and, strangest of all—since it revealed the project of the youths—in the pocket of another of them was found a letter ready for posting, addressed to the lad's parents, and telling them that he and his companions were off for a voyage to Australia. Thus it appeared that this small fogbound boat in charge of four boys was actually on her way to the other side of the world when encountered by the police galley. The adventure finished in the unromantic precincts of a police station; but as the affair proved to be merely a boyish freak, the lads were cautioned against such foolishness and discharged.

The 'penny-dreadful' portion of the boat's equipment probably accounted for this attempted voyage; but one would think boys of their ages, however ignorant, could scarcely imagine that Australia was to be reached in a small open row-boat. After this exploit, it will be hard to know where to draw the line at youthful credulity. These lads being armed with a pistol, suggests their belief in the existence of pirates, and their resolution to cover themselves with glory by rescuing lovely captives from the whiskered villains' plunder-stored caves. We can imagine their secret and eager consultations, and self-denial in saving their pocket-money, ere their preparations were complete. But what ideas could these boys have of the awful distance and dangers of the projected voyage in a small wherry, unprovided even with fresh water? Their sheer incapacity to grasp in the faintest degree the character of their insane project is enough to make one class these boys with lunatics, did we not remember that in youth, romance goes first and preparations are entirely secondary. The sentiment of adventure is a passion in youth. Romance leads the way, and enthusiasm smiles on the cold suggestions of foresight and prudence. Is it not

sometimes as well that it should be so? and though we laugh at such childish expeditions, may not the enthusiasm which undertakes them prove the germ of the same old spirit which animated the death-defying adventurers who have made this country renowned, and to whose names on the roll of fame we can point with pride and triumph?

COLOUR-BLINDNESS IN THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

It is now fully ten years since the colour-test system was introduced into the British mercantile marine; and public attention has again been drawn to the surprising prevalence of colour-blindness among our sailors by the recent issue of a Report on this interesting and important subject by the Assistant-secretary of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade. Certain of the tests for colour-blindness used in the examination of candidates for the responsible positions of masters and chief-officers appear simple enough. It is, however, really astonishing how large a percentage of candidates are unsuccessful in obtaining certificates, breaking down where it might be naturally conjectured there could be little or no possibility of mistake. It is instructive to note, in the long list of failures since the year 1884, that, in an apparently simple test, in which the candidate is requested to describe the colour of a light exhibited in a dark room, the standard green colour was pronounced red in one hundred and seven cases out of one hundred and eighty-nine.

This matter appears the more serious when it is remembered that red and green have been selected and universally adopted as the port and starboard lights for vessels, with the express object of preventing collisions on the highways of the sea. On the discernment of those vivid and warning lights during the darkness of the night, the safety of valuable life and property depends. It is doubtless because of their strong and decided contrast that railways and ships display the red and green lights, and yet we are confronted with the startling fact, that these are the most conflicting and confusing of all colours to those whose visual organs are defective. It was ascertained, on the examination of the pilot in whose charge was the *City of Austin*, when she foundered in the harbour of Fernandina, Florida, thereby occasioning a loss to the owners of forty thousand pounds, that he could not distinguish difference in colours at a distance of over six feet, a fact that at once accounted for his mistaking the buoys, which, had he been able to read their guiding colours, would have acted as so many finger-posts pointing out the certain path of safety.

It has been said on the highest authority that colour-blindness affects at least four per cent. of all civilised peoples. In a Report presented some years since to the Committee of the Ophthalmological Society by its secretary, it is stated that out of eighteen thousand and eighty-eight persons examined—including five thousand members of the metropolitan police—upwards of seven hundred were found to be absolutely colour-blind. At another examination of engine-drivers, out of nine thousand two hundred, no fewer than four

hundred came under the same category. It goes without saying that the safe working of railway traffic is almost entirely dependent upon the use of red and green signals, and these two colours were, in the examination above alluded to, the very ones about which there was the most confusion. Such a state of things requires no comment.

It is worthy of mention, and certainly curious, that this visual defect prevails more commonly among males than females, the difference being in the proportion of about twelve to one. A remarkable instance of the inability to distinguish red from green was related by the late Professor George Wilson, who was anxiously consulted by a tailor's foreman. He informed the physician that he was suffering from a defect, of the existence of which he had only become conscious since his promotion to his present post, when, for the first time, he had to match colours for the journeymen. He was soon plunged into painful difficulties. The scarlet back of a livery waistcoat was provided with green strings to *match*; a ruddy brown was put side by side with a dark green; a customer was confidently informed that a red and blue stripe on a piece of trouser-cloth was all blue; and in general, greens were confounded with reds, and browns and crimson with blue. The distracted foreman was hopelessly mixed up. He sent the professor examples of his 'matches,' which displayed a colour-blindness of an embarrassing nature. These 'matches' were accompanied by a letter, in which he said: 'Perhaps you will be able to discover where the fault lies, and to give me some advice in the matter. Shall be happy to forward any reasonable charge, and at the same time feel greatly indebted to you, for if I do not improve, I must certainly go out of the business.'

We are unable to say what the result was; but we give the narrative as an example of a good eye for form and outline—the foreman being an excellent cutter—accompanying blindness to colour.

In October 1885, a circular letter was forwarded by the Board of Trade to the governors of the various training ships, requesting to be furnished with exact results of the colour-test as applied on their respective vessels. Out of an aggregate of seven hundred and twenty-seven intending officers and seamen on three of these vessels, twenty were found to be extremely weak in colour-sense; and one candidate, a cadet of two years' standing, so utterly deficient as to necessitate his immediate removal.

The examinations in colours are conducted both by daylight and by artificial light. Cards are used by daylight, consisting of five of each of the following colours—namely, white, black, red, pink,* green, drab,* blue, and yellow. The cards are shuffled. The examiner then holds up each card separately and asks the candidate to name the colour; and if the latter does so unhesitatingly, he is regarded as having passed the daylight test. Should the candidate, however, hesitate in any of his answers, so as to raise a doubt in the mind

of the examiner as to his ability to readily distinguish colours, the examiner distributes the cards upon the table and requires the candidate to select all cards of a colour or colours he may name. This being done, the cards are again mixed, and the candidate is required to sort the cards into eight heaps, putting all cards of one colour into each heap. The result is then duly noted.

In the examination by artificial light, a lantern lighted by kerosene and provided with nine slides of coloured glass, is used. These colours are as follows: Red (standard); pink or salmon; green (standard, or No. 1); green (bottle, or No. 2); green* (pale, or No. 3); yellow; neutral*; blue (standard); and blue (pale). The candidate is introduced into a dark room; the lamp is then lighted and placed in the lantern, the candidate seated or standing at least fifteen feet from the front and opening of the lantern. He is first asked—the lantern having no slide in it—if he can see any colour; and if so, what colour. The slide with the ground glass is then put into the opening at the front of the lantern, and the candidate is asked the same question. The slide with the ground glass being left in, and the coloured slides placed one by one and separately in front of it, the candidate is asked in each case to name the colour or tint. The replies are duly recorded; and this comprises the whole of the examination.

Physicians in America, it is said, attribute the defect of colour-blindness to inordinate smoking; but however this may be, colour-blindness is largely attracting the attention of the medical faculty; and the general consensus of professional opinion seems to point in the direction that this lamentable defect, which has already cut short the aspirations of many otherwise promising and intelligent young officers, is incurable. While it is quite possible that partial colour-blindness may be improved by assiduous practice, it is to be feared that total colour-blindness is a radical and unalterable defect, upon which the efforts of our present scientific knowledge are altogether wasted and thrown away.

NOCTURNE.

In perfect rest the garden lies;
The heavy tree that fills the skies
Is silent as the tiniest flower;
And only on the stillness dies
The honeyed chime that tells the hour.

Ah! would at yonder casement bright
That shade might flit, so dear to me,
Or swiftly glance athwart the night,
To give me greeting tenderly,
Here in the dark, where none could see.

Alas! those panes but strangely glow,
Nor cast my soul a cheering ray;
The eyes of distant friend or foe
Are cold and comfortless as they,
And she I love is far away.

J. S. MILLS.

* The cards and glasses against which an asterisk is placed in the list are what may be called 'confusion tints.' The candidate is not regarded as having 'failed' if he miscalls these tints, provided that he names all the others correctly.

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PRICE 1½d.

ACROSS THE LAMMERMOORS.

It is a bright autumn morning, and our new Quadrant tricycle stands at the door, well oiled and ready for a journey. We propose to take a run from Edinburgh southward over the Lammermoors by the old Dalkeith Road. It is interesting to remember that this has been a great highway literally since the dawn of history. It was originally a Roman road, and formed for centuries the chief thoroughfare to the eastern Border and to England. Scottish armies, English armies, priests, pilgrims, Stewart kings, Covenanting lairds, Cromwell's troopers, Prince Charlie's men—how much of our country's history is suggested by the old road! About sixty years ago it was greatly improved by Telford, the celebrated engineer; and from then until the introduction of railways, was daily traversed by upwards of a dozen stage-coaches, and also by the 'curricie' which conveyed the mails from Edinburgh to London in about forty hours—all things considered, a wonderful speed. When the curricie approached any place where field-labourers were working, they would fling down their hoes and run to the roadside to see it pass. In addition to these vehicles, there were the heavy goods-wagons of Howey & Co. and other firms going to Newcastle and Yorkshire; besides numerous carriers' carts, so that there was not a busier road in the country. Now, all this is changed, and we meet very few horses, which is perhaps as well, for the equine race is not yet thoroughly reconciled to the tricycle.

The road is very undulating; for many miles it crosses all the valleys at right angles. The Saturday-afternoon pedestrian will remember the descent to Cameron toll, then the rise to Craigmillar, the descent again to the Burdiehouse Burn, and the stiff 'brae' beyond. But for every brae up which he toils, the tricyclist knows there is a corresponding brae down which he glides delightfully without any effort. Still, the ascent immediately beyond Dalkeith from the level of the Esk to the top of the Camp Hill is sufficiently trying, and although only two miles, it feels as

if it were a dozen. The top is, however, reached at last, and off we go down the other side at ten miles an hour. At the foot is a fine viaduct over the Tyne—one of Telford's masterpieces—having five arches, each upwards of ninety feet high, and with fifty feet of span.

We are now at the village of Pathhead, which consists of a single very steep street, up which lies our road. When we reach the top we come to a fine stretch beneath an archway of old trees, with the pleasant fields, now cleared of grain, on each side. The tendency of the road is still upwards, and at Blackshiels—fourteen miles out—we are no less than eight hundred feet above the sea. The time taken has been two hours. We are now close upon the hills, and are in sight of the heather. Soutra, in front, rises like a cliff, along whose face the road is cut diagonally. This piece of road is the steepest we have come to yet, but luckily it is not very long, and we are cheered by the knowledge that after this our course is all down hill. There are very few places where a road across the Lammermoors is possible; thus the range formed an invaluable natural defence to the Lothians. The railway to Melrose and Carlisle (the Waverley route) crosses a few miles to the west of this through a curious notch in the hills, at a much lower elevation than Soutra; but up to about a hundred years ago, this western pass was very little used, owing to the marshy nature of the ground and the number of marauders who frequented the district. For some reason or other, robberies on the Soutra road were fewer, possibly because of the number of vehicles and pedestrians continually traversing it.

The top of Soutra is upwards of twelve hundred feet above the sea, and the highest point in the road about eleven hundred. Near the summit, by the roadside, is a welcome spring of clear cold water called Trinity Well. A hind who has just quenched the thirst of himself and his horses, says: 'There's nae water like that atween here and Cheviot;' and it thoroughly deserves his commendation. Here we rest a few minutes to enjoy the view, which is enchanting. As the day

is clear, we can see, northward of us, Traprain Law, the Bass, Arthur's Seat, the Pentlands, Edinburgh Castle, the spires of the distant city, the variegated landscape which intervenes, the Firth, and beyond, the hills of Fife, with a suggestion of the Grampians on the extreme horizon.

Turning southward, we see the road stretching across the moorland plateau which forms the top of the hill. On either hand there is no sign of cultivation; but at this season we see miles of purple heather. The runlets seem undecided whether they will flow to the Firth of Forth or to the Tweed. On this wild moor stood the ancient church and village of Soutra. The village was a place of great resort, as a hospital for the relief of pilgrims and travellers had been founded here in 1164 by Malcolm IV., who richly endowed it with lands and gave it the right of sanctuary. In course of years it became one of the wealthiest hospitals in Scotland. Gradually, however, during the troublous times the hospital fell into decay, and its endowments were transferred in 1462 to Trinity College and Hospital in Edinburgh. After the removal of the hospital the village became deserted and ruinous: a few green mounds are all that now mark its site; while a single aisle used as a burial-place is the only memorial of the church. Near this is a piece of ground called the Bede-man's Acre, which was granted by James V. to a family named Pringle who lived here, and had hospitably entertained the monarch while travelling incognito. About half a mile south is the King's Inch, a common a few acres in extent, which has been used by drovers as a resting and feeding place for their cattle from time immemorial.

Pursuing our journey we come to Lowrie's Den, a solitary house by the roadside, which Sir Walter Scott—who knew it well—might have taken as the prototype of Bessie Maclure's house in *Old Mortality*. It was formerly a small inn, and was the scene of a murder at the beginning of the century. Two gypsies had quarrelled while drinking in the kitchen. During the struggle, one of them drew a knife; his wife called out, 'Strike laigh [low], Rob!' which the ruffian did, stabbing his victim to the heart. The murderer at once fled. Sir Walter Scott—then a young man—coming up at the time, gave chase, and after following him a couple of miles, he was captured with the help of a neighbouring blacksmith, and handed over to the authorities, by whom he was afterwards tried and hanged. Even before this, however, the place had a sinister reputation: several packmen or pedlars had mysteriously disappeared. No clue to their fate was got until one warm summer, many years after, the goose-dub or small pond opposite the door became completely dry and exposed a number of human bones, revealing the gruesome secret.

It was on the moor to the east of this that, in September 1745, the people while busy 'casting' peats for winter fuel were astonished by the unwonted spectacle of a number of dragoons threading their way through the moss 'hags.' These were some of Sir John Cope's cavalry, who had fled from Prestonpans, and having lost their bearings, asked in what direction Coldstream lay. On this being pointed out, they rode off as quickly as their tired horses could carry them, much to the relief of the peasants.

After two miles of the straight level road along the top, we come to the lip of the Red Brae, and then descend for upwards of other two miles at a good speed, time something under ten minutes. This Red Brae is beautifully graded, being a fine steady slope, just the right inclination to get the full safe speed out of the machine. From the head of the Brae, all Lauderdale is visible, as well as most of the Merse and Teviotdale, and in the distance, Cheviot's mountains blue.

At the foot of the descent is Carfrae Mill Inn, a welcome sight, for hunger now begins to assert itself. It is among the hills, is built where two small valleys converge, their burns uniting before the house. The view from the door, looking down the glen where the little bridge spans the stream, and the tiny hamlet beyond sends up its smoke, with the hills green to the top on every side, makes a pleasant picture. This rural paradise, although only twenty miles from Edinburgh, is almost unknown to the citizens, and yet there are few places even in the Highlands with finer scenery or better fishing; and this possesses in addition the nameless charm peculiar to the Border land.

For some miles the solitude of the dale is only broken by a few farmhouses; but from the marks of ruins here and there, the population at one time must have been much greater. The numerous remains of British camps seem also to show that even in the period before historical records there were more inhabitants in the district than now. Under the pressure of bad times and low prices, the large farms characteristic of the dale are no longer profitable, so that there is a tendency to break them up into smaller holdings, and this may result in the population again increasing.

The road follows the Leader—now a fine trout-ing stream—for some miles, and gradually the valley becomes better cultivated and more wooded. At the same time, as we are descending from the tableland of the Lammermoors, the hills on each side apparently become higher, although it is really the valley that is getting deeper. This part of the road is said by tradition to be the work of the Romans—it seems with some truth, for in course of making the improvements sixty years ago, portions of the original Roman pavement were come upon.

We now arrive at the small gray town of Lauder, with its old-fashioned 'harled' houses and slated roofs. It is a neat tidy place, and being far from railways and but little visited, is a characteristic specimen of an old Border town. The burgesses, who have the right of cultivating the town common, are a fairly thriving and industrious people. This is perhaps the last surviving instance in Scotland of the village commune, as the burgh is absolute proprietor of the common, which extends to seventeen hundred acres.

The slope of the road being still downward, we are able with little effort to keep up a good speed, accomplishing the seven miles between Lauder and Earlston in forty minutes. On the way we pass St Leonards, where lived in his old age Nicol Burn, the last of the race of ancient minstrels, and author of the fine song, *Leader Haughs and Yarrow*, which Robert Chambers says 'has evidently acted as an inspiration and

model to Wordsworth in his exquisite series of poems beginning with *Yarrow Unvisited*. These Border minstrels wandered about the country reciting the ballads which were afterwards rescued from oblivion by Sir Walter, and in return were hospitably entertained by their listeners. Burn died about one hundred and fifty years ago. It is interesting to note that Robert Burns is not the first of the name who was inspired by the muse. Further on is Blainslie, which gives its name to a species of oats now no longer grown here, but still cultivated, and much appreciated under the old name, in Aberdeenshire.

The next place is Cuddie's Ha', the reputed dwelling-place of St Cuthbert, when, as a boy, twelve hundred years ago, he herded sheep on the green hills by the banks of the Leader. It is only a humble cottage by the wayside, and yet it must be one of the oldest seats of human habitation in the country. We are now at the beautiful Carolside Brae, where, according to Thomas the Rhymer, the horse 'was to gang until the girth gawed [cut] its side in twae.' The road here is made along the face of a steep hill, a considerable height above the Leader, which winds through the green haughs below. The banks are gay with foxglove and marguerites, interspersed between great clumps of broom, some of which must be ten feet in height.

The next few miles down the valley are not surpassed for richness and variety by any scenery in the south of Scotland. In addition, it is the very core of the classic land of the Border, the home of Thomas the Rhymer, a vale whose charms have been celebrated in *The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes* and many other songs. After passing Carolside, where Kinglake wrote a portion of his *History of the Crimean War*, we come to Lowrie's Lowp (Leap), so called from an unfortunate huntsman, who, galloping down the hill and unable to restrain his horse, fell over the deep cliff into Leader and was killed. On the opposite side is Kedzlie, where the story is still told of how the guidwife had to make broth in the washing boiler and in all the available pots about the house for Prince Charlie's famishing Highlanders.

A few other traditions of the '45 still linger. One is to the effect that the barefooted Highlanders, while able to walk almost any distance over the springy turf of the north, suffered very much from their march along the hard Soutra road. They molested no man further than to deprive him of his shoes; in fact, after they passed down, it is said there was not a pair left in Lauderdale. The people of Earlstoun, when they heard of the clansmen's approach, hid in the Howe o' the Hope, a curious hollow a little above the road, which had been always the resort of their ancestors in times of danger; but they were unluckily discovered, and also deprived of their brogues. It was a peculiarity of all the Border villages, and a necessity of their position in a district constantly visited by war, to have a 'lair' or hiding-place, known only to the initiated; and this is the last occasion on which the Earlstoun one was used. But the Howe o' the Hope was also utilised by another section of the community. The witches from far and near assembled here every Halloween at midnight,

and danced to the strains of the bagpipes, which were played by an awesome personage; a scene somewhat similar to that described by Burns in *Tam o' Shanter*. For all any one can tell, this may be witnessed yet; nobody has ever had the rashness to put the story to the proof. A spring near at hand is still known as the Witches' Well.

We have now travelled together for thirty-two miles, and perhaps it is time to stop. Earlstoun is a pleasant little town; and we cannot do better than rest here, making our way back to Edinburgh to-morrow by the well-known Gala Water Road, invigorated and strengthened by our two days' run on the tricycle.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XIX.—AU RENDEZVOUS DES BONS CAMARADES.

In the cosy smoking-room of the Cheyne Row Club, a group of budding geniuses, convened from the four quarters of the earth, stood once more in the bay-window, looking out on the dull October street, and discussing with one another in diverse tones the various means which each had adopted for killing time through his own modicum of summer holidays. Reminiscences and greetings were the order of the day. A buzz of voices pervaded the air. Everybody was full to the throat of fresh impressions, and everybody was laudably eager to share them all, still hot from the press, with the balance of humanity as then and there represented before him.—The mosquitoes at the North Cape were really unendurable: they bit a piece out of your face bodily, and then perched on a neighbouring tree to eat it; while the midnight sun, as advertised, was a hoary old impostor, exactly like any other sun anywhere, when you came to examine him through a smoked glass at close quarters.

Cromer was just the jolliest place to lounge on the sands, and the best centre for short excursions, that a fellow could find on a year's tramp all round the shores of England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland.

Grouse were scanty and devilish cunning in Aberdeenshire this year; the young birds packed like old ones; and the accommodation at Lumphanan had turned out on nearer view by no means what it ought to be.

A most delightful time indeed at Beatenberg, just above the Lake of Thun, you know, with exquisite views over the Bernese Oberland; and such a pretty little Swiss maiden, with liquid blue eyes and tow-coloured hair, to bring in one's breakfast and pour out coffee in the thick white coffee-cups. And then the flowers!—a perfect paradise for a botanist, I assure you.

Montreal in August was hot and stuffy, but the Thousand Islands were simply delicious, and black-bass fishing among the back lakes was the only sport now left alive worthy a British fisherman's distinguished consideration.

O yes; the yacht behaved very well indeed, considering, on her way to Iceland—as well as any yacht that sailed the seas—but just before reaching Reykjavik—that's how they pronounce it, with the *j* soft and a falling intonation on

the last syllable—a most tremendous gale came thundering down with rain and lightning from the Vatna Jökull, and, by George, sir, it nearly foundered her outright with its sudden squalls in the open ocean. You never saw anything like the way she heeled over: you could touch the trough of the waves every time from the gunwale.

Had anything new been going on, you fellows, while we were all away? and had anybody heard anything about the Bard, as Cheyne Row had unanimously nicknamed Hugh Massinger?

Yes, one budding genius in the descriptive-article trade—writer of that interesting series of papers in the *Charing Cross Review* on Seaside Resorts—afterwards reprinted in crown octavo fancy boards, at seven-and-sixpence, as *The Complete Idler*—had had a letter from the Bard himself only three days ago, announcing his intention to be back in harness in town again that very morning.

‘And what’s the Immortal Singer been doing with himself this hot summer?’ cried a dozen voices—for it was generally felt in Cheyne Row circles that Hugh Massinger, though still as undiscovered as the sources of the Congo, was a coming man of proximate eventuality. ‘Has he hooked his heiress yet? He vowed, when he left town in July, he was going on an angling expedition—as a fisher of women—in the eastern counties.’

‘Well, yes,’ the recipient of young love’s first confidences responded guardedly; ‘I should say he had.—To be sure, the Immortal One doesn’t exactly mention the fact or amount of the young lady’s fortune; but he does casually remark in a single passing sentence that he has got himself engaged to a Thing of Beauty somewhere down in Suffolk.’

‘Suffolk!—most congruous indeed for an idyllic, bucolic, impressionist poet.—He’ll come back to town with a wreath round his hat, and his pockets stuffed with ballades and sonnets to his mistress’ eyebrow, where “Suffolk punches” shall sweetly rhyme to “the red-cheek apple that she gaily munches,” with slight excursions on lunches, bunches, crunches, and hunches, all à la Massinger, in endless profusion.—Now then, Hatherley; there’s a ballade ready made for you to your hand already. Send it by the first post yourself to the lady, and cut out the Bard on his own ground with the beautiful and anonymous East Anglian heiress.—I suppose, by the way, Massinger didn’t happen to confide to you the local habitation and the name of the proud recipient of so much interested and anapestic devotion?’

‘He said, I think, if I remember right, her name was Meysey.’

‘Meysey! Oh, then, that’s one of the White-strand Meyseys, you may be sure; daughter of old Tom Wyville Meysey, whose estates have all been swallowed up by the sea. They lie in the prebend of Consumptum per Mare.—If he’s going to marry her on the strength of her red, red gold, or of her vested securities in Argentine and Turkish, he’ll have to collect his arrears of income from a sea-green mermaid—at the bottom of the deep blue sea; which will be worse than even dealing with the Land League, for the Queen’s writ doesn’t run beyond the fore-

shore, and No Rent is universal law on the bed of the ocean.’

‘I don’t think they’ve all been quite swallowed up,’ one of the bystanders remarked in a pensive voice: he was Suffolk born; ‘at least, not yet, as far as I’ve heard of them. The devouring sea is engaged in taking them a bite at a time, like Bob Sawyer’s apple; but he’s left the Hall and the lands about it to the present day—so Relf tells me.’

‘Has she money, I wonder?’ the editor of that struggling periodical, the *Night-Jar*, remarked abstractly.

‘Oh, I expect so, or the Bard wouldn’t ever have dreamt of proposing to her. The Immortal Singer knows his own worth exactly, to four places of decimals, and estimates himself at full market value. He’s the last man on earth to throw himself away for a mere trifle. When he sells his soul in the matrimonial Exchange, it’ll be for the highest current market quotation, to an eligible purchaser for cash only, who must combine considerable charms of body and mind with the superadded advantage of a respectable balance at Drummond’s or at Coutts’s. The Bard knows down to the ground the exact money-worth of a handsome poet; he wouldn’t dream of letting himself go dirt cheap, like a common every-day historian or novelist.’

As the last speaker let the words drop carelessly from his mouth, the buzz of voices in the smoke-room paused suddenly: there was a slight and awkward lull in the conversation for half a minute; and then the crowd of budding geniuses was stretching out its dozen right hands with singular unanimity in rapid succession to grasp the languid fingers of a tall dark new-comer who had slipped in, after the fashion usually attributed to angels or their opposite, in the very nick of time to catch the last echoes of a candid opinion from his peers and contemporaries upon his own conduct.

‘Do you think he heard us?’ one of the peccant gossipers whispered to another with a scared face.

‘Can’t say,’ his friend whispered back uneasily. ‘He’s got quick ears. Listeners generally hear no good of themselves. But anyhow, we’ve got to brazen it out now. The best way’s just to take the bull by the horns boldly.—Well, Massinger, we were all talking about you when you came in. You’re the chief subject of conversation in literary circles at the present day. Do you know it’s going the round of all the clubs in London at this moment that you shortly contemplate committing matrimony?’

Hugh Massinger drew himself up stiff and erect to his full height, and withered his questioner with a scathing glance from his dark eyes such as only he could dart at will to scarify and annihilate a selected victim. ‘I’m going to be married in the course of the year,’ he answered coldly, ‘if that’s what you mean by committing matrimony.—Mitchison,’ turning round with marked abruptness to an earlier speaker, ‘what have you been doing with yourself all the summer?’

‘Oh, I’ve been riding a bicycle through the best part of Finland, getting up a set of articles on the picturesque aspect of the Far North for the *Porte-Crayon*, you know, and at the same time working in the Russian anarchists for the leader column in the *Morning Telephone*.—Bates went

with me on the illegitimate machine—yes, that means a tricycle; the bicycle alone's accounted lawful: he's doing the sketches to illustrate my letterpress, or I'm doing the letterpress to illustrate his sketches—whichever you please, my little dear; you pays your money and you takes your choice, all for the small sum of sixpence weekly. The roads in Finland are abominably rough, and the Finnish language is the beastliest and most agglutinative I ever had to deal with, even in the entrancing pages of Ollendorff. But there's good copy in it—very good copy.—The *Telephone* and the *Porte-Crayon* shared our expenses.—And where have you been hiding your light yourself since we last saw you?

'My particular bushel was somewhere down about Suffolk, I believe,' Hugh Massinger answered with magnificent indefiniteness, as though minute accuracy to the matter of a county or two were rather beneath his sublime consideration. 'I've been stopping at a dead-alive little place they call Whitestrand: a sort of moribund fishing village, minus the fish. It's a lost corner among the mud-flats and the salt marshes; picturesque, but ugly, and dull as ditch-water. And having nothing else on earth to do there, I occupied myself with getting engaged, as you fellows seem to have heard by telegraph already. This is an age of publicity. Everything's known in London nowadays. A man can't change his coat, it appears, or have venison for dinner, or wear red stockings, or stop to chat with a pretty woman, but he finds a flaring paragraph about it next day in the society papers.'

'May one venture to ask the lady's name?' Mitchison inquired courteously, a little apart from the main group.

Hugh Massinger's manner melted at once. He would not be chaffed, but it rather relieved him, in his present strained condition of mind, to enter into inoffensive confidences with a polite listener.

'She's a Miss Meysey,' he said in a lower tone, drawing over towards the fireplace: 'one of the Suffolk Meyseys—you've heard of the family. Her father has a very nice place down by the sea at Whitestrand. They're the banking people, you know: remote cousins of the old hanging judge's. Very nice old things in their own way, though a trifle slow and out of date—not to say mouldy.—But after all, rapidity is hardly the precise quality one feels called upon to exact in a prospective father-in-law: slowness goes with some solid virtues. The honoured tortoise has never been accused by its deadliest foes of wasting its patrimony in extravagant expenditure.'

'Has she any brothers?' Mitchison asked with apparent ingenuousness, approaching the question of Miss Meysey's fortune (like Hugh himself) by obscure byways, as being a politer mode than the direct assault. 'There was a fellow called Meysey in the fifth form with me at Winchester, I remember; perhaps he might have been some sort of relation.'

Hugh shook his head in emphatic dissent. 'No,' he answered; 'the girl has no brothers. She's an only child—the last of her family. There was one son, a captain in the Forty-fourth, or something of the sort; but he was killed in Zululand, and was never at Winchester, or I'm sure I should have heard of it.—They're a kinless

lot, extremely kinless: in fact I've almost realised the highest ambition of the American humorist, to the effect that he might have the luck to marry a poor lonely friendless orphan.'

'She's an heiress, then?'

Hugh nodded assent. 'Well, a sort of an heiress,' he admitted modestly, as who should say, 'not so good as she might be.' 'The estate's been very much impaired by the inroads of the sea for the last ten years; but there's still a decent remnant of it left standing. Enough for a man of modest expectations to make a living off in these hard times, I fancy.'

'Then we shall all come down in due time,' another man put in—a painter by trade—joining the group as he spoke, 'and find the Bard a landed proprietor on his own broad acres, living in state and bounty in the baronial Hall, lord of Burleigh, fair and free, or whatever other name the place may be called by!'

'If I invite you to come,' Hugh answered significantly with curt emphasis.

'Ah yes, of course,' the artist answered. 'I dare say when you start your carriage, you'll be too proud to remember a poor devil of an oil and colour man like me.—In those days, no doubt you'll migrate like all the rest to the Athenæum.—Well, well, the world moves—once every twenty-four hours on its own axis—and in the longrun we all move with it and go up together.—When I'm an R.A., I'll run down and visit you at the ancestral mansion, and perhaps paint your wife's portrait—for a thousand guineas, *bien entendu*.—And what sort of a body is the prospective father-in-law?'

'Oh, just the usual type of Suffolk Squire, don't you know,' Massinger replied carelessly. 'A breeder of fat oxen and of pigs, a pamphleteer on Guano and on Grain, a quarter-sessions chairman, abler none; but with faint reminiscences still of an Oxford training left in him to keep the milk of human kindness from turning sour by long exposure to the pernicious influence of the East Anglian sunshine. I should enjoy his society better, however, if I were a trifle deaf. He has less to say, and he says it more, than any other man of my acquaintance. Still, he's a jolly old boy enough, as old boys go. We shall rub along somehow till he pops off the hooks and leaves us the paternal acres on our own account to make merry upon.'

So far, Hugh had tried with decent success to keep up his usual appearance of careless ease and languid good-humour, in spite of volcanic internal desires to avoid the painful subject of his approaching marriage altogether. He was schooling himself, indeed, to face society. He was sure to hear much of his Suffolk trip, and it was well to get used to it as early as possible. But the next question fairly blanched his cheek, by leading up direct to the skeleton in the cupboard: 'How did you first come to get acquainted with them?'

The question must inevitably be asked again, and he must do his best to face it with pretended equanimity. 'A relation of mine—a distant cousin—a Girton girl—was living with the family as Miss Meysey's governess or companion or something,' he answered with what jauntiness he could summon up. 'It was through her that I first got to know my future wife. And old Mr Meysey, the coming papa-in-law'—

He stopped dead short. Words failed him. His jaw fell abruptly. A strange thrill seemed to course through his frame. His large black eyes protruded suddenly from their sunken orbits; his olive-coloured cheek blanched pale and pasty. Some unexpected emotion had evidently checked his ready flow of speech. Mitchison and the painter turned round in surprise to see what might be the cause of this unwonted flutter. It was merely Warren Relf who had entered the club, and was gazing with a stony British stare from head to foot at Hugh Massinger.

The poet wavered, but he did not flinch. From the fixed look in Relf's eye, he felt certain in an instant that the skipper of the *Mud-Turtle* knew something—if not everything—of his fatal secret. How much did he know? and how much not?—that was the question. Had he tracked Elsie to her nameless grave at Orfordness? Had he recognised the body in the mortuary at the lighthouse? Had he learned from the cutter's man the horrid truth as to the corpse's identity? All these things or any one of them might well have happened to the owner of the *Mud-Turtle*, cruising in and out of East Anglian creeks in his ubiquitous little vessel. Warren Relf was plainly a dangerous subject. But in any case, Hugh thought with shame, how rash, how imprudent, how unworthy of himself thus to betray in his own face and features the terror and astonishment with which he regarded him! He might have known Relf was likely to drop in any day at the club! He might have known he would sooner or later meet him there! He might have prepared beforehand a neat little lie to deliver pat with a casual air of truth on their first greeting! And instead of all that, here he was, discomposed and startled, gazing the painter straight in the face like a dazed fool, and never knowing how or where on earth to start any ordinary subject of polite conversation. For the first time in his adult life he was so taken aback with childish awe and mute surprise that he felt positively relieved when Relf boarded him with the double-barrelled question: 'And how did you leave Miss Meysey and Miss Challoner, Massinger?'

Hugh drew him aside towards the back of the room and lowered his voice still more markedly in reply. 'I left Miss Meysey very well,' he answered with as much ease of manner as he could hastily assume. 'You may perhaps have heard from rumour or from the public prints that she and I have struck up an engagement. In the lucid language of the newspaper announcements, a marriage has been definitely arranged between us.'

Warren Relf bent his head in sober acquiescence. 'I had heard so,' he said with grim formality. 'Your siege was successful. You carried the citadel by storm that day in the sandhills.—I won't congratulate you. You know my opinion already of marriages arranged upon that mercantile basis. I told it you beforehand. We need not now recur to the subject.—But Miss Challoner?—How about her? Did you leave her well? Is she still at Whitestrand?' He looked his man through and through as he spoke, with a cold stern light in those truthful eyes of his.

Hugh Massinger shuffled uneasily before his steadfast glance. Was it only his own poor guilty conscience, or did Relf know all? he wondered

silently. The man was eyeing him like his evil angel. He longed for time to pause and reflect; to think out the best possible non-committing lie in answer to this direct and leading question. How to parry that deadly thrust on the spur of the moment he knew not. Relf was gazing at him still intently. Hesitation would be fatal. He blundered into the first form of answer that came uppermost. 'My cousin Elsie has gone away,' he stammered out in haste. 'She—she left the Meyseys quite abruptly.'

'As a consequence of your engagement?' Relf asked sternly.

This was going one step too far. Hugh Massinger felt really indignant now, and his indignation enabled him to cover his retreat a little more gracefully. 'You have no right to ask me that,' he answered in genuine anger. 'My private relations with my own family are surely no concern of yours or of any one's.'

Warren Relf bowed his head grimly once more. 'Where has she gone?' he asked in a searching voice. 'I'm interested in Miss Challoner. I may venture to inquire that much at least. I'm told you've heard from her. Where is she now? Will you kindly tell me?'

'I don't know,' Hugh answered angrily, driven to bay. Then with a sudden inspiration, he added significantly: 'Do you either?'

'Yes,' Warren Relf responded with solemn directness.

The answer took Massinger aback once more. A cold shudder ran down his spine. Their eyes met. For a moment they stared one another out. Then Hugh's glance fell slowly and heavily. He dared not ask one word more.—Relf must have tracked her, for certain, to the lighthouse. He must have seen the grave, perhaps even the body.—This was too terrible.—Henceforth, it was war to the knife between them. 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?' he broke out sullenly.

'I have found you, Massinger, and I have found you out,' the painter answered in a very low voice, with a sudden burst of unpremeditated frankness. 'I know you now for exactly the very creature you are—a liar, a forger, a coward, and only two fingers' width short of a murderer.—There! you may make what use you like of that.—For myself, I will make no use at all of it.—For reasons of my own, I will let you go. I could crush you if I would, but I prefer to screen you. Still, I tell you once for all the truth. Remember it well.—I know it; you know it; and we both know we each of us know it.'

Hugh Massinger's fingers itched inexpressibly that moment to close round the painter's honest bronzed throat in a wild death-struggle. He was a passionate man, and the provocation was terrible. The provocation was terrible because it was all true. He *was* a liar, a forger, a coward—and a murderer!—But he dared not—he dared not. To thrust these hateful words down Relf's throat would be to court exposure, and worse than exposure; and exposure was just what Hugh Massinger could never bear to face like a man. Sooner than that, the river, or aconite. He must swallow it all, proud soul as he was. He must swallow it all, now and for ever.

As he stood there irresolute, with blanched lips and itching fingers, his nails pressed hard into the palms of his hands in the fierce endeavour to

repress his passion, he felt a sudden light touch on his right shoulder. It was Hatherley once more. 'I say, Massinger,' the journalist put in lightly, all unconscious of the tragedy he was interrupting, 'come down and knock about the balls on the table a bit, will you?'

If Hugh Massinger was to go on living at all, he must go on living in the wonted fashion of nineteenth-century literate humanity. Tragedy must hide itself behind the scenes; in public he must still be the prince of high comedians. He unclosed his hands and let go his breath with a terrible effort. Relf stood aside to let him pass. Their glances met as Hugh left the room arm in arm with Hatherley. Relf's was a glance of contempt and scorn; Hugh Massinger's was one of undying hatred.

He had murdered Elsie, and Relf knew it. That was the way Massinger interpreted to himself the 'Yes' that the painter had just now so truthfully and directly answered him.

(To be continued.)

SUDDEN FORGETFULNESS.

NOT many things are more surprising than the lapses of memory one sometimes meets with in persons whose powers of mind, both natural and acquired, are considered to be much above the average. It would be folly to expect grapes from gooseberry bushes or figs from fir-trees; and it would be as preposterous to look for anything but unwisdom from the foolish; but we do expect wisdom from the wise; and above all we do anticipate expertness from the really clever. And yet, what breakdowns do happen now and again in the senate, on the platform, in the pulpit, and even on the stage; and not seldom the more skilful the person the more curious the catastrophe.

In a recently published letter of Thackeray's we have a description of the sudden forgetfulness he was subjected to at the Literary Fund dinner. He was one of the speakers, and he describes the affair as an 'awful smash.' Of the thread of his discourse he seems to have said, not in the words, but in the spirit of an old dramatist:

'Tis lost;

Like what we think can never shun remembrance,
Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the clouds.

But the experience of the author of *Vanity Fair* was far from being singular to himself. Others have got their pearls of thought and illustration into the wrong places, nay, some have even been so unfortunate as to lose both the pearls and their setting. It seems to have been a trying time for Thackeray, and he sat down afterwards and described to a friend what a fool he had made of himself; but his mother, who had contrived to be within hearing, came to the opposite conclusion.

The senate is not free from cases of sudden forgetfulness, though, in the days when it was considered out of place to use manuscript, the lapses took place much more often. Nowadays, a case seldom happens unless the notes have been disarranged or mislaid, or when the 'paper gives out.' But the thing does occur, and to front-bench men and back-bench men alike. Not long since, an ex-cabinet minister collapsed completely

from failure of memory, and he was shortly afterwards translated, perhaps by way of consolation, to the House of Peers. Only the other day, too, a member with a grievance made an 'awful smash,' to the delight of the house, through not being able to get at his notes; but he has had no consolation and little peace since.

On the stage, the prompter is the safety from forgetfulness; but in the concert-theatre, lapses take place. Even a great living tenor has been known to retire in the middle of a song he had been singing every week for almost a lifetime, because all memory of the words he wanted was gone. Such a case of sudden forgetfulness took place in one of the London theatres early in the present century. During the performance, which seems to have been of a mixed character, the gods in the galleries called for their favourite song, *The Sprig of Shillelagh*, though it was not announced in the bills; and Mr John Henry Johnstone, a well-known Irish actor and vocalist, came forward with alacrity and good-humour to comply with the wishes of the gods. Accordingly, the music played, but the singer stood silent and apparently confused. The symphony was repeated, but the same silence and confusion on the part of the vocalist took place in rather an increased degree. The symphony was performed a third time, but all to no purpose. At length Mr Johnstone came forward to the front of the stage and thus addressed the audience: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that I have sung this song so often that I forget the first line.' A roar of laughter greeted these words, and hundreds of good-humoured voices began to prompt the singer, who immediately gave the favourite song in good style, and gained increased applause.

Sudden forgetfulness is not an unusual thing in the pulpit. Aubrey the antiquary says that when he was a freshman at college he heard Dr Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln, well known for his work, *Nine Cases of Conscience*, break down in the middle of the Lord's Prayer. Even the great French preacher Massillon once stopped in the middle of a sermon from a defect of memory; and Massillon himself recorded that the same thing happened through excess of apprehension to two other preachers whom he went to hear in different parts of the same day. Another French preacher stopped in the middle of a sermon and was unable to proceed. The pause was, however, got over ingeniously. 'Friends,' said he, 'I had forgot to say that a person much afflicted is recommended to your immediate prayers.' He meant himself. He fell on his knees; and before he rose he had recovered the thread of his discourse, which he concluded without his want of memory being perceived.

The late Rev. Henry Ware of Boston was once in a similar predicament. In the middle of a sermon his memory failed him and he stopped abruptly. The pause seemed long to the preacher before he regained his thought, and he imagined the sermon to be a failure in consequence; but as he walked quietly up the aisle, a different impression was given to him. 'How did you like the sermon?' asked one hearer of another.—'Like it? It is the best sermon Mr Ware has ever preached. That pause was sublime!'

A good illustration of this sudden forgetfulness comes from the same district of Boston. A

worthy minister there is not only absent-minded and has a short memory, but he breaks down as continually as he breaks down suddenly. To counteract this, it is a habit with him, when he forgets anything, to rise again and make a few supplementary remarks, which he always begins with the phrase, 'By the way.' One Sunday he got half-way through a prayer from memory, when he hesitated, forgot what he was about, and sat down abruptly without pronouncing the closing word. In a moment or two he rose, and pointing his finger at the amazed congregation, he exclaimed: 'Oh, by the way, Amen!'

It is said of Father Taylor, a preacher to sailors, that once, when he got confused, he cried out: 'Boys, I've lost my nominative case; but never mind—we're on the way to glory!'

We can understand a lapse of memory taking place when the mind is overburdened and unusual demands are being made upon it; but for a failure to occur when there is no stress put upon the mental powers is singular. Here is a case in point. We are told on good authority that a prominent Harvard Professor went into the old Cambridge post-office and presented himself at the place where the delivery of letters was made. He stood there silent, but apparently very confused about something. The clerk in charge inquired what he desired.—'My letters, please.'—'Name, sir?' asked the clerk.—After stammering and stuttering, the learned man said: 'I have quite forgotten my name!' The official knew the Professor, and with a smile handed him his letters.

'You will forget your own name next,' is a phrase often thrown at the stupid, and perhaps there would be some excuse for them even if they did so.

There is some consolation, however, in cases of sudden forgetfulness; the pity is that it does not come soon enough to benefit fully, and at times it is denied altogether to the actor. As for the orator, he knows afterwards that none but himself is aware of the valuable forgotten things, and the difference between the projected ideal and the actual performance. It would have been a great saving of nerve-force, and a pleasurable emotion to have thought of those two items before he had wished himself a thousand miles away, and before the room swam round, and before he burst into perspiration at every pore.

THE MYSTIC COMPACT:

A MARVEL OF MODERN SPIRIT-LIFE.

BENEDICT CLOUDESLEY was not a believer in or disciple of any system of magic or mysticism, nor was he a medium of intercourse with spirits. This fact should be clearly stated at first, as he always considered that his experience was the more remarkable from his being, as one may say, an outsider. He was not actually a sceptic; he had thought too little about such matters to have any decided opinion. He would occasionally cut a joke, after the manner of a good many other young fellows, when spiritualism was discussed, but beyond this he did not trouble himself.

It was not so with Mr Alfred Bince, his familiar friend, and a City clerk to boot, as was also our hero—to apply a title to which the latter was

far too sensible to assert any claim. But all Mr Bince's spare time was absorbed in mystic studies, and he often intimated to Benedict that even spiritualism with all its wonders—which he freely admitted and professed to be familiar with—was but meat for babes compared with the deeper secrets he had mastered. In company with a few earnest students, he had at last solved the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian and Indian magics, and expected very soon to wield their powers.

As a beginning, however, he recommended spiritualism as suitable for a novice, and was always urging Benedict to attend a séance of invitation, which appeared to be the sitting of several persons round a table awaiting the manifestations, which were sure to come if you only waited long enough. Cloudesley was a bachelor, and sometimes did not know what to do with himself of an evening, so at last he agreed to attend one of these invitation meetings—it was to be held next evening, the last night of the year, as it happened; and the result of which, his friend assured him, would be his complete conviction.

Benedict was hardly so enthusiastic at even this prospect as was Mr Bince; but he went, and a bitterly cold night it was, too—a frost, with a keen north-east wind blowing. The séance lasted about two hours, the lights being turned low, although not out, while all conversation was held in subdued tones. Nothing was heard on this first night; but the more experienced disciples explained that it was hardly ever known for the first night to be a success. There was no doubt, they said, from the powerful mediums present, that in two or three sittings they would obtain favourable manifestations.

The young man listened to this and a good deal more of the same, but was quite wearied by the dull, useless waiting, not inclined to believe in anything more turning up, and by no means disposed to attend the rest of the series. He did not tell his friend Alfred this, as he knew it would hurt his feelings; so, when they parted at a short distance from Cloudesley's house, Mr Bince promised to call for him on the next night, and predicted a brilliant success. Benedict answered with the best imitation of enthusiasm he could muster, and so they separated.

The young fellow was heartily glad to get into his own sitting-room, which, however, struck rather chilly, for the fire had been allowed to sink too low. Yet with his shudder at the cold as he took off his coat, there mingled a shudder which was of relief at having left the dreary circle wherein he formed part, and at having got clear from his friend's mystic talk, of which, as he muttered, he had had almost too much for one dose. He threw a plentiful supply of coal upon the fire, at the risk of putting it out; as he did so, the clock of a neighbouring church sounded eleven. 'Eight o'clock till eleven—three hours of penance,' he muttered. 'They talk of meeting an hour later to-morrow, the conditions being more favourable as the night advances. Let them meet if they like; they won't meet me.'

He lit his pipe, smoked in silence for a time, and thought deeply on the events of the evening. Whether he liked it or not, it was impossible for him to detach his thoughts from the subject, and his friend's arguments, wild and even ridiculous as he had fancied them, recurred with added force. 'But come what may,' he thought, 'I will never mix myself up with such an absurd lot, or be led by any arguments which my reason tells me are crazy fancies.'

'Yes, you will,' cried a voice.

This was a strange interruption, for not only was Benedict certain that there was no one else in the room, but even if there had been, as he had not uttered a syllable, the answer was actually to his thoughts.

He was a man of firm nerves, so was less startled than might have been expected. He turned, and saw a stranger quietly sitting on a chair, so placed that he, Benedict, was between him and the door, quite disproving the idea that he had just entered.

'You will believe in these people,' said the stranger; 'and I will prove to you the truth of those tales of magic at which you have sneered. I am Zafiana, the Chinese Seer.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed Benedict, who at that moment fancied he had somewhere heard the name. 'But you do not look like a Chinaman; I should have taken you for a Volunteer.' He seemed indeed to wear a kind of uniform.

'Not like such Chinese as *you* know, perhaps,' returned the visitor with a contemptuous smile.

Benedict was not acquainted with many Chinese, but this remark appeared to have great force.

'I have not been in China for many thousands of years,' resumed the stranger.

'For what?' interrupted Benedict.

'My work,' Zafiana went on, without heeding the question, 'is in the West. It was I who worked most of the effects which are recorded in the *Arabian Nights*. As recorded, they are vulgarised; but they are all true, and much beyond them. I admire your doubts and your anxiety to see the truth, so I mean to make a convert of you. You will find it easy and pleasant to become my disciple.'

'I am not much of a spiritualist,' returned Cloudesley; 'and if you will excuse my saying so, I don't care about being one.'

'That is the reason I am determined to have you,' retorted Zafiana. 'You are poor, and wish to be rich—is it not so?'

'He is right there, however he knows it,' thought Benedict, but he might just as well have spoken aloud.

'Yes; I am right,' said the stranger; 'and I am here to give you your wish.—Do you see this ring?'

Benedict was obliged to admit he did, it was so prominently displayed on his visitor's finger, although he had not before noticed it.

'That ring is yours with all its powers. You have only to turn it—thus, and any wealth you may wish for is yours. Put it on now.'

With some reluctance, Benedict allowed the stranger to fit the ring on his finger.

'Now turn it and wish for a hundred pounds.'

Despite the objection Cloudesley entertained to the whole proceeding, he could not resist this suggestion—his yearly income did not much

exceed this amount. He turned the ring, wished, and in an instant a pile of gold lay on the table at his elbow.

'My eye!' he ejaculated.

'You are satisfied?' asked Zafiana. 'Then the ring is yours—on easy conditions.'

'No!—no conditions!' exclaimed Cloudesley, who thought of the devil and Dr Faustus, with a score of similar legends. 'I will not have anything to do with them.'

'When I tell you the only condition is, that you never go into No. 77 Badoura Street, Islington,' said the visitor, 'you may judge for yourself what danger or hardship there is in my offer.'

'Badoura Street, Islington; I never heard of the place,' returned Cloudesley, after a moment's reflection.

'I knew you had not, so proposed this as the easiest condition in the world.—Will you take the ring? Unbounded wealth; a thousand years of life, youth, and health, in which to enjoy yourself—is it worth while, in exchange for these things, to say you will never go into a house you have never seen and never will see?'

'It is!' exclaimed Benedict. 'The ring is mine!'

'Then farewell.' His visitor rose as he spoke. 'You will never see me again—unless, indeed, you go to No. 77 Badoura Street.'

'If I do'—began Cloudesley; but his guest was gone; the space where he had been standing was void.

Somehow, Benedict did not feel surprised or overcome; he seemed already to regard the magic ring as a thing of ordinary life and experience. Nevertheless, he resolved to secure himself from the slightest risk of entering the forbidden house, by leaving London for good. He would go and live at Brighton, a town he was always fond of.

He gave up his situation, and secured handsome apartments at the seaside. His mind must have been more affected than he had thought, for when he tried, he could hardly recall the processes by which these changes were accomplished, and he knew or cared nothing about the friends he had left behind him. Yet these latter came, as might have been expected, so often to see him at Brighton, that it was really like still living in the old circle. The great difference was in his abundance of money, which accumulated faster than he had any need of, so that he found himself wondering why he called for it in such quantities, and, moreover, what he should do with it, as it was lying in piles about his rooms.

He made up his mind at times to give a good part of this wealth to his friend Alfred Bince, but could never carry out this intention. Something always intervened, and Alfred came and went none the richer for his visits.

Benedict was staggered, on opening his newspaper one day, to see in bold type the startling heading: 'Dreadful Murder in Badoura Street—Arrest of the Murderer.' Fascinated, he read on. It was all confused and blurred to his excited nerves; yet he could make out that the crime was of a wretched, commonplace character, shocking enough in itself, but with none of the features which make such incidents the public talk for weeks.

'I am glad,' thought Benedict, 'I do not even

know where Badoura Street is. But perhaps if I did, I should'— His unfinished reflection was one which often recurred.

He paid occasional visits to London, but took care never to go into or even near Islington. Yet the name haunted him, so that he wished the donor of the ring had never mentioned the place, but had allowed him to take his chance, as, out of the million or so of houses in London, it was nearly impossible that he should have wandered into this No. 77 by accident. He found himself speculating over and over again as to what sort of a street this was, and fancying he should like to see it from a balloon or other safe position. He thought about Badoura Street almost constantly, until he felt that it would be best for him to go and see it and have done with it. Yet he fought against the dangerous fancy, resolving sometimes that he would go to Australia or some other distant country, to break this habit of thought; when it suddenly became necessary for him to go to London to meet his friend Bince. When there, some important business in which the latter was concerned required that Benedict should go to Islington. He did not completely understand the complicated business in which Bince was engaged, yet could not refuse to attend to it; and so, for the first time since that eventful night, and for years before, he found himself in the great northern parish.

It was impossible to avoid a wish to see Badoura Street, now that he was in the neighbourhood. He knew but little of Islington; and in the vicinity of Badoura Street—for which he consulted a local map—he was an utter stranger. He determined to walk across the end of the thoroughfare, and satisfy what he felt was his unreasonable, his absurd curiosity, by a single glance down it; but to do even this, it was necessary that he should find the place.

Such a confused labyrinth of streets and houses as he now found himself amidst, he had never before seen. Dingy, dull, twisting streets—streets of which he could not see the end—streets where the houses overhung the paths and approached each other until they touched: he marvelled that so obsolete a neighbourhood was allowed to exist, and felt afraid of losing his way in such a maze.

No trace of Badoura Street could he find, although he prolonged his search until he was weary. He was annoyed with himself for this perseverance, but could not give up the search. At last, with a mingled feeling of disappointment at his want of success and relief at being unable to run into danger, he turned down a thoroughfare in what he had believed to be the immediate vicinity of his quest, in order to regain what were to him more familiar districts. This was a long street, tolerably broad, but filled with poor houses and paltry shops. He walked slowly through it, for he felt tired, amusing himself with gazing into the shabby shops as he passed, when suddenly—for he had not noticed the dense black cloud which now seemed to rest on the tops of the houses—a heavy rain-storm burst overhead. He was just in front of a small eating-house, so naturally stepped inside the doorway; and the proprietor—attracted, perhaps, by the appearance of a person above the usual run of his customers—came forward and civilly invited the stranger to enter.

Benedict, with thanks, complied, and soon got into conversation with the shopkeeper, who was not too busy for a gossip.

'I have been in search of a street in this neighbourhood,' said Cloudeley, 'which I cannot find; perhaps you may know it.'

'I have lived here these ten years,' replied the man; 'and I believe I know every inch of the parish. What street might you want?'

'I have been looking for Badoura Street,' answered Benedict, who was angry with himself, even while he spoke, for introducing the subject. 'I made sure it was somewhere about this spot.'

'It was,' said the shopkeeper; 'but there is no Badoura Street now. This was it.'

'This! This!' echoed Cloudeley. 'Why, I saw the name written up, "Royal Princess Street." How can'—

'The name was altered in consequence of a dreadful murder—the Badoura Street murder, it was called, and you may have heard of it. It gave the street a bad name, so the parish altered it; and now it is Royal Princess Street.'

'What an awful thing! What a narrow escape I have had!' muttered Benedict, who found himself turning actually hot, not cold, at the idea. 'Your house, I see,' he continued aloud, 'is No. 40. Were you near the house where?'

'O no,' interrupted the man; 'that was on the other side of the way. But numbers is no rule, sir, as they altered them too. This, for instance, used to be No. 77'—

'What!—77!' gasped Cloudeley. He faltered here, and his head and throat grew hotter.

'You don't seem well,' said the shopkeeper kindly. 'Step into this room and sit down; there is no one in there.' He opened the door of a back room as he spoke, and Benedict went in, the landlord closing the door behind him and leaving him alone.

The room struck Cloudeley as being almost stiflingly warm, while some smoke or mist rising at the further end of the apartment made it obscure. He thought the place must be on fire, the heat was so great and the smoke so dense, although, strangely enough, it did not approach him. It was so unpleasant that, even though his brain was still reeling from the shock he had experienced, he determined to leave. He thought the door was just behind him; but he could not find the lock; and while he was feeling for this, and growing almost alarmed at the incident, his outstretched hand was clasped by another, and a voice cried: 'So we meet in No. 77, then, after all!'

He knew the voice; he had never heard it since the night he had accepted the ring—knew the figure of Zafiana, who was standing close to him.

This excited no surprise in Benedict, who now seemed to have been expecting to see him all along. His clasp was hot, while the atmosphere of the room seemed to grow hotter and hotter. 'I cannot stay to talk to you,' said the young man; 'I must go.'

'You must go! Ha, ha, ha!' Zafiana laughed in exactly the three syllables in which all such beings have laughed, in romance or on the stage, from time immemorial. Benedict had always thought this a ridiculous conventionality; but he now saw it was founded on fact, and doubtless

much experience. 'You must go?' repeated Zafana. 'Do you know that you are talking to your master?—Give me the ring!'

Without any action on the part of either, the ring flew from Benedict's hand, and at that moment the burning heat of the room became almost insufferable.

'You have broken your agreement,' pursued the seer, 'and must pay the forfeit.'

'What forfeit?' cried Benedict, growing desperate. 'I agreed to no forfeit, and I will have nothing more to do with you.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed Zafana again. 'You have lost the ring. The coffers of gold and your splendid equipments have ere this wholly vanished. You will meet me to-morrow night at nine o'clock; then you will know the rest of the penalty.'

'I won't. I'll see you'—The rest of Benedict's speech was lost in another mocking laugh from the Chinese seer, who thrust his face close to his victim's; and his breath was so scorching, that, with a frantic effort, Benedict threw him off. As he did so, the room sank or melted away; and in an instant the old familiar lines of his lodging at Brixton became visible, and he found himself sitting in front of his fire, which had burnt up to such a size and fierceness that he was almost roasting.

He pushed back his chair, drew a long breath, and strove to collect his thoughts. He looked at his hand—the ring was gone! But then he remembered it had not been there when he sat down, and if he had been to sleep—But it could not have been all a dream! How long had he been under the spell? What day, or month, or year, was it?—Ah! There was his landlord coming in; he was on late duty, being a railway clerk.

Benedict bade him 'good-night,' and then, as calmly as he could, asked the date and the time. 'I am surprised you should have forgotten the date, sir,' returned his landlord cheerily from the hall: 'it is half-past eleven on the last night of the old year.'

'Thank you,' said Benedict.—'Then it is a dream,' he muttered; 'but if ever I go again to any of these manifestations, why, I will be content to have such another!'

In the morning he received a note from Bince, urging him not to forget that night at nine; a valuable medium had promised to come, a foreign gentleman, and he knew Benedict would be delighted to meet him.

'Shall I?' muttered Cloudesley, whose thoughts at once reverted to Zafana and his appointment for that night. 'None of your foreigners or mediums either, for me: I will go to the play.'

And go to the play he did. It was rather cowardly on his part to do so, perhaps; but, seated in the centre of a crowded pit, he felt he could defy any necromancer or seer. He went home in good spirits, having got over the dreaded hour.

The next day he saw his friend Bince, who was in ecstasies at the splendid results of the previous night, and particularly anxious to get Benedict to witness their repetition on an early occasion; but the latter said: 'My dear boy, you are a truthful fellow, so I will not dispute anything you say. I will admit you do see and hear all

these things, but I do not think I could; I am not the right sort of fellow: my mind is not exalted enough. In any case, I do not mean to go again, for I never had such a nightmare as I got from your spirits, and which was all I ever did get from them.'

Never again did Benedict Cloudesley go to a séance, and never again did the Chinese seer present his ominous features to his gaze or utter his mocking laugh in his ears.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THREE very interesting papers have lately been read before the Royal Geographical Society. The first to which we call attention is that by Mr D. W. Freshfield, the Hon. Secretary, on 'The Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers of the Caucasus.' Mr Freshfield is well qualified to speak upon this subject; for he was one of the early explorers of the alpine portion of this district, which he first visited more than twenty years back. Owing to faulty surveying, it has been stated, and is still stated in various text-books, that the glaciers of this region are few and unimportant; but this, Mr Freshfield shows, is not the case. The Caucasus differs from the Alps in having no lakes; while the scenery, if less picturesque, is far grander in character. The atmosphere is pure, and the whole country is clad with forests, which are brought up to the very verge of the snow and ice. Mr Freshfield maintains that while the Alps are played out for purposes of discovery, the Caucasus offers a fresh field for the climber, as well as for the naturalist, the ethnologist, and geologist. He traversed one peak which was considerably over sixteen thousand five hundred feet above the sea-level, and he speaks in glowing terms of the grand view presented to him from that eminence.

Another interesting paper has been read to the same Society by Mr John Stearns, who, two years ago, undertook at his own expense a journey of exploration through a corner of Brazil about which hitherto little has been known. This district is situated in the valley of the Rio Doce, and although it is within two hundred and fifty miles of the city of Rio de Janeiro, its natives are cannibals. They still wander about without clothing, and seem to be as little civilised as it is possible to imagine. They have no religion, and the only time that they seem to acknowledge a superior Power is when a thunderstorm bursts over them, when they throw fire into the air to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit. The reason why this district has not benefited by civilisation is, that settlers have passed it by; for the river already named is useless for navigation on account of its being intersected by falls and rapids; moreover, hitherto, tribes of fierce Indians have inhabited the dense forests by which the country is surrounded. It is probable that this neglected district may be opened up, now that this explorer has made known so much about it. Its chief product is rosewood, which we need hardly say is of great value.

The Ruby Mines of Burmah, about which we have heard so much since the British annexation

of that country, formed the subject of another most interesting paper by Mr Robert Gordon, who surveyed the ruby-mining district, lying north of Mandalay, shortly after the annexation took place. He tells us that the mines are of three different kinds. The first consist of workings in veins of soft material which are found in the hard rock, which veins are due probably to volcanic action in past ages. The second class of mining is by washing, and may be compared in a less degree to the hydraulic mining carried on in California and other places. In this case the clay is cut into a thin slice with an ordinary spade, and is then washed, so as to dissolve away the softer material, and leave any precious stones that may be encrusted within it. No attempt, however, has been made to employ water under pressure. The third class of mines may be regarded as the most important; these are found in the lower lands of the valleys, where, at a depth varying from ten to thirty feet, there is found a layer of corundum. The lecturer could not give any information as to the future of the Ruby Mines; but he said that with the careful handling which they were sure to receive under the new governors of the country, their mineral wealth could soon be rapidly developed.

A German newspaper publishes a letter from a correspondent at Dresden which tells of alleged frauds at the noble Gallery of Paintings in that city. It is stated that of the several pictures recently purchased at high prices, some are mere copies, others are works of inferior artists, while some are simply forgeries. Sixteen years ago, the authorities, out of their share of the French war indemnity, were able to purchase eighteen pictures said to be by old masters. It is these pictures which have lately been condemned. At the time they were purchased, it was stated by those who professed to know that the pictures were not worth the money asked for them, and that the reputation of the alleged artists appeared to be the standard that regulated the price instead of the artistic value of their works. This lesson comes home to us in Britain, where an altogether fancy value is often attached to the name of a painter regardless of the work which he produces.

Dr Schliemann, whose reputation as a discoverer is already widely known, has commenced excavations at Ramleh, a place, it will be remembered, which was last brought into prominence by the events which followed the bombardment of Alexandria, a few years back. These excavations are in order to discover if possible the remains of the Palace of Cleopatra. The work has been continued to a depth of about fifty feet; but its progress has been much hindered by local springs. Some stonework has already been discovered which is believed to belong to the building sought for.

We have already alluded to the circumstance that M. Pasteur has proposed to exterminate the rabbits at the antipodes by the introduction among them of the epidemic known as hen-cholera. In the letter addressed by him to the Agents-general of Australia and New Zealand, he not only fully explains his method, but he gives particulars of a remarkable experiment which at once shows its efficacy. Madame Pommery, the well-known champagne grower, had unfortunately been induced to breed wild rabbits in an enclosed vine-

yard of twenty acres. In a short time they increased to the extent of a veritable pest, and threatened destruction to the adjacent wine-vaults by their continual burrowing. In her distress the owner applied to M. Pasteur, who sent one of his pupils to the place armed with some recent 'culture' of the microbe of fowl-cholera. This was mingled with some food spread for the rabbits, and was quickly consumed. On the following day, all the rabbits were dead, mostly dying in their burrows. This mode of death, unlike that by poison or trap-methods, which have been largely adopted by the Australian colonists, is said to be quite painless. The animal affected wraps itself up in a ball and dies, 'to all appearance in a painless sleep.'

A resident at Herne Bay was lately walking along the beach near that place when he noticed a somewhat remarkable projection from a stratum of clay in the cliff. He at once saw that it was the fossilised remains of some animal, and with assistance removed it. It was found to be a tusk of the hairy northern elephant, which measured fifty-seven inches in length, with a circumference of seventeen inches at its thicker end.

The advent of a new musical instrument, especially if it promises to be of real use, is always an interesting event. Such an instrument has lately been invented by M. Dietz of Brussels; it is called the Claviharp, and, as the name suggests, it consists of a harp furnished with a *clavier*, or keyboard. The strings are of metal, furnished with an insulating covering, so as to give the tone of catgut strings, but without their liability to be affected by changes of atmosphere. But the most important feature of the Claviharp, and one in which it differs from all other keyboard instruments, is, that its strings are not struck by hammers, but are *plucked* as by the fingers of a harpist. Skilled harpists are so few in number, and modern orchestration so often requires their presence, that a great difficulty is often experienced in filling their places. The Claviharp is intended to fill this gap, and there is little doubt that it will do so, more especially as it can be played by any one accustomed to the pianoforte. At a concert in London recently, the capabilities of the new instrument were effectually demonstrated.

In a German botanical journal, a new method of retaining the natural colours of flowers when put under pressure for preservation has recently been published; it consists of dusting salicylic acid upon the leaves, and removing the powder with a brush when the petals are dry. Or the same acid may be used as a solution, one part of acid to fourteen of alcohol. Cotton-wool or blotting-paper impregnated with the solution is laid above and beneath the flowers as they lie in the press. It is said that red colours in particular are well preserved by this simple process.

The administration of ammonia and other alkalies as a remedy for the stings and bites of venomous insects has long been known, the theory of the treatment being the neutralisation of the acid poison. And as surely as autumn comes round, ammonia, soda, &c. are pointed to as convenient aids to the cure of wasp-stings. It is so seldom, however, that an authentic case of cure of snake-bite by such simple means comes to hand, that the details of such a case, published in the *Indian Medical Gazette*, cannot fail to be of

interest. The sufferer was bitten in the hand by a small cobra, and the usual symptoms—inability to stand, gasping for breath—quickly set in. At the same time the hand and arm were much swollen. Permanganate of potash in powder was rubbed into the wound, and hypodermic injections of ammonia diluted with water were administered at frequent intervals. The patient was also given draughts containing ammonia. Although apparently brought almost to the point of death, the man gradually took a turn for the better, and eventually recovered.

Although we have occasionally to deplore instances of individual bigotry or intolerance, we must all admit that the sure march of education has had the effect of eradicating these faults from civilised nations to a very great extent. An instance of improvement in this respect is afforded by the recent decision of the Italian government to issue a new edition of the works of Galileo at the expense of the state. We may remember that it was less than three hundred years ago that poor persecuted Galileo was forced by the authorities to do penance for publishing his opinions, and was made to declare that to be false which he well knew to be true. The works will be published in about twenty-five volumes, under the auspices of the university of Padua, and copies will be presented gratis to the chief public libraries of the world. A better monument to the first man who turned a telescope towards the heavens could hardly be imagined.

The great interest which has of late years been developed in the art of photography, mainly on account of the ease with which modern methods can be practised by amateur workers, is evidenced by the number of important Exhibitions which have taken place since the commencement of the year. Of these we may mention those at Nottingham, Gloucester, Dundee, Liverpool, and the most important of all, that at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham. This last has been so successful in every way, that it will probably be repeated next year upon a still larger scale. In addition to these Exhibitions, there has been an important Conference of photographers in London, and a Photographic Convention with its headquarters at Birmingham is to meet in a few months' time.

Some account of the poisonous properties of the yew have lately been published, from which it would appear that the poisonous qualities of the tree are confined to the leaves. A very small quantity is fatal to the horse, the ass, and the mule; but it requires a far larger amount in proportion to the size of the animal to kill the goat. These observations may be new to many, but we may remind our readers that Gilbert White, of Selborne fame, was well acquainted with the poisonous nature of the tree, and gives several particulars concerning its action upon cattle.

A new form of Letter-copying Book has been recently introduced, in which the use of water and brush is dispensed with. The leaves of the book are so chemically prepared that they remain in a damp condition until after they have received the impression from the documents to be copied, when the moisture disappears on the application of blotting-paper. The importance of retaining copies of letters is known to all men of business; and probably more will avail themselves of that method of registering their transactions, when

they know that by this new plan the trouble of doing so is reduced to a minimum.

Mr Robert Irvine, Caroline Park Works, Edinburgh, has recently published, in pamphlet form, a paper which he read a short time ago before the Society of Chemical Industry. This paper takes the form of 'A Note on the Action of Bleaching Agents upon Writing-ink as a Means of detecting Fraud.' Mr Irvine has found that the age of written characters can be gauged to some extent by the action of a dilute solution of bleaching-powder, commonly known as chloride of lime, upon them. The newer the writing, the more quickly will it disappear. This discovery will be of obvious use in suspected cases of alteration of old documents, for interpolations can by it be made conclusively evident. The pamphlet in question gives particulars of the method, as well as details of other experiments in the same useful direction.

While different methods of dealing with that difficult problem, the disposal of the sewage of large towns, are constantly brought before the public, the sewers themselves give their own testimony, in the shape of evil-smelling and disease-bearing gases, that the present method of drainage is fraught with perils to health. Through every street-grating noxious effluvia are expelled, and nothing is done to remedy the evil. Keeting's Sewer-gas Exhauster and Destructor is a simple appliance for both ventilating these unsavoury water-ways and for rendering the gases extracted from them innocuous. It consists of an upright pipe connected with the sewer, which for convenience can be crowned with an ordinary street lamp. Within this pipe is a special form of gas-burner, capable of raising its metallic surroundings to an intense heat. This burner in the first case raises such a draught that the gases from the sewer below are drawn into the pipe, and the heat from it then decomposes those gases into harmless products. Careful experiments have shown that the apparatus will do what is claimed for it at an expenditure of six cubic feet of coal-gas per hour, and that a single burner will effectually ventilate the sewers for a radius of about two thousand feet. The cost of maintaining the system can thus be roughly estimated, but we have no information as to the expense of the original plant.

Mr Brode of Glasgow has patented a method of utilising coal-dust, or slack, which is said to afford a convenient and efficient form of fuel. He mixes the dust with an adhesive solution made of water, ground-rice waste, and silicate of soda. The mass is well incorporated in a mixing-machine, and is then moulded into blocks. It is curious to note that fuel in block-form, although it has been in use for a great many years on shipboard, has only very lately been employed in the domestic fire-grate.

Mr Wigham, who is so well known as an authority on lighthouse illuminants, recently delivered a lecture on that subject to the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society. He was able to point to more than one lighthouse in Ireland where his gas system has been adopted with success. He pointed out how gas could be made to give as intense a light as electricity, with the advantage of possessing that predominance of red and yellow rays which are of such service in penetrating fog. In the course of his lecture, he

described several improvements which he had devised, including a method of doing away with chimneys round the burners. The plan consists in supplying under pressure a cylinder of air, which encircles the flame and acts as a chimney to it.

Captain Doty, who has for some years been noted for the invention of one of the best lamps for burning mineral oil, has lately produced a Gas-flame Lamp, or retort-burner light, which is likely to prove of great service to builders, railway contractors, and others, who require to illuminate large open spaces for temporary purposes. The apparatus consists of a tank to contain the oil, at the top of which is a special form of burner for vaporising it. This consists of a coil of pipe through which the oil flows, which coil terminates in a jet which is carried to its base. An air-pump forms part of the apparatus by which an initial pressure is put upon the liquid in the tank. In starting the lamp, a little tow saturated in oil is ignited within the coil, when the metal speedily becomes heated, and the oil within issues as gas. From this moment, the lamp is self-acting, the flame itself giving the necessary heat to the coil which surrounds it. The consumption of three-quarters of a gallon of oil per hour is said to give a flame of five hundred candle-power. The lamp is quite portable, and in this feature lies its great value.

A correspondent of the *Chicago Herald* has recently published some interesting particulars of his journeyings to the Asiatic empires, where he had gone some time back for the purpose of introducing the electric light. He found that his mission was warmly espoused by the Japanese, and says that their principal cities are now lighted by electricity. The palace of the Mikado at Tokio is similarly lighted. The Chinese did not seem so ready to avail themselves of the latest advances in science, and his success with them was therefore not so pronounced. The Koreans, on the other hand, were eager to believe in anything born of the United States, and welcomed the new light. The king's palace was illuminated for the first time with three hundred lights on the occasion of the birthday of his mother-in-law, a festival not generally so much honoured in more civilised communities. But the workmen ran an uncomfortable risk in placing the wires, for, by the law of the country, no foreigner may look upon the features of the king and queen without suffering death. For this reason, they were carried to and from their labours in palanquins, while trumpeters were sent before them to warn any loitering members of the royal family to get out of the way.

In an article contributed to the *Provincial Medical Journal* by Dr Harley, F.R.S., the practice of moderate drinking and its influence upon health is dealt with in a masterly manner. The writer points out that moderate drinkers may be divided into two classes—namely, those who partake of stimulating beverages only at meal-times, and those who indulge in 'nipping' without at the same time partaking of food. He shows the danger of the latter habit in inducing liver and other organic complaints, by abstracting from the Registrar-general's Reports the death-rate from such diseases—for those engaged in such occupations—commercial travellers, brewers, inn-

keepers, barmen, waiters, and others—as are likely to lead to a temptation to take frequent 'glasses.' He then compares the result with the death-rate of gardeners, printers, farmers, drapers, and warehousemen, who are kept away from such temptation. The difference between the figures is startling and most suggestive.

Two hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling for an egg-shell seems to be rather an extravagant price. Yet that sum was paid only the other day for an egg of the Great Auk. There is nothing beautiful about the egg, nor is carbonate of lime, of which it is composed, of any intrinsic value. But the Great Auk happens to be extinct, and only sixty-seven shells are known to exist. Mr Stevens, the well-known London auctioneer, through whom the egg was sold, has informed us that the purchaser was a dealer. The inference, therefore, is that the buyer expects to get a still larger sum for his investment. And he is likely to do so, for when the collecting craze attacks a human being, he thinks not of price so long as he can claim possession of the coveted thing.

Canon Bagot and others, both by voice and pen, have shown how the dairy interests of England and Ireland may be advanced by attending to many small details now neglected, and how a higher price may be secured for butter more scientifically prepared. In this connection we mention what is called a 'Baby Separator,' by the use of which twenty per cent. more butter can be manufactured from milk than from an equal quantity separated by one of the old systems of setting. It was exhibited for the first time in England at the London Dairy Show, where it was awarded the Lord Mayor's Champion Cup. Its price is £12, 10s., and its skimming capacity is twelve gallons per hour. It is made to be fixed on a firm table or stand, and may be turned by a young person, while the separation is as perfect as that of the larger machines. The larger Laval separators, as now made, are adapted to the requirements and the pecuniary resources of every user. The farmer or dairyman who has steam, gas, water, or horse-power available, has two machines, of different prices and capacities, to choose from; those who possess a steam-boiler, but find the use of an engine and gearing impracticable or inconvenient, have their wants supplied by the new steam turbine separator, which for motive-power requires nothing more than a small jet of steam; and those who have manual power only can take their pick from three hand machines. The agents in this country for Dr Laval's 'Baby Separator' are the Dairy Supply Co., Limited, Museum Street, London.

We note in this connection that the recent Report of the Departmental Commission finds that there is a great loss to the country through its want of knowledge of the most effective modes of dairy practice, and that to supply this want state aid is necessary. They suggest the creation of a new system of agricultural education, to be gradually carried out, beginning by meeting the most pressing wants, and by engrafting practical agricultural teaching on a limited number of existing schools, and to proceed on a well-matured system, capable of future growth and extension. The Commission is strongly of opinion that increased facilities should be given to agricultural

instruction in rural elementary schools; that a limited number of scholarships for boys and girls should be instituted; and that further inducements should be offered to teachers to improve their qualifications for giving instruction in agriculture.

THE NEW EL DORADO.

WITHIN the last two years two new towns have sprung into existence with a rapidity that is marvellous, considering the difficulties in the way of transport of the necessary materials for building purposes. Unlike the majority of towns of rapid growth of which one has often read, these two are not of American origin, but are situated in the Transvaal Free State, in South Africa. The older of the two is named Barberton, and is situated about three hundred miles to the east of Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal; while the younger, Johannesburg, lies between thirty and forty miles south-west of the same place. Both owe their rapid rise to the discoveries of gold which have been made in their immediate neighbourhood.

The place where Barberton now stands was, two years ago, occupied only by a few miners and prospectors, who had discovered rich gold-bearing reefs after long search. The news of the 'finds' soon became known throughout the whole of the South African colonies, and a steady stream of eager miners, speculators, and others, set in. The most popular way of reaching the new El Dorado from the Cape Colony was by way of Kimberley, the terminus of the Cape Government Railway, and thence by mule-wagon, a journey of some hundreds of miles, costing in the early days from twenty to thirty pounds.

Rich discoveries of gold continued to be made, and Companies were floated in rapid succession. Buildings of the roughest materials were erected, and were eagerly competed for, while large numbers of persons had to put up with the accommodation afforded by tents. Transport-riders were, however, soon busily engaged in bringing up the necessary materials for building purposes, the cost of carriage from Kimberley ranging from fifteen to twenty-five shillings per one hundred pounds. The town rapidly grew, and is now a handsome one, containing many buildings of brick and stone; while wood and corrugated iron have entered largely into the composition of most of the smaller dwellings. The population at the end of last year was about eight thousand.

Some months back Barberton passed through a rather severe crisis; for a time there was but very little work done on many of the reefs, nearly every one being busily engaged in dealing in the shares of the various Companies, which rose by leaps and bounds to many times their original value. This state of things could not, of course, go on for ever, and prices of stock began to fall with the same rapidity as they had risen. For a time it looked as though the days of Barberton were numbered. Many persons left for other places. However, machinery began to arrive from England; hard work was commenced in earnest, and gold is now being obtained in quantities which are steadily increasing every month.

While all South Africa was talking of Barberton, prospectors had been busily engaged searching for gold in other places; and about the end of 1886 rumours of rich discoveries at what is now

Johannesberg began to be noised abroad. Numbers of persons made their way thither, and the town began to spring up. Luckily, however, before building had proceeded to any great extent, it was discovered that the main gold-bearing reef ran right through the heart of the site which had been marked out for the new town. Building on such valuable ground was at once suspended, and a new situation fixed upon some few hundred yards away. Johannesburg grew rapidly; and the population is now estimated at about eight thousand, which, for a place that, with the exception of a few shanties and tents, was practically non-existent little over twelve months ago, is really marvellous. The cost of living at Johannesburg is high, butter fetching three shillings per pound, cabbages two shillings each, eggs one pound per one hundred, potatoes thirty-one shillings, and onions twenty-five shillings, per bag, and other articles in proportion. Fodder is also expensive, green barley fetching twenty shillings, and oat-hay thirty shillings, per one hundred pounds.

The output of gold from South Africa for the year 1887 was nearly a quarter of a million; and considering the short time that most of the Companies have been at work, this may be looked upon as satisfactory. The yield for the present year will, it is estimated, reach one million pounds, but many talk of double that quantity.

In conclusion, it may be as well to point out to persons who contemplate rushing off to these newly-discovered fields, that alluvial gold in payable quantities has not yet been discovered. Any one, however, with a practical knowledge of gold-mining machinery and assaying who is prepared to rough it for a time, might do worse than take his passage for the new southern El Dorado.

THE WORLD.

A PLAYGROUND—oft with clouded skies,

That o'er the rosebuds weep,

Where little troubles take the weight

Of sorrows far more deep;

Where loved toys break in tiny hands—

Sad symbols of the time

When hope shall cheat, and joys depart

In Life's swift-passing prime.

A BATTLEFIELD where forces meet,

And unseen hosts contend,

With truces all so short, they seem

With the wild strife to blend:

Strife that leaves none of us unscathed,

Where'er the mastery be;

But who, till the Great Day, can tell

With whom is victory?

A GRAVEYARD, where on every side

Pale monuments arise,

To show how brief is human life,

How vain is all we prize.

A Graveyard filled by memory,

Where phantoms lightly tread,

But each one points with finger raised

To blue skies overhead.

CAMILLA CROSLAND.

In Memoriam

ROBERT CHAMBERS

BORN 1832. DIED 1888.

It is but five years since we had the melancholy duty of recording in these pages the death of the founder of this *Journal*, Dr William Chambers. To the list of the departed must now be added that of the *Journal's* latest conductor, Mr ROBERT CHAMBERS.

Mr CHAMBERS, who was the eldest son of the late Dr Robert Chambers, had been associated with the work of the firm—of which he was finally the head—for a period of thirty-four years. In all departments of the firm's business he took a keen and intelligent interest; but from 1873, when he and the late Dr William Chambers assumed between them the management of *Chambers's Journal*, his work for many years lay chiefly in this department, with the result of a great and continuous success. Mr Charles E. S. Chambers now succeeds to his father's place in the business of W. & R. CHAMBERS, as conductor of the *Journal*, and head of the firm's various literary enterprises.

The memory of the late ROBERT CHAMBERS will long be cherished by those who were associated with him in the work of the firm, his unvarying courtesy and kindness of heart being manifested uniformly to all who came in contact with him. Of his goodness and generosity to contributors and others, only those who worked with him can know; for he himself conferred his favours without ostentation or publicity, always accompanied by a few kindly words that made the gift the sweeter to the recipient.

In literary matters, Mr CHAMBERS possessed a quick and sound judgment, having something approaching to an instinct for the kind of literature required. Until within the last two years he constantly identified himself with all the work of the firm—encyclopædic, educational, and artistic; but since then the state of his health had rendered rest and quiet necessary for him. He passed away at his residence in Edinburgh on the evening of Friday, 23d March.

ED.

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DOWN GOYDEN POT.

AN article appeared in *Chambers's Journal* for October 18, 1886, entitled 'Cave-hunting in Yorkshire,' where reference was made to a series of caverns and subterranean watercourses which honeycomb the limestone hills at the head of Nidderdale, and especially to a curious natural tunnel in which the river Nidd flows for nearly three miles, known as Goyden Pot. No one has ever succeeded in following the stream from where it disappears under Beggarmote Scaur to the point at which it appears again from out of the hillside just under the Vicarage below Lofthouse; at least there is no record of such a feat, though tradition tells of a duck which once made the passage, but with the loss of all its feathers.

Thrice have two of us explored this awesome aqueduct of nature's engineering, but each time with comrades less enthusiastic in cavern-work than ourselves, whose ardour cooled after experiencing the pleasures of scaling rocky points in semi-darkness, and wading deep in rushing water, with numbed feet, against which sharp pebbles roll. And so, when we determined to celebrate the year of Her Majesty's Jubilee by a resolute attempt to penetrate to the farthest possible point in this famous and weird Pot, we decided to do it alone, unhampered by companions of any sort. Therefore did we betake ourselves to the little village of Lofthouse, which stands towards the head of Nidderdale (or Netherdale as old authorities have it), some seven miles above the quaint market town of Pateley Bridge, and there, in its one inn parlour, gird ourselves for our task.

'We' were—the 'Captain,' a stalwart officer in the local rifle corps, a dalesman born and bred—and the 'Skipper,' a roving member of the Royal Canoe Club, who follows his Captain, 'Rob Roy' Macgregor, in a fondness for adventures underground.

'Well! ye be noän pretty, but ye lewks loike wark,' is the greeting of the buxom hostess of the *King's Arms* as we descend into the stone-flagged kitchen, which has just been 'weshed,' and is now

receiving the finishing touches at the hands of an artistic if snub-nosed maiden, who is marking it over with bold flourishes and strange winding devices in red ochre. And we mean work too; and so, having donned rough canvas trousers, blouses, and miners' hats, with candles galore and stout rope, march forth.

Clear of the village, our path runs down to, and crosses a rocky gorge by a footbridge, whose rough parapets are covered with soft velvety moss, and then turns off to the right, through fields skirting a long reach, where the rivulet is sunning itself before diving under the bridge. A lovelier walk than the one before us it would indeed be hard to find. A soft westerly wind whispers in the pine copses which stud the hillside to right, and sends the shadows sailing up the slopes to left, until, like ships reaching the open sea, they disappear westward over the great lone moors, where the heather and the ling shimmer in the heat, and the plaintive plovers call 'peewhit.' The fresh luscious grass springs at every step, in which the cattle feed knee-deep, lashing their tails amongst the buzzing flies, seeking the shade of the rough limestone walls which divide the meadows, and through which the pathway leads by the narrowest of stiles. And then the glories of the streamlet itself, whose sweet music, never dying, alternately grows softer and then more loud as it chatters over ridges of white pebbles, or slides past a face of rock which dips into its cool depths; whilst now and again the symphony is broken by noisy plunging, as its waters leap in glittering cascades down tiny fern-fringed cliffs, or rush sobbing over mossy shoots into deep pools and foam-flecked reaches. Water-ousels dip and twitter, and swallows circle round and round; and suddenly a gorgeous kingfisher darts out, his blue and scarlet plumage gleaming like a tiny rainbow, as we reach Limley, a lonely little farmstead, surrounded by stone walls on three sides, and by the stream, or 'beck' as the local term is, on the fourth. A great barking answers the click of the gate as we enter the foldyard, and a couple of sheep-dogs dash furiously at us.

'Come hoäm, wilt'a, Lassie; doon wi' ye, Bob, ye senseless barns!' screams a comely wench, coming to the door; then recognising the Captain, adds: 'Coom in' wi' ye; t'maister's sledding t' hay.'

Declining the proffered hospitality, we pass the end of the house and cross the now almost dry bed of the stream by a line of 'hippen-steäns,' just below the spot where an iron spring flows in, staining the stones a rusty red. A hundred yards farther we turn a corner, and there, right in front, is a quarry-like cliff, pierced by an arched opening a few feet below the surface of the ground, which falls away like a deep rockbound basin. This is the main entrance to the famous Goyden Pot.

Except in very wet weather, this opening is always dry, for the stream sinks into the hillside at a spot a quarter of a mile higher up the valley, called Manchester Hole. But after heavy rains, the swollen river cannot all get away there, and then it comes down, and leaps as of yore over this basin-lip straight into the Pot, making a pretty fall before it is lost in the dark passage within. When the 'floods are out,' the scene is completely changed, and even this capacious mouth cannot swallow the torrent, which rages and dashes its muddy waters down, filling completely, and often overflowing, its ancient above-ground course; and then, a grim swirling at this cliff-face alone marks where a portion of the Nidd is being sucked into Goyden Pot, to choke its caverns roof-full. A cold air blows steadily up from the dark distance as we enter the cave, and a thin mist clings to its damp sides, where the gleam from the daylight catches it. Boots are replaced by canvas wading-shoes, two candles lighted for service, and the remainder pocketed as reserve store, and then, with a last look at the bright world outside, we commence the descent. A muffled roar fills the wild cavern like a longdrawn groan; and as we clamber onward and hear the noise grow louder, we realise somewhat the old Norse Sagaman's story of the descent of Baldur into the realms of Hela.

For the first couple of hundred yards, the passage is roomy, and the rough boulders present little obstacle to an experienced cave-hunter, and ladies even can without difficulty follow it, until a sudden turn opens into a great chamber, and the path drops abruptly into a seemingly bottomless abyss, in which a stream of water is falling somewhere in unseen space. But we are bent on more than merely gazing into this black vault, so make for a hollow half filled up with rubbish, leading into another passage which winds along to the opposite side of the 'Great Chamber,' and ends in another sheer descent into darkness. Here the rope is fixed to a jutting point, and the Skipper disappears into the black gulf, and is within sight of the bottom, faintly discernible in the flickering light of his waving candle, when his hands, slippery with tallow, suddenly lose hold of the line, and next instant he is embracing, not his mother-earth, but the putrid carcases of two defunct sheep which have lain a long time in this odoriferous corner. Another moment, and the Captain comes down with a run, and a mighty 'Ugh!' as he finds his feet. Together, we scramble up and flee the scene, and with all

speed light up our trusty pipes; and as we puff great clouds of fragrant 'honeydew' into each other's faces, we bless the memory of brave Sir Walter Raleigh, and vow we will eschew (braxy) mutton in the future. At one end of this chamber there is a fine cascade, where the water from Manchester Hole comes leaping down some thirty feet or more; and though the dry weather has lessened its volume, yet we get a good douche-bath as we pass behind it. Foaming its way over the rock-strewn floor, the river crosses the cavern, and then plunges down a long lofty passage. Upon a subsequent visit, a few weeks later, a less perpendicular descent was discovered at the extreme end of this Great Chamber; and 'two bonnie maidens frae over the Border' actually accompanied us to the edge of the rushing water. Scrambling gallantly over the rough rocks with tallow-bespattering candles in hand, and fearlessly dropping into black abysses, their ready pluck quite won our hearts, but, alas, woefully damaged their gowns and gear. Stepping into the stream, we follow it down many a swirling run and over rocky steps, wondering to find how warm its waters, knee-deep, are.

A loud shout makes the Skipper turn hastily to where the Captain's stalwart figure is clinging to a glistening rock over which the Nidd leaps in a white curve, whilst he points frantically in the dim light to the pool below. The packet of candles has fallen from his pocket, and six composites are tossing in the rush of waters! Desperately do we grab at three, and save them; but the others elude our eager grasp, and voyage onward, perhaps to float out with the freed river and dance down the Dale; perhaps condemned to slowly dissolve in some sullen deep, or to catch in some ever-dark cranny—but never now, alas, to light us on our way, either in advance or retreat; therefore, it behoves us to husband our remaining stock, for a struggle back up this winding water-fretted channel in pitch darkness would be no joke. It is wonderful what ghostly objects seem to loom out of the gloom as the candle-rays are thrown around, and how fancy makes ghastly corpses of the strangely worn stones which lie about at every bend and turn; gnomish eyes glare fiercely out of deep corners, and sobs and moans seem to fill this weird solitude with painful life; and our own voices rouse unearthly echoes, and sound unnatural in the awful darkness.

But we are too eager to get on to let such uncanny thoughts have play, and bend after bend is turned and left behind. And now the passage widens, but unfortunately grows lower and lower, and in a few moments heads are stooped, and then shoulders. 'It will get higher in a few yards,' foretells the sanguine one; but, alas, like many a Weather-Forecast, the prognostication comes not true, for already we are bent double, and the roof is still descending upon us. It is no good shirking it; if we are to follow the stream farther, we must crawl! So, down we get on to all-fours, or rather all-threes, for one hand is wanted to hold the candle, and splash on for ten yards, and then the Skipper sinks level with the stream, and turning on his side, wriggles ahead; the Captain following suit, lets his light dip under water, necessitating a halt and a backward wriggling until the leader's candle can be reached over his shoulder.

Progress is now very slow, for we are constantly getting wedged fast between the roof and the floor; but we push on somehow, crawling along in the very stream itself, with the water running merrily over us, and constantly putting out our lights in turn with a mischievous splash. Twenty yards more of this amphibious advance, and we stop.

We are really beaten at last, and cannot get a foot farther, for the roof and the water meet, where a big gravel-bed chokes up the whole passage, into which the stream sinks; for a very thin sheet of it only can find its way over the bank. It is certainly very disappointing to be thus stopped; but we have at least proved that much spade-work is necessary before any human being can pass this block, and we have got to the farthest point we possibly can at present in Goyden Pot. So we toast our Sovereign Lady Victoria in whiskied water, and there lying picturesquely in mid-stream, we lift up our voices and sing *God save the Queen*.

The retreat is decidedly more uncomfortable than the advance, for, crawling up stream, the water meets our resisting, pushing bodies, and foams gleefully over shoulders and down necks. At last we reach higher regions. The luxury of standing upright again is something indescribable, and quite unrealisable by those who have never spent an hour imitating the movements of a serpent or an eel. We are to have some reward for our venture after all, for in passing a rocky cliff, we espy a ledge, and beyond, a black band, which betokens another passage; and scrambling up some twelve feet, we find a low opening, nearly filled with soft mud. Sliding over it, we are in a winding cavern which turns away to the southward, gradually rising foot by foot. Following this for some distance, we catch the sound of trickling water, and come suddenly into a most curious place. To the right, the cavern rises; and clambering over a great heap of branches, stones, and flood-debris, we are at the bottom of an almost circular shaft, which goes sheer up like a huge chimney, and down whose sides water is running and sparkling in the feeble rays from our candles. This is evidently a capacious rain-spout, where, in wet weather, the water plunges from the upper ground; and though no glimmer of daylight is visible, yet it shows unmistakably that 'swallow' and 'pot' holes are formed by the surface of the land above falling in. At the bottom, this shoot turns like a corkscrew through an archway, and our lights are reflected under it, like two stars, in a black-looking pool some distance below us. Slipping down over a slimy slant of rock, we see a cavern, lofty but narrow, without any floor but the water. An old rail-post, washed hither by some flood, is lying against the little cape on which we are perched; and by its aid the depth is found to be a yard at the edge, so down into the pool the Skipper drops. 'O Jupiter, it's cold!' Unlike the main stream, warmed by days of hot sun before it leapt into Goyden, this water must have been here long months, for a moment's examination shows that there is no current, and that in fact this is a small subterranean lake. Wading on waist-deep, a point of wall is reached; and beyond, the cavern opens out, and hangs, a

great vaulted dome, over the turgid pool, which suddenly deepens till the rail will not bottom.

Are we to swim across or not? is the question earnestly debated, and finally negatived, not by ourselves, but by want of candles. We have only one spare one—just enough to ensure our return to the outer world—and no matches (the water-crawl having effectually spoilt our supply), with which to relight, if by chance we should dip our lights under when swimming. So we scramble up out of the frigid bath, and ruefully take a last look at the mysterious pond. In all probability, this is one of many chambers of Goyden Pot, and its only outlet is the passage we went up. In floods it fills, and then the waters rise, and overflowing, rush down the passage to join the main stream in the Pot; whilst, when the season is dry, there is only a deep pool in the hollow. Of course, it is possible that there is an outlet at the farther end, like the opening we entered it by, though the utter absence of any current seems to render this improbable. But this point will be thoroughly investigated in our next venture.

Once more in the Great Chamber, we explore it carefully, in hopes of finding some way up to a tunnel which comes into it on the north side, a yard from the roof; but our search is fruitless; so, resolving to bring a light ladder some future day—though how to get it down the winding passage will be a puzzle—we make for the rope, which hangs like a white streak against the black rocks, and hand over hand go up, and stand once more at the end of the gallery, and leaving a candle-end burning at the place of descent, steer for the upper main cavern. For some moments we cannot find the way out, so filled up with gravel is it; and we begin to half fancy we must have made a mistake and taken the wrong turn; but a second careful search shows the opening, and we speedily scramble through, and then turn down for the head of the cascade.

Here we find a new state of affairs, for, instead of boldly springing over the edge of the precipice, the water has forced its way through the floor, leaving a bank across the line of its old leap. On examination, this is found to consist of shingle, held in position by a great tree, which some flood has carried down and wedged like a dam across the channel, to catch and hold everything which the stream washes against it; and the water itself, headed back by it, has made a way down a fissure in the limestone.

The sun is sinking in a purple sea of cloud as we come out into daylight, and the scent of new-mown hay is wafted on the rising breeze as we climb the bank of the dry channel and set out in the hazy evening, homeward-bound.

Thus a fourth attempt to get through Goyden has failed, and the question we now discuss is, can it ever be done? The results of this last venture are, it must be owned, rather discouraging. Evidently there is a large deposit of gravel spread over a considerable distance, which every 'fresh' adds to; and when we come to think that no flood-debris of any moment is washed out at the lower openings below Lofthouse, and that there are no bars or shingle-beds formed near these outlets, we are led to fear that for a long length somewhere the subterranean passage is

pretty effectually blocked. Perhaps it is even silting up; and a succession of heavy floods may in coming years so choke the channel that the Nidd, instead of diving out of sight for nearly three miles, will once more roll its brown waters along its ancient bed in the open day between ash-fringed banks and limestone scaurs. Be this as it may, it will take more than another exploration to satisfy us that the passage of Goyden Pot is impracticable; and until the new-found subterranean lakelet is proved to have no second outlet, we still cherish the hope of being able to follow the river Nidd throughout its three miles of hidden passage.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XX.—EVENTS MARCH.

'PAPA is still in Scotland,' Winifred wrote to Hugh, 'slaying many grouse; and mamma and I have the place all to ourselves now, so we're really having a lovely time, enjoying our holiday *immensely* (though you're not here), taking down everything, and washing and polishing, and rearranging things again, and playing havoc with the household gods generally. We expect papa back on Friday. His birds have preceded him. I do hope he remembered to send you a brace or two. I gave him your town address before he left, with *very* special directions to let you have some; but, you know, men always forget everything. As soon as he comes home, he'll make us take our alterations all down again, which will be a horrid nuisance, for the drawing-room *does* look so perfectly lovely. We've done it up exactly as you recommended, with the sage green plush for the old mantel-piece, and a red Japanese table in the dark corner; and I really think, now I see the effect, your taste's simply exquisite. But then, you know, what else can you expect from a distinguished poet! You always do everything beautifully—and I think you're a darling.'

At any other time this naive girlish appreciation of his decorative talents would have pleased and flattered Hugh's susceptible soul; for, being a man, he was of course vain; and he loved a pretty girl's approbation dearly. But just at that moment he had no stomach for praise, even though it came from Sir Hubert Stanley; and whatever faint rising flush of pleasure he might possibly have felt at his little fiancée's ecstatic admiration was all crushed down again into the gall of bitterness by the sickening refrain of her repeated postscripts: 'No further news yet from poor Elsie.—Has she written to you? I shall be simply *frantic* if I don't hear from her soon. She can *never* mean to leave us all in doubt like this. I'm going to advertise to-morrow in the London papers. If only she knew the state of mind she was plunging me into, I'm sure she'd write and relieve my suspense, which is just *agonising*.—A kiss from your little one: in the corner here. Be sure you kiss it where I've put the cross. Good-night, darling Hugh.—Yours ever, WINIFRED.'

Hugh flung the letter down on the floor of his chambers in an agony of horror. Was his crime to pursue him thus through a whole lifetime? Was he always to hear surmises, conjectures, speculations, doubts as to what on earth had

become of Elsie? Was he never to be free for a single second from the shadow of that awful pursuing episode? Was Winifred, when she became his wedded wife, to torture and rack him for years together with questions and hesitations about the poor dead child who lay, as he firmly and unreservedly believed, in her nameless grave by the lighthouse at Orfordness?—There was only one possible way out of it—a way that Hugh shrank from almost as much as he shrank from the terror and shame of exposure. It was ghastly: it was gruesome: it was past endurance; but it was the one solitary way of safety. He must write a letter from time to time, in Elsie's handwriting, addressed to Winifred, giving a fictitious account of Elsie's doings in an imaginary home, away over somewhere in America or the antipodes. He must invent a new life and a new life-history, under the Southern Cross, for poor dead Elsie: he must keep her alive like a character in a novel, and spin her fresh surroundings from his own brain, in some little-known and inaccessible quarter of the universe.

But then, what a slavery, what a drudgery, what a perpetual torture! His soul shrank from the hideous continued deceit. To have perpetrated that one old fatal forgery, in the first fresh flush of terror and remorse, was not perhaps quite so wicked, quite so horrible, quite so soul-destroying as this new departure. He had then at least the poor lame excuse of a pressing emergency; and it was once only. But to live a life of consistent lying—to go on fathering a perennial fraud—to forge pretended letters from mail to mail—to invent a long tissue of successful falsehoods—and that about a matter that lay nearest and dearest to his own wounded and remorseful heart—all this was utterly and wholly repugnant to Hugh Massinger's underlying nature. Set aside the wickedness and baseness of it all, the poet was a proud and sensitive man; and lying on such an extended scale was abhorrent to his soul from its mere ignominy and æsthetic repulsiveness. He liked the truth: he admired the open, frank, straightforward way. Tortuous cunning and mean subterfuges roused his profoundest contempt and loathing—when he saw them in others. Up till now, he had enjoyed his own unquestioning self-respect. Vain and shallow and unscrupulous as he was, he had hitherto basked serenely in the sunshine of his own personal approbation. He had done nothing till lately that sinned against his private and peculiar code of morals, such as it was. His proposal to Winifred had, for the first time, opened the sluices of the great unknown within him, and fathomless depths of deceit and crime were welling up now and crowding in upon him to drown and obliterate whatever spark or scintillation of conscience had ever been his. It was a hateful sight. He shrank himself from the effort to realise it.

And Warren Relf knew all! That in itself was bad enough. But if he also invented a continuous lie to palm off upon Winifred and her unsuspecting people, then Warren Relf at least would know it constantly for what it was, and despise him for it even more profoundly than he despised him at present. All that was horrible—horrible—horrible. Yet there was one person whose opinion mattered to him far more than even Warren Relf's—one person who would hate and despise with a deadly hatred and an utter scorn

the horrid perfidy of his proposed line of conduct. That person was one with whom he ate and drank familiarly every day, with whom he conversed unreservedly night and morning, with whom he lived and moved and had his being. He could never escape or deceive or outwit Hugh Massinger. *Patriæ quis exsul se quoque fugit?* Hugh Massinger would dog him, and follow his footsteps wherever he went, with his unfeigned contempt for so dirty and despicable a course of action. It was vile, it was loathsome, it was mean, it was horrible in its ghastly charnel-house false-ness and foulness; and Hugh Massinger knew it perfectly. If he yielded to this last and lowest temptation of Satan, he might walk about henceforth with his outer man a whitened sepulchre, but within, he would be full of dead men's bones and vile imaginings of impossible evil.

Thinking which things definitely to himself, in his own tormented and horrified soul, he—sat down and wrote another forged letter.

It was a hasty note, written as if in the hurry and bustle of departure, on the very eve of a long journey, and it told Winifred, in rapid general terms, that Elsie was just on her way to the Continent, *en route* for Australia—no matter where. She would join her steamer (no line mentioned) under an assumed name, perhaps at Marseilles, perhaps at Genoa, perhaps at Naples, perhaps at Brindisi. Useless to dream of tracking or identifying her. She was going away from England *for ever and ever*—this last underlined in feminine fashion—and it would be quite hopeless for Winifred to cherish the vain idea of seeing her again in this world of misfortunes. Some day, perhaps, her conduct would be explained and vindicated; for the present, it must suffice that letters sent to her at the address as before—the porter's of the Cheyne Row Club, though Hugh did not specifically mention that fact—would finally reach her by private arrangement. Would Winifred accept the accompanying ring, and wear it always on her own finger, as a parting gift from her affectionate and misunderstood friend,

ELSIE?

The ring was one from the little jewel-case he had stolen that fatal night from Elsie's bedroom. Profoundly as he hated and loathed himself for his deception, he couldn't help stopping half-way through to admire his own devilry of cleverness in sending that ring back now to Winifred. Nothing could be so calculated to disarm suspicion. Who could doubt that Elsie was indeed alive, when Elsie not only wrote letters to her friends, but sent with them the very jewelry from her own fingers as a visible pledge and token of her identity?—Besides, he really wanted Winifred to wear it; he wished her to have something that once was Elsie's. He would like the woman he was now deceiving to be linked by some visible bond of memory to the woman he had deceived and lured to her destruction.

He kissed the ring, a hot burning kiss, and wrapped it reverently and tenderly in cotton-wool. That done, he gummed and stamped the letter with a resolute air, crushed his hat firmly down on his head, and strode out with feverishly long strides from his rooms in Jermyn Street to the doubtful hospitality of the Cheyne Row.

Would Warren Relf be there again, he wondered? Was that man to poison half London

for him in future?—Why on earth, knowing the whole truth about Elsie—knowing that Elsie was dead and buried at Orfordness—did the fellow mean to hold his vile tongue and allow him, Hugh Massinger, to put about this elaborate fiction unchecked, of her sudden and causeless disappearance? Inexplicable quite! The thing was a mystery; and Hugh Massinger hated mysteries. He could never know now at what unexpected moment Warren Relf might swoop down upon him from behind with a dash and a crash and an explosive exposure.—He was working in the dark, like navvies in a tunnel.—Surely the crash must come some day! The roof must collapse and crush him utterly. It was ghastly to wait in long blind expectation of it.

The forged letter still remained in his pocket unposted. He passed a couple of pillar-boxes, but could not nerve himself up to drop it in. Some grain of grace within him was fighting hard even now for the mastery of his soul. He shrank from committing himself irrevocably by a single act to that despicable life of ingrained deception.

In the smoking-room at the club he found nobody, for it was still early. He took up the *Times*, which he had not yet had time to consult that morning. In the Agony Column, a familiar conjunction of names attracted his eye as it moved down the outer sheet. They were the two names never out of his thoughts for a moment for the last fortnight. 'ELSIE,' the advertisement ran in clear black type, 'Do write to me. I can stand this fearful suspense no longer. Only a few lines to say you are well. I am so frightened. Ever yours,

WINIFRED.'

He laid the paper down with a sudden resolve, and striding across the room gloomily to the letter-box on the mantel-piece, took the fateful envelope from his pocket at last, and held it dubious, between finger and thumb, dangling loose over the slit in the lid. Heaven and hell still battled fiercely for the upper hand within him. Should he drop it in boldly, or should he not? To be or not to be—a liar for life?—that was the question. The envelope trembled between his finger and thumb. The slit in the box yawned hungry below. His grasp was lax. The letter hung by a corner only. Nor was his impulse, even, so wholly bad: pity for Winifred urged him on; remorse and horror held him back feebly. He knew not in his own soul how to act; he knew he was weak and wicked only.

As he paused and hesitated, unable to decide for good or evil—a noise at the door made him start and waver.—Somebody coming! Perhaps Warren Relf.—That address on the envelope—'Miss Meysey, The Hall, Whitestrand, Suffolk.'—If Relf saw it, he would know it was—well—an imitation of Elsie's handwriting. She had sent a note to Relf on the morning of the sandhills picnic. If any one else saw it, they would see at least it was a letter to his fiancée—and they would chaff him accordingly with chaff that he hated, or perhaps they would only smile a superior smile of fatuous recognition and smirking amusement. He could stand neither—above all, not Relf.—His fingers relaxed upon the cover of the envelope.—Half unconsciously, half unwillingly,

he loosened his hold.—Plop! it fell through that yawning abyss, three inches down, but as deep as perdition itself.—The die was cast! A liar for a lifetime!

He turned round, and Hatherley the journalist stood smiling good-morning by the open doorway. Hugh Massinger tried his hardest to look as if nothing out of the common had happened in any way. He nodded to Hatherley, and buried his face once more in the pages of the *Times*. 'The Drought in Wales'—'The Bulgarian Difficulty'—'Painful Disturbances on the West Coast of Africa'—'Pah! What nonsense! What commonplaces of opinion! It made his gorge rise with disgust to look at them. Wales and Bulgaria and the West Coast of Africa, when Elsie was dead! dead and unnoticed!

A boy in buttons brought in a telegram—Central News Agency—and fixed it by the corners with brass-headed pins in a vacant space on the accustomed notice-board. Hatherley, laying down his copy of *Punch*, strolled lazily over to the board to examine it. 'Meysey! Meysey!' he repeated musingly.—'Why, Massinger, that must be one of your Whitestrand Meyseys. Precious uncommon name. There can't be many of them.'

Hugh rose and glanced at the new telegram unconcernedly. It couldn't have much to do with himself! But its terms brought the blood with a hasty rush into his pale cheek again: '*Serious Accident on the Scotch Moors*.—Aberdeen, Thursday. As Sir Malcolm Farquharson's party were shooting over the Glenbeg estate yesterday, near Kincardine-O'Neil, a rifle held by Mr Wyville Meysey burst suddenly, wounding the unfortunate gentleman in the face and neck, and lodging a splinter of jagged metal in his left temple. He was conveyed at once from the spot in an insensible state to Invertnar Castle, where he now lies in a most precarious condition. His wife and daughter were immediately telegraphed for.'

'INVERTANAR: 10.40 A.M. Mr Wyville Meysey, a guest of Sir Malcolm Farquharson's at Invertnar Castle, wounded yesterday by the bursting of his rifle on the Glenbeg moors, expired this morning very suddenly at 9.20. The unfortunate gentleman did not recover consciousness for a single moment after the fatal accident.'

A shudder of horror ran through Hugh's frame as he realised the meaning of that curt announcement. Not for the mishap; not for Mrs Meysey; not for Winifred: oh, dear no; but for his own possible or probable disfigurement.—His first thought was a characteristic one. Mr Meysey had died unexpectedly. There might or there might not be a will forthcoming. Guardians might or might not be appointed for his infant daughter. The estate might or might not go to Winifred. He might or he might not now be permitted to marry her.—If she happened to be left a ward in Chancery, for example, it would be a hopeless business: his chance would be ruined. The court would never consent to accept him as Winifred's husband. And then—and then it would be all up with him.

It was bad enough to have sold his own soul for a mess of pottage—for a few hundred acres of miserable salt marsh, encroached upon by the sea with rapid strides, and half covered with shifting, drifting sandhills. It was bad enough

to have sacrificed Elsie—dear, tender, delicate, loving-hearted Elsie, his own beautiful, sacred, dead Elsie—to that wretched, sordid, ineffective avarice, that fractional worship of a silver-gilt Mammon. He had regretted all that in sack-cloth and ashes for one whole endless hopeless fortnight or more, already.—But to have sold his own soul and to have sacrificed Elsie for the privilege of being rejected by Winifred's guardian—for the chance of being publicly and ignominiously jilted by the Court of Chancery—for the opportunity of becoming a common laughing-stock to the quidnuncs of Cheyne Row and the five o'clock tea-tables of half feminine London—that was indeed a depth of possible degradation from which his heart shrank with infinite throes of self-commiserating reluctance. He could sell his own soul for very little, and despise himself well for the squalid ignoble bargain; but to sell his own soul for absolutely nothing, with a dose of well-deserved ridicule thrown in gratis, and no Elsie to console him for his bitter loss, was more than even Hugh Massinger's sense of mean self-abnegation could easily swallow.

He flung himself back unmanned, in the big leather-covered armchair, and let the abject misery of his own thoughts overcome him visibly in his rueful countenance.

'I never imagined,' said Hatherley afterwards to his friends the Relfs, 'that Massinger could possibly have felt anything so much as he seemed to feel the sudden death of his prospective father-in-law, when he read that telegram. It really made me think better of the fellow.'

CURIOSITIES OF NOMENCLATURE.

THE origin of names is a subject which has in this age of research received its full share of investigation. Some writers and antiquaries have made Christian names their theme, and have pointed out the derivations and meanings of those male and female designations which are in common use among European nations. Others, again, have treated of surnames, showing the rise of the employment of such family designations, and the various influences displayed in their choice—influences which we may find even now in full force among the less civilised inhabitants of the world. Most common among these primitive fashions of nomenclature are, we learn, three classes of names: the first being adaptations of the names of places; the second embracing the numerous names ending in 'son,' and those with the Scotch and Irish prefixes of 'Mac' and 'O,' patronymics; the third, descriptive either of the personal characteristics or the surrounding circumstances of the bearers. Our list has no claim to be exhaustive of these phenomena, including nicknames, of which examples are by no means uncommon; but the very mention of this word nickname conjures up before our mental vision such an array of rulers and other public personages, whose personal appearance, whose characters or circumstances have suggested to some imaginative mind an appellation which has clung to their names ever since, that we must impose a restriction on our category, and only admit such designations as have replaced the original name, rather than

been added to it as a further means of identification.

The bearers of these appellations belong to divers ages, and come to us from widely varying countries and nations, though it is remarkable that the sober English mind lends itself but seldom to such trivialities. On the other hand, as might be supposed by any one who has the slightest acquaintance with the character of her light-hearted and impetuous people, Italy, both ancient and modern, supplies perhaps the largest contingent. The annals of the Roman Empire afford three notable examples. We should hardly recognise by his real name of Caius Cæsar the infamous Emperor Caligula; and yet that designation was in his own day only a nickname, derived from the *caligæ* or sandals of the common soldiers, which the young son of Germanicus had worn during his childhood in his father's camp. Hardly more familiar to us is either his real name of Bassianus, or the title of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, assumed with the purple by Caracalla. In spite of his aversion to the appellation, which we are told he regarded as an insult, this equally ignoble emperor remains known to us by the name of another article of dress, the Gaulish cloak (*caracalla*), which he was fond of wearing, and introduced into the army. The occupation of another imperial ruler prior to his elevation to the throne as a priest of the Phœnician sun-god (*Elagabalus*) in his native city of Emesa gives him the name of Heliogabalus. That he should retain an earnest devotion to the god whose minister he had been, and to whose favour he would ascribe his advancement, is not surprising; but we can picture to ourselves something of the disgust with which a cultured Roman would pronounce the nickname, when we learn that he publicly appeared in the attire of a Syrian priest, dancing wild measures and singing barbaric hymns, and that he decreed that his outlandish idol, to whom he was even suspected of sacrificing human victims, should supersede the time-honoured Jupiter, Mars, and so forth, and be the only celestial power worshipped in Rome.

Of other rulers, the famous Charlemagne may put in a claim to be admitted into our category, for, although the artificial part of his name is merely equivalent to 'the great,' an epithet which the flattery of courtiers has not failed to apply to many a sovereign, it has become so incorporated in his name as to be almost inseparable from it. In later days, another French king was so universally known as Philip Augustus, that the title of Philip II. would hardly establish his identity. The addition of *Augustus* was, however, only a nickname due to the month of his birth. The monk's hood (*capet*) which distinguished Hugues Capet before he ascended the throne, gave a designation not only to an individual but to a dynasty; even as the floral badge of their ancestors, the broom, or *Planta genista*, distinguished in English history a long line of kings.

The names of certain celebrated Christian teachers also fall within the scope of our investigation. One of the greatest of the Fathers of the Church, John of Antioch, is known to us by the epithet of Chrysostom (signifying in Greek golden-mouth), in allusion to his eloquence. It is recorded that his sermon on one occasion produced so much enthusiasm, and so carried

away his audience, that, regardless of the incongruity of time and place, they burst out into expressions of applause. A peculiar practice, affected especially by scholars and divines, became common in the age of the revival of learning—namely, that of substituting for the real name the Greek or Latin synonym. For example, in accordance with this pedantic custom, the son of a Dutchman of the name of Gerhard (signifying amiable) comes to be known to us by its equivalent in both the dead languages as Desiderius Erasmus. Two other theologians of the Renaissance, who came over to England in 1548 to assist in the translation of the Scriptures, are similarly distinguished by translations of their patronymics. Kuhorn was easily rendered (by the two Greek words which signify respectively 'cow' and 'horn') into Bucer; while the German Buchlein (beech-tree) found the equivalent of his name in the Latin Fagius. Even where the name did not lend itself to translation, it was customary to give to us as far as possible a classical sound and to add a Latin termination. By this means it happens that one of the names best known to the student of divinity is preserved to us in its form of Calvin, and many would hardly recognise the bearer by his real patronymic, Chauvin.

We may now pass, disregarding of the ties of chronology, to some instances of epithets applied to certain individuals in Roman history by reason of some special quality or achievement. Two instances of inherited fame first present themselves. Britannicus, the unfortunate victim of Nero's hatred, was so called from the victories which his father, the Emperor Claudius, claimed to have gained in our island. The designation of Germanicus also came by inheritance to its bearer by reason of the conquest of the German tribes by his father, Nero Claudius Drusus; but in this instance the son gained an independent title to it by his military achievements. Another distinguished Roman name, that of Cato, reflects credit on its first bearer, Marcus Porcius, the Censor, as testifying to that practical wisdom which is the result of natural sagacity combined with experience. The qualities implied by this word *cato* received further acknowledgment in the epithet of Sapiens (the Wise) by which, according to Cicero, the same individual was so frequently distinguished that it became almost his cognomen. Legends, too well known to require recapitulation, recur to the memory at the very mention of the first Scævola (from the Latin *scævus*, left-handed), whose right hand had been sacrificed in defiance of his country's foe; and of the original Brutus (irrational), who was obliged to simulate idiocy to escape the death which Tarquin the 'Proud' had already visited on his father and elder brother. Personal valour at the siege of the Volscian city of *Corioli* obtained for Caius Martius, then a common soldier, the title of Coriolanus.

The lapse of centuries divides these characters in Roman history from three national heroes whom we may class together, although in character they have but little in common. George Castriot, the champion of Eastern Europe in the fifteenth century against the power of the Sultan, derives his name of Scanderbeg from an incident of his youth. He was the son of the Prince of Epirus, and having been delivered when a boy as hostage to the Turkish Sultan, Murad II.,

he had been brought up as a Moslem. At the age of eighteen, the Sultan's attention was attracted to him by his noble appearance and his skill in feats of arms, and he was advanced to the rank of *Sandjak-bag*, with the command of five thousand horse. In this capacity he so distinguished himself, that the title in corrupt form clung to him ever afterwards, even after he had forsaken Islam and taken up arms against the Porte. A less noble hero, the half-mad leader of the Neapolitan revolt of 1647, is distinguished as Masaniello, a contraction of his real name, Tommaso Aniello. No Scottish reader need be reminded of the celebrated Robert Magregor, whose sobriquet of Rob Roy (Robert the Red) reminds us of the nickname of Rufus (the Red) which clings to a king of England, and the Barbarossa (Red Beard) which distinguished a German emperor.

Perhaps no class of men have been so frequently known by their nicknames—for in their case the designations deserve no better name—as the disciples of art, especially the Italian painters. It may be that the bohemianism of the craft, its unconventionality and freedom from ceremony, lends itself especially to this practice. Certain it is that many of those who know something of the names at anyrate by which celebrated artists are usually known, would find their powers of recognition taxed to the utmost were they to see a catalogue of some famous gallery, the Louvre, for example, where the painters are all designated by their real names, and where, instead of the familiar Raphael and Titian, they must look for Santi and Vecelli, and in place of Perugino and Correggio, they find Vanucci and Allegri. These may serve as specimens of two easily multiplied classes of designations; the one, to which we might add Michael Angelo and many another of lesser repute, showing the exclusive use of the Christian name long after surnames had become customary; the other, including names no less famous than Da Vinci and Veronese besides a minor host, instances of local appellations. Claude Lorraine the great landscape painter may be taken as an example of one of the many artists who combine these two somewhat commonplace sources of unconventional nomenclature. Others inherit their names in a manner somewhat different from what is usual. Thus, three names high in artistic fame reveal to us the profession of the fathers of their most celebrated bearers. The brothers Pollaiuolo, workers in metal as well as painters, were, it is generally asserted, so called from their father's profession of 'poulterer,' which the word signifies. In view of this circumstance, perhaps, we may imagine that familiarity with the victims displayed in the paternal shop had something to do with the excellence of the quail modelled by Antonio on the bronze gate of the Florentine Baptistery, of which Vasari says, 'it wants nothing of life but to fly.' Another family trade, which would seem to promise equally little in regard to art, gave to Andrea Vanucchi, whose perfect execution gained for him in his own day the title of 'the faultless,' the appellation of del Sarto (of the tailor). Tintoretto, again, is the diminutive applied in childhood to the son of Robusti, a Venetian dyer (*tintore*). The names of others point not to their natural but to their artistic parent, and it is remarkable that in three cases at least the masters are chiefly known to us

through the assumption of their names in gratitude to their memory by their more eminent pupils. We refer to Francia, Botticelli, and del Vaga. The name of one painter, Ghirlandajo, is said to point to his former occupation as a goldsmith, and to his supposed invention of the silver ornaments in form of a wreath (*ghirlanda*) which became the fashion with the ladies of Tuscany. Sebastian del Piombo derived that title from his office of keeper of the leaden (*piombo*) seal of the papal chancery—a mere sinecure, to qualify for which he was obliged to take orders. A peculiarity of his art—namely, the frequent introduction of birds and other animals—gained for Paolo Doni the nickname of Uccelli (birds).

Individual characteristics give the clue to other appellations. Verocchio, the master who gave up painting when his pupil, the great Leonardo, excelled him on his own canvas in softness and brilliancy of colouring, had gained that name by the true eye (*ver-occhio*), which served him in good stead in his subsequent occupation of sculpture. It is amusing to find another nickname which may well be quoted here in contradistinction to the above, Guercino, whose squint (*guercio*), if it gave him his name, does not appear to have affected his artistic powers. We can find no record of the swarthy complexion which we should suppose to be implied by the title of Il Moretto (the Moor), by which a famous portrait-painter was distinguished. The small stature of Bernardino Betti gained for him the sobriquet of Pinturicchio (the little painter). Two men celebrated by their Christian names with an ending expressive in the one case of contempt, in the other of admiration, may next be cited. In Ghiberti's studio there was a boy who had so abstracted an air, was so utterly indifferent to the usual pursuits and sports of boyhood, and so negligent in dress and uncouth in manners, that his fellow-students called him Masaccio (Tommasaccio), dirty or slovenly Tom. By this ignoble nickname is one known who gave a new impulse to art. On the other hand, Giorgione (*giorgio-ne*), the great Venetian colourist, was distinguished even in boyhood by his tall noble figure and dignity of deportment, which gained for him from his playmates the suffix which renders his name equivalent to George the Great. But the greatest tribute of praise is found in the title of Fra Angelico, or Il beato Angelico, conferred on Brother Giovanni of the Florentine monastery of St Mark. We are told of the spirit in which he approached his work—how he ever knelt in prayer before taking up his brush; and in the record of his blameless life, no less than in the inspired beauty of his conceptions of the host of heaven, we find sufficient reason for the name by which he is known to fame.

We pass now to the last phase of our inquiry—the names by which some of the heroes of literature are distinguished. Here, again, the Italian nation leads the way. Their greatest poet, he 'who dreams and sees' for all nations and for all time, is known to us chiefly by his Christian name, and not even by that in its correct form of Durante, but abbreviated to Dante. An instance of change of name occurs to us in the case of another Italian writer, Metastasio, who was taken from the streets, educated and adopted by the learned lawyer Gravina. At his instance, the

boy changed his original name of Trapassi to that under which he appears before the world, Metastasio having in Greek the same meaning of 'transmutation.' One more Italian writer we may mention, the satirist whose venomous tongue and small respect of persons gained for him the title of the 'Scourge of Princes.' The name by which he is known as Pietro Aretino is derived from his birthplace, *Arezzo*. This mode of designation was, as we have seen, so common, that this instance would hardly deserve notice were it not from the significant fact that, on account of a satirical sonnet against indulgences, he was banished at an early age from his native city, and never again saw the place by the name of which he has been distinguished for more than three centuries.

The history of French literature acquaints us with the curious fact, that two of her greatest votaries are known by voluntarily assumed *noms de plume*. Not only are these the disguises under which they wrote, but they have in a degree unprecedented in comparatively modern times, superseded their real names. We may indeed doubt if the authors so well known as Voltaire and Molière would obtain universal recognition under their real names of Arouet and Poquelin. It has been suggested that Voltaire is an anagram of Arouet l. j. (*le jeun*); but we are not aware that any reason but an arbitrary choice has been adduced for the assumed title of the great comedian, who thus set an example now followed by the majority of those who make the stage their profession. In a comment on the names of these eminent Frenchmen, contained in the valuable series of 'Foreign Classics,' the author of the volume on Voltaire classes with them the essay-writer Montesquieu, whose name, he says, was De Secondat. We cannot, however, but think that the parallel is unwarranted, for the title of Baron de Montesquieu devolved upon the essayist from his uncle.

Thus such assumed names have but slight claim to be placed among those personages whom we have endeavoured to commemorate, personages of different nationality and different date, who have but little in common save the peculiarity that their names have been merged, either intentionally on their part, or by the will of their contemporaries, into variously derived and universally applied designations.

MISS BARKLE'S LEGACY.

BY EDWARD D. CUMING.

CHAPTER I.—A SURPRISE.

'If Selina Mary Barkle, only daughter of the late James Fransworth Barkle, of the Honourable East India Company's service, will communicate with Messrs Lambton and Warder, solicitors, 10 Holborn Lane, London, E.C., she will hear of something to her advantage.'

If any observant individual had chanced to be on the beach at the quaint little seaside town of Midport on the morning when the above advertisement appeared in the *Standard*, he might have witnessed the effect it produced on a lady who was seated on a low rock reading that newspaper under the shade of a very small parasol. The

lady, whose somewhat girlish dress made her seem younger than she really was, had as usual begun with the 'marriages,' and was absorbed in the mystic contents of the Agony Column, when she snatched at the paper with both hands and sprang up ejaculating 'Gracious me!' This she did with a degree of consternation quite comprehensible in view of the fact that she herself was no other than the Selina Mary Barkle therein referred to. She stood transfixed with astonishment, and held the newspaper firmly whilst she read the advertisement again. There could be no possible doubt that she was the person wanted; her father's name in full, along with her own, placed that beyond question. But what could Messrs Lambton and Warder want her address for? was her very natural reflection. What could they have heard to her advantage? She had not a relative alive in the world, that she knew of, and her worldly concerns were small enough to be retained in her own hands. Her father had departed this life some five years before our story opens, leaving her a sum sufficient to purchase an annuity of three hundred pounds a year; and on this income Miss Barkle led a quiet, retired existence, in a cottage on the outskirts of Midport, attended by a middle-aged couple, who took care of the house and garden.

She was a good-looking and amiable spinster of seven-and-thirty, whose charms, in spite of her youthful deportment, might without any breach of charity have been regarded as beginning to fade. Time had been when Selina Barkle's presence made men's hearts beat faster than was their wont; when her meaningless words were valued beyond their worth; when her eyes gave birth to hopes she fostered only for her lips to destroy; when, caring for none, she dallied with all, until her day of heedless conquest waned, and little more than its memory was now left to her. Her best friends could not call her an extremely wise person, and her enemies described her as a silly vain creature who did not know her own mind. She had not many foes, however, for she was a kindly, well-meaning woman, devoid of malice, whose chief failing lay in her unshaken belief that, as of yore, she had but to beckon, for men to come and worship. But here in Midport, men were few and far between, and hence opportunities of exercising whatever powers of fascination were left to her were correspondingly rare.

Miss Barkle recovered from her surprise, and folding up the now precious *Standard*, turned in the direction of her house. She would write to the address given by the next post; and whilst sensible that a mere letter would not procure the 'advantages' mentioned, she comforted herself with the thought that the solicitors who inserted the advertisement would tell her what to do. She was speculating with feverish curiosity on the nature of the news in store, when she reached the gate of the cottage garden, at which she found her bosom-friend and confidante, Miss Annie Carston, awaiting her.

'What's happened, Lina?' asked the young lady in a high clear voice. 'You look awfully serious.'

Miss Barkle took her friend's arm and walked her into the little drawing-room with an air of importance which her silence served to emphasise.

She closed the door carefully, handed the paper to Miss Carston, and looked on in triumph while her friend read and re-read the suggestive advertisement.

'You see, my dear, there's no mistaking the fact that I'm the person alluded to,' said Miss Barkle, relieved in being able to disburden her mind; 'and I'm going to write this minute asking what they mean and what I ought to do about it.'

Miss Carston, who was a trim, dark-haired little person, with a pretty animated face, said nothing. She was her friend's chief adviser on small matters; but this, she felt, was quite beyond her province. In so weighty an affair she could not help; and she watched Miss Barkle's preparations in silence until an idea occurred to her. 'Perhaps Mr Brawen might be able to advise you,' she said rather timidly.

'Why Mr Brawen, of all the lawyers in England, Annie?' responded Miss Barkle without looking up.

'Oh, I only thought because he lives here and you know him,' said Miss Carston a little incoherently, turning to look out of the window.

Miss Barkle went on with her letter and made no answer. She knew Mr Brawen; no one knew him better, she often said to herself, for that young solicitor was very fond of dropping in to tea of an afternoon at the cottage, and Miss Barkle was equally fond of seeing him there. The Midport gossips said that the lively man of law would go there once too often if he did not have a care, in spite of the lady's seniority; but the gentleman accepted their warnings in good part, and told his advisers that he could look after himself. It might have been mere coincidence, but was none the less true that Miss Annie Carston seldom failed to be present at the cottage during Mr Brawen's visits, and that he, as often as they met there, escorted her home to her step-mother's house, a quarter of a mile out of his own way. This was a proceeding, however, that gave Miss Barkle little uneasiness, as she could not think he 'saw anything' in such a girl as Annie, who was little more than nineteen, and childish for her age. She had indeed a very tender place for Mr Brawen in her own virgin heart, and really cherished the idea that 'something would come of it.' He was comfortably off, and with her own little property, they could do very well. True, she was seven years older than he; but no one, she imagined, suspected that; he certainly was not aware of it, and she saw no reason why he should find it out, so long as she didn't tell him. If he made the discovery after they were engaged, it would not matter much. Oh, he was all right; and she would not frighten him away by objecting to his civilities to her little friend.

She finished her letter, and turned round in her chair to find Miss Carston still gazing with dreamy, far-away eyes over the sea. 'I don't think I need refer to Mr Brawen yet, Annie,' she said. 'If there should be papers to sign or legal things to be done, he might of course be of use.'

If the 'something to her advantage' proved to be really worth hearing, she promised herself that Mr Brawen should be told about it soon enough; but there was no necessity to tell Annie that.

'Here's Captain Mulbane coming,' said Annie, hastily withdrawing from the window.

'Go and let him in, like a good child; and say I told you to scold him for coming before lunch.'

Annie left the room, and returned with the visitor, a hale, burly specimen of the British sailor, as buoyant and jovial now when nearly fifty as he had been at twenty. The world's cares sat lightly on the shoulders of Captain William Mulbane, R.N., and he was the most popular man in Midport, where most of the inhabitants of all ranks and classes regarded him as guide, philosopher, friend, and oracle. He came in now with one hand on Miss Carston's shoulder, filling the room with his genial presence and deep bass voice.

'I've come to congratulate you, Miss Barkle,' said he, holding out his hand. The lady thanked him, and begged him to sit down with a languid air which betokened the exhausting effect of a state of expectancy.

'How did you hear of it?' said she with serious interest.

'Saw it in the *Standard*, of course,' said the captain with a laugh.

'Ah, yes. I had forgotten every one would know,' said Miss Barkle, upon whom it suddenly dawned that her own copy of the paper was not the only one extant.

'It's all over Midport by now,' continued her guest. 'I hardly met a soul who didn't know about it.' He might have added, 'And I told every one who hadn't heard,' but left that unsaid.

The gallant officer had been constant in his attentions to Miss Barkle for a long time, but had received little encouragement from the lady. He was old enough to be her father, she told her friends, and no doubt considered his mature age an appropriate safeguard in allowing the intimacy to exist. Captain Mulbane was quite as regular in his attendance at the cottage as Mr Brawen; and although the two men were the best of friends, they had not as yet confided their respective ambitions to each other.

Miss Barkle had to submit to a severe cross-examination in the captain's endeavour to obtain her own opinion upon what might be expected to transpire, for he made a point of knowing everything, and would not allow the usual respect shown for other people's private affairs to obstruct his investigations. However, his blunt openness went unrewarded in this instance, and he left the cottage no better informed than he came, and spent the afternoon discussing the subject in all its possible bearings with his numerous friends.

To Midport society, which had little to occupy its mind, the occurrence was as welcome as an angel's message, and Miss Barkle, on her appearance out of doors, enjoyed all the attentions usually accorded to a public character. She could not remember having excited so much interest since she first 'came out' at Brighton—now more years ago than she cared to think—and was acknowledged to be one of the reigning beauties. Miss Barkle, in the new situation in which she was placed, felt that satisfactory warmth of heart which we obtain by benefiting our fellow-creatures without injury to ourselves. She was conscious of being a real benefactress in affording her friends

such a subject to talk about; and when she re-entered her cottage, it was in a state of pleased perplexity as to which of the eight ladies to whom she had promised to impart the news (when it came) first, was best entitled to the privilege.

She had hardly seated herself at the tea-table when a ring at the door-bell disturbed the current of her thoughts, and Mr Brawen was ushered into the room. He was a pleasant-looking, dapper little man, and was at once cordially welcomed and taken into confidence by Miss Barkle. What *did* Mr Brawen think she ought to do about that advertisement? She had written to the people who had put it in the paper, but hadn't the least idea what to do next. She had been longing to see him all day, and now he had come to her at last, what did he think?

Mr Brawen put down his cup and cleared his throat, whilst Miss Barkle leaned towards him with that look of appealing trust which used to do such terrible execution upon the victim of fifteen years ago. She had drawn no distinction in her own mind between Mr Brawen the friend and Mr Brawen the solicitor, and the gentleman took a business-like view of the case, considering it had been presented to him in his professional capacity.

'It will probably be necessary for you in the first place to get certified extracts from the registers wherein your birth and baptism are recorded. The clergyman of the parish where you were born and baptised would of course furnish them if you send to him; or if you wish it, I'—

'O no; thank you,' the lady hastily struck in. 'I couldn't think of troubling you for such a trifle; and besides, Mr Brawen, I can't conceive why the lawyers should want to know these particulars.'

John Brawen the friend might have indulged in a smile at the anxiety of Miss Barkle's tone; but John Brawen the solicitor preserved a judicial stolidity of countenance as he dryly explained: 'If it should happen, for instance, Miss Barkle, that money has been left you, the documents might be required to prove your identity. That is all.'

'Oh, that was all.' And Miss Barkle, to whom this had not suggested itself, regretted having betrayed what came uppermost in her mind at the mention of such papers.

He did not seem to have noticed it, and she felt relieved. It would be very simple to write to old Mr Trafford, the rector of Pellingham, the village where she first saw the light, and obtain the needful certificates, without assistance from any one. It did not matter how much or how little those London solicitors knew about her, but she had a perfectly morbid dread of her age being discovered by the man before her.

Mr Brawen did not display so much interest in the business as Miss Barkle had hoped and expected; he had given his advice in a plain straightforward way, without asking a single question. 'Just as if I had come to him and paid for it like anybody else,' she reflected with a pang of disappointment. Perhaps he thought she would not appreciate being questioned on a matter so purely personal; she would encourage him to share her expectations.

'It's a very curious thing altogether, Mr Brawen,' she said. 'You know I'm quite at a loss to think what it can be.'

'I daresay you will know all about it in a day or two,' he answered indifferently, whilst his attention wandered to the road outside.

'You know I haven't a relation in the world,' she continued pathetically, but without receiving any very comforting response. 'Really,' she said to herself, 'he might show a little more concern than this.' She was half sorry she had mentioned the matter to him at all, he seemed to take it so coolly—not more warmly, indeed, than if it had come before him in the ordinary course of his professional work.

That, in fact, was just the view Mr Brawen did take; and, as he confessed himself, he was not 'good at guessing.' He was, moreover, rather chagrined at not finding Miss Carston there as usual. That young lady, who engaged in ceaseless wordy skirmishes with her step-mother, spent most of her time in Miss Barkle's society, a practice which endowed the cottage with its only charm in John Brawen's eyes. He had other things to occupy him also this afternoon: his sister, who had just lost her husband, had signified her intention of coming down to join him at Midport as soon as she could get away. Of course he was ready to receive her; but some change would be necessary in his style of living, for the neighbours who had lodgings in the same house as himself were principally bachelors, addicted to nocturnal festivities, and musical entertainments more remarkable for vigorous execution than for talent. His rooms were, moreover, not suitable for the accommodation of a lady; and John Brawen was well aware that his sister, who had married a wealthy man, was somewhat exacting in her requirements. He would have to take a furnished house, and having little time to do it in, and no very clear ideas about those mysterious details which constitute a 'desirable residence,' felt that his own hands were for the time sufficiently full. He would have been glad to discuss the business with Miss Barkle, but he had found her too much absorbed in her own concerns; and if he could not feign an interest in them which he did not feel, he could at all events abstain from troubling her to-day with his difficulties.

Conversation flagged hopelessly; but Mr Brawen had no intention of leaving until the lateness of the hour compelled him to: he was particularly anxious to see Annie Carston that day to tell her of the change in his domestic arrangements, which he hoped might serve to bring them more easily together. He found little pleasure in seeing her at her step-mother's house; he was not a favourite with Mrs Carston, and mother and daughter appeared to direct their best energies towards making each other look foolish and uncomfortable, an exercise which usually culminated in their squabbling fiercely, to his considerable embarrassment.

Miss Carston, however, did not appear, and it was getting late when Brawen took up his hat to go. 'You will let me know if I can be of any use to you, Miss Barkle,' he said, as he shook hands. He felt bound to make the offer of his services, after she had asked his advice, and had not failed to see that his indifference was

displeasing to her. 'I have a good deal to do just now,' he added by way of apology, 'but am not too busy to give assistance to *you*, if you should want it.'

Miss Barkle's vexation melted away in a moment at his little speech, and the lingering memory of his listless unconcern faded as he laid stress upon 'you.' John Brawen had made his peace, if that were necessary, and so took his departure, wondering much why Annie Carston had not been to the cottage, when he had been careful to tell her the previous day that he intended calling there that afternoon.

About the time her admirer gave up expecting her, the young lady had concluded a final skirmish with her step-mother by declaring her resolve to leave the house for ever without an hour's delay. Life with Mrs Carston number two was beyond Miss Annie's powers of endurance, and being gifted with an enterprising spirit and some tenacity of purpose, she withdrew from the conflict under a heavy fire of scolding taunts, and made preparations to go with imperturbable coolness. She knew Miss Barkle would take her in if she went to her; and was further perfectly aware that John Brawen was only waiting for a suitable opportunity to make her a definite offer of marriage, so she felt tolerably easy as to the future. She did not, however, know the light in which that gentleman was regarded by Miss Barkle, or she might have done otherwise than form the intention of at once explaining to that lady her own relations towards him. So it happened that an hour after John Brawen had left the cottage, Miss Annie arrived with a quantity of baggage that promised a lengthened stay. Miss Barkle received her with open arms, and professed her willingness to give the young lady a home as long as she was likely to want one. But Miss Annie was spared the explanation she intended to make by Miss Barkle suddenly saying: 'Mr Brawen was here this afternoon, Annie. He was awfully nice, and offered to help me if it becomes necessary to have legal assistance.'

'I knew he would,' replied Annie Carston with a confidence that betrayed her knowledge of him.

'I was quite certain of it myself,' said Miss Barkle modestly; 'but you know I was a little afraid he might misunderstand me.'

'How could he misunderstand you?'

'He has been so much about the house lately, you know, Annie, and—and—well, you know how the people here talk.'

Miss Barkle raised a fire-screen and examined the pattern closely, to conceal the rising blushes; whilst her friend stared in blank astonishment. This was a revelation she had certainly never expected; but was it possible to suppose that Miss Barkle really believed John Brawen, her own Jack, had been dancing attendance at the cottage all this time drawn thither by her allurements? Manifestly, she did; and Miss Annie saw that if she meant to carry out her scheme of taxing that hospitable woman for shelter, it would never do to disabuse her of the idea; but it was scarcely fair and above-board to leave her in the dark. It was awkward, Annie felt, decidedly awkward, and had she only known it a few hours before, she would have put up with Mrs Carston's bitter tongue and irritating vagaries in preference to coming to her best friend under such false colours.

John Brawen had not actually proposed to her yet; but they fully understood each other, and she waited curiously until Miss Barkle should speak again.

'He's a good fellow, Annie,' said she warmly, from behind the fire-screen.

Miss Carston cordially agreed with this opinion, and felt that she must know all, if she died for it. 'When did he say? Did he speak to you, Lina?' she asked.

'He hasn't said anything really yet,' confessed the blushing Selina; 'but I'm sure he will before long.'

Miss Carston was hardly disposed to encourage the theory, and was relieved to find Miss Barkle had no stronger ground for her hopes than her own convictions. If that was all, she might fairly leave her to discover her mistake, and she bade her friend good-night with a smile of reassurance.

Miss Barkle also retired smiling. Hers was a sanguine nature; and that advertisement and the kindly pressure of John Brawen's hand as he left her were the foundations of a delightful castle in the air, which in her dreams contained a Mr and Mrs Brawen, whose income was a mysteriously acquired twenty thousand a year.

'NOT WANTED AT HOME.'

IN the following remarks, I wish to offer a few words of caution to the friends of those who are 'not wanted at home,' against sending them away to inflict them upon total strangers in any part of the world, but more particularly upon the inhabitants of the Great North-west of the United States of America, in which part I have for some years been a resident. In a majority of instances it is a great and fatal mistake. *Experto crede.* It is a step which should only be resorted to when it is intended to abandon the unhappy ones to their fate. Is it at all likely, when a youth has become so demoralised and debased, and has trodden the downward path at home so far, that all its influences for good—his mother's and sisters' tears—are spurned and of no avail, that he is going to regain his self-respect amongst 'strangers who know not him, nor his?' From my own experience and that of many others, I answer, 'No! a thousand times no!'

Few boys are by nature vicious—though there are of course cases of inherited diseases—but when a youth finds himself banished from home, from all that he ever cared for, from all that he is ever likely to care for, after the sting of the separation and banishment is over, he from that moment becomes callous, indifferent, hardened. What does he care for anybody any more, and who cares for him—whether he is sick or suffering or well—whether he prospers, or otherwise? Is it a matter of wonder if he goes from bad to worse? It is almost past belief how low down even those trained in circles of refinement and culture can get. They are restrained by nothing; and they meet with all the encouragement they want in their downward career. Finding themselves strangers in a strange land, they are lonely and home-sick; and as they are glad to associate with anybody, they are not

particular in their choice of companions, if indeed any choice be laid before them. It is most likely that those who first come to relieve their downheartedness are some who like themselves have seen happier days, but have fallen very low, and who too often take pleasure in drawing new-comers down to their own low level. This is especially the case if the new-comer—or greenhorn as he is called—have money; but if he has none, or when he has spent all he had, he may die in a ditch for all that any one cares. His newly-made friends have no further use for him; and respectable people *here* are just as glad to be rid of his presence as were the respectable people who sent him away from them.

It is not right or fair, in any sense, for people to foist their disreputable relations upon others. In many instances the fault lies largely at their own doors. Then what right have they to inflict this incubus upon others? Whether the fault be theirs or not, surely total strangers can be in no way to blame. The United States have for years past been generally chosen as the cesspool for European filth in the shape of hopeless inebriates, paupers, blacklegs, swindlers, &c., in short for all and every class which were 'not wanted at home.' The citizens have, however, become alive to this fact, and now resent the advent of such into their midst. There are just as respectable people out here, who have sons and daughters to bring up and families to regulate, as in Europe, though by many over there this fact would appear to be unknown, or at least overlooked. All good citizens in America are anxious to bring up their children in industry and respectability; and it is a well-known characteristic of the United States—and this, at the present time, applies from Maine to Florida, from New York to San Francisco—that everybody works and works hard, unless incapacitated by infirmity, from the highest to the poorest. To work is honourable here; to be idle is a disgrace. What, then, can such a people have here for the idle and worthless 'cast-offs' who are 'not wanted at home?' At the same time, be it clearly understood that the United States of America and her citizens receive and welcome with open arms all such as are steady and able and willing to work. For these, and these only, are the people to develop and build up a new country, and to such men-immigrants all possible inducements are most frankly and liberally offered.

For a long time, little or no complaint was heard respecting indiscriminate importation of persons of all classes or conditions; and no inquiry was made as to the previous history or antecedents of any immigrants, or at least practically none. But that state of things has in a great measure passed away; and such general dissatisfaction has prevailed as to cause the enactment of laws to prohibit the wholesale importation of disabled paupers, convicts, *et hoc genus omne*. This is a free country; but I warn each and every one of the class 'not wanted at home,' that they are not wanted here either; that unless they can behave themselves when they do come here, it is not a good place to come to, and that they had better stay where they are.

Apart from all this, I should like to ask the parents, guardians, or friends of those who are so

unhappily situated as to be 'not wanted at home,' a few questions. Does it mend matters, or add to your respectability, to have simply cast the wayward one out of your sight? Is your peace of mind greater because you do not see him every day? Does it add to your respectability at home, if he is lying drunk in the gutter, or in the lock-up, or working out a sentence on the stone-heap in the public streets of some town, with a chain round his leg and a ball attached thereto, like a poor slave, because all this happens in a foreign country and away from home? Did your Christmas dinner taste the better, or did some family gathering pass off more pleasantly, because the absent one was perhaps nearly frozen and hungry and shivering in the streets with the bitter cold of a North-western winter, and the—if possible—colder indifference of the passers-by; or perhaps was sweltering under the scorching sun of the treeless, shadeless prairies; or—worse by far than either—was listening to, and it is more than likely taking part in, ribald songs and unseemly jokes and stories at some drunken debauch?

In fine, I ask, does the fact of his being *out of your sight* and away from his home, make you forget that he is *in the sight of and before strangers*, who have no sorrow, no pity for him, only contempt and disgust? Does all this make matters any better? I, for one, cannot think so. If he was bad and vicious near you, depend upon it he is ten times worse far away. At least, such is my experience during some years, during which I have witnessed not a few, but, alas, very many instances of the truth of what I say. Leave no stone unturned, leave no remedy untried, before this last, and generally disastrous step of casting any wayward one out of your sight is taken. It is only in rare and very isolated cases, indeed, that any benefit comes of it. If *you* have no control over him, you can neither expect strangers to have it, nor to trouble themselves about him. Even were they to do so, their influence can never be like that of home and of the dear friends there. Adversity and hardship are good schools; but they may also be *too* severe. Fire purifies metal; but if the ore be left in it too long, or if the fire be too hot, it is apt to spoil and make it valueless. At all events, as I have said, the Great Northwest is not for worthless or idle men or boys, and its people do not care to see them.

IN A TURKISH CITY.

CONCLUDING PAPER.

THE pelting rains which afflict the country all the winter are over for the season; the sun is making all the plants grow with marvellous rapidity, though it is not yet strong enough to scorch the young shoots; therefore, it is a fitting day to call on an acquaintance whose hobby is flower-growing. He is a sailor, and perhaps that is why, when he does get ashore, he makes his little garden as trim and tidy as the deck of a ship, and will not let a square inch of ground go unused. Scodra is twenty miles from the sea, and the Boiana is too shallow to be navigable; but for all that, we have the headquarters

of a portion of the Turkish navy in our midst. Whenever there is a war between Montenegro and Turkey, Lake Scodra is the scene of many a naval battle unrecorded in the pages of history; and accordingly, when the late war broke out, an imposing fleet of threepenny steamboats and a launch was somehow or other coaxed over the rapids and shallows of the Boiana when the river was swollen with the autumn rains. No doubt these vessels did some service; but the commodore is not a talkative man, and prefers his flowers to his ships. To-day, I mean to see the flowers; so, early in the afternoon, an English friend and myself start for the commodore's house, after previously making sure that he is at home and ready to receive us. Achmet is engaged about the house, and so we take my friend's servant to precede us through the streets. '*Casa di vaporji*' (the steamboat man's house) is the direction given him in the curious polyglot language that prevails in this part of the world, and drives to distraction tourists, who travel with every question you can possibly ask in seven different tongues in seven parallel columns.

This man deserves a line or two to himself, as in his way he is the type of the lower-class Christian of the town. As he stalks proudly in front of us, with a couple of brass-handled pistols stuck in his belt, he is a very stately and warlike-looking person; but a few weeks ago he was an altogether different object. In his childhood he played about the narrow streets of the Christian quarter, dressed in a thin cotton shirt in summer, and wrapped in a bit of blanket in winter, and most probably learned to smoke when he was about seven years old. As he grew up, he spent his days hanging about the courtyard of some merchant or rich man, turning his hand to all sorts of odd jobs, when he could not get his piece of maize-bread without exertion, and at night sleeping under the lee of a wall or in an outhouse. In spite of having no visible means of subsistence, he always had some tobacco to twist into a cigarette; and possessed a rusty old flint-lock pistol for use on grand occasions. When the war began, and there was consequently a relaxation of authority, he and some kindred spirits took to foraging expeditions on their own account, and coming into collision with the *zaptiehs*, got thrown into prison. When a man gets into prison in Turkey, he generally stays there, unless he has a great deal of money or luck, and Giorgio proved no exception to the rule. In his case, luck opened the doors of his prison after he had had a pretty lengthy experience of durance vile.

His old mother, who led the same sort of hand-to-mouth existence as himself, was fortunate enough to get the rough washing and cleaning-up to do at one of the European consulates; and after some months, summoned courage to petition the consul's wife to beg the consul to ask the pasha to let her son out of prison. The consul being good-natured, promised to look into the matter; and learning that Giorgio had committed no crime, but had been incarcerated chiefly on suspicion, one day put the case before the Vali, with the result that the pasha, who was of course utterly ignorant of the whole affair, immediately set Master Giorgio free.

When he came out, he was a lank, lean, and

hungry-looking object, clothed simply in a shirt and trousers of the thinnest cotton, and with a felt skullcap on his head. For some weeks he almost regretted his liberty, and was inclined to repent of his mother's influence with those in power; but at last luck befriended him again, and he was engaged as servant by an English traveller. He at once discarded the old shirt and trousers, and assumed the mountaineer dress of white felt embroidered with black silk, in which we now see him. He no longer slinks about like a famished wolf, but, proud of being in the service of a Frank, and certain that a good supper awaits him after *Aksham*, he precedes us with head erect and all the stately swagger of his race.

But by this time we have arrived at the commodore's. A stream separates the road from his garden wall; and crossing the single rough plank that serves as a bridge, Giorgio knocks loudly at the great gates. Presently a voice within inquires who we are, and on Giorgio replying proudly, '*Ingliz milordo*,' the gates are thrown open, and we enter. The commodore, or *vaporji*, as Giorgio calls him, rises at our entry from the garden couch upon which he has been watching the watering of his beloved flowers. We sit down, one on each side of our host. A sailor instantly provides us with cigarettes and brass ashtrays, and then, with his hand on his heart, proffers us a red-hot coal in a little pair of tongs, instead of matches. We have interchanged compliments, and now sit silently inhaling the fragrant tobacco, and looking at the four sailors who are watering the flowers under our host's directions. The garden is a tiny square patch of ground wedged in between the high white walls of the neighbouring houses, and with the commodore's little cottage opening into it. The entire available space is cut up into beds by straight paths about eighteen inches wide, which are scrupulously weeded and laid down with powdered shells. Every bed has its flowers planted in mathematical straight lines; and it is easy to see that tulips are the commodore's favourites; but no one plant is allowed to take up more room than another; and the whole place, trim and neat, with every square inch of available soil put to its fullest use, shows incontestably that the sailor's tidiness does not forsake him when on shore.

The cottage is full of sailors, for the commodore naturally does not mean to go to the expense of keeping a servant when he has all the men of the fleet on Lake Scodra under his command. Another blue-jacket brings us coffee; and then we follow our host in Indian file along the narrow white paths, to inspect the beauties of nature more closely. The commodore is a stout man, in a baggy uniform, that fits him like a sack; and as he winds along the tiny paths, he reminds one irresistibly of a tight-rope dancer. However, he steers his way with marvellous skill, never kicking a single shell on to the flower-beds, and explaining to us as he goes that the garden will look much better in another week, showing us where some of his choicest specimens have been planted, but have not yet shown above ground, and pointing out the buds that lie concealed among the green shoots of others that have come up—and all with the simplicity of a child, and with the grave interest that only a real lover of

flowers who is also a Turk or a Dutchman can exhibit.

After the inspection of the garden, we resume our seats, and more coffee is brought to us. The conversation now turns upon naval matters, upon which the commodore is quite willing to enter, but hardly with the quiet enthusiasm with which he discourses on his flowers. Our host tells us that before coming to North Albania, he was in command of a gunboat on the Danube during the Russo-Turkish war. We cannot discover that he did anything in particular or fought any actions with the Russians; but as he seems to have kept his boat out of harm's way, and not to have wantonly exposed any of the sultan's men or ships, he was doubtless marked out for promotion. The flotilla on the lake consisted originally of three boats; but one is somewhere at the bottom of the Boiana; and so the two survivors are judiciously kept in the lake, in case they should also come to grief if they again attempted to pass the shallows and rapids of the river. The commodore asks us if we should like to go over the fleet, and we accept with pleasure; so, after the final directions have been given to the four gardening sailors, we set off in procession for the bazaar and the outlet of the river Boiana. Giorgio goes first, perhaps with a prouder air than usual; next comes the commodore, sandwiched between our two selves; while the rear is brought up by two sailors. In this order, and at a grave and solemn pace, we proceed through the streets, past the great burial-ground where Ali Haidar Pasha lies buried; and turning aside by the well without entering the bazaar, cross the fields to a spot known as the Twelve Trees. There are only four trees left now to stretch their tall branches towards the cloudless sky, and a melancholy story attaches to them. Standing alone on the bank of the river, they have always been a mark for the thunderstorms which are such constant visitors to Scodra, and gradually their number has been reduced. Only a few years ago, a shepherd and his sheep crouching under their shelter from the pelting storm, were struck by lightning, and all killed; and the scarred trunk of one of the trees still standing serves as a grim reminder that next autumn another may fall victim to the lightning-flash.

A great deal of shouting from the two sailors who accompany us brings a man-of-war's boat from the other side to carry us across to the steamers. We enter the boat, Giorgio and the two sailors remaining on shore. The commodore takes the tiller, and the lithe little crew from the Black Sea coast take us rapidly towards the lake; and it is as well they do so, for before we have gone very far, we discover that the water is unpleasantly high in the bottom of the boat. The commodore explains that this is one of two new boats lately sent from Constantinople, and that they were left some time on the shore at the mouth of the Boiana before being brought up the river, and consequently some of the seams have started. He trusts resignedly that they will close when the boat has been in the water a little while, and meantime counsels us to put our feet up on the thwart in front of us. The brown little sailors are dressed much as sailors usually are, except that they wear the fez, which

has become almost the only distinguishing part of an Ottoman Turk's dress; for their loose trousers, and shirt with full wide collar of dark-blue cotton, might be worn by the mariners of any power. In a few minutes' time we bump against the side of the flagship, and mount the broad and commodious ladder which hangs over the side. Both the commodore and his second in command are stout and dignified, and have no intention of scrambling up the side even of a penny steamer in any but the very easiest fashion.

The captain having seen us on the shore, has made preparations in our honour by girding on his sword and hastily buttoning up the front of his uniform all awry. He salaams courteously; and the bright blades of four sailors drawn up in line flash in the sunshine as they salute the commodore and ourselves. Instantly four rush-bottomed chairs are thrust up the hatchway by an unseen hand, and we take our seats in a circle, while cigarettes and coffee are handed round—a ceremony which it would be a most terrible breach of etiquette to omit. This done, we stroll round the ship, a duty very quickly finished. The vessel carries two guns, one a little brass popgun in the bows, used for firing salutes; and the other a long Krupp gun in the stern, which would in all probability shake the old tub to pieces if it were fired. In the cabin below, a dozen Martini-Peabody rifles, and as many cutlasses, all well kept and brightly polished, are arranged in a stand, and constitute the armament of the ship's company.

As for the vessels themselves, they were built at Glasgow about the commencement of the Crimean war, and after doing good service on the Clyde, were bought by the Turkish government, and transferred to the Bosphorus. There they ran to and fro for some fifteen years, and then the Porte conceived the brilliant idea of turning them into men-of-war, and sending them into Lake Scodra to aid in the campaign against Montenegro. On the wheel are recorded the builder's name and the date. Poor old boats; they still do the journey backwards and forwards across the lake, especially when any distinguished personage wishes to go from Scodra to Montenegro; and after the signature of the Virbazar Convention, they transported several families of ragged refugees into the already poverty-harassed city of Scodra.

The commodore evidently takes a sort of pride in his command, although he admits that he can get no great speed out of his ships. Pressed on this point, he confesses that he does not know their rate of speed, but that it takes several hours to steam to Lissendra, at the far end of the lake. 'No, there is no coal; that is a great drawback. Sometimes a ship brings coal, and leaves some at Medua for the squadron; but there has been none for some time past. They burn wood; and when they cross the lake, the whole deck is cumbered with firewood, so that at first there is hardly room to move; but the furnaces burn such a quantity that the pile is soon diminished.'

The captain tells us with considerable satisfaction that he can speak English; but as he makes this avowal in Turkish, we are naturally rather sceptical on the point, until it slowly

dawns upon us that the queer sounds with which he follows up his assertion are English words of command—'Easer, stopper, bakker, turnerastern, goaed.' The captain reels off the phrases in a low voice, without pause or inflection, and looking very like a sheepish schoolboy repeating a French lesson. He also gives us the English names for parts of the engines and gear; for the Turks, like most eastern races, have adopted the English terms for machinery and the like, the Turkish language even boasting such a verb as 'Trnrstrn-etmk,' which means, 'to turn her astern.'

But the sun is drawing near Mount Rumia; and if we wish to be home before *Aksham*, we must leave at once; so, as the commodore expresses his intention of remaining on board for some time longer, we take leave of him and the captain, and once more trust ourselves to the leaky boat. On shore, Giorgio receives us, evidently rather bored by his long wait; and after giving a present to the boat's crew, we join the crowd of merchants going home from the bazaar, and reach the house just as the muezzin is mounting the rickety wooden minaret of the mosque near my door and preparing to summon the Faithful to the evening prayer.

A NOVEL ASCENT.

SOME little time since, under the title of 'A Subaqueous Excursion,' we embodied our impressions on visiting the caissons of the Forth Bridge at Queensferry, and portrayed the scenes enacted in the air-chambers, where, some ninety feet below water-level, the foundations of the huge structure were being excavated. All this is now changed; the busy workers no longer ply pick and shovel deep down beneath the water; but high up in mid-air above the 'gallant Forth' are rearing the steel superstructure of the giant cantilevers. The main steel piers are now erected to their full height, and their ascent forms an expedition so novel and unique, that we have endeavoured to briefly depict our experiences in gaining the summit.

Leaving the classic *Hawes Inn*, immortalised in the *Antiquary*, and which at one time or another has sheltered many historic personages on their way across the Forth, a steam-launch conveys us to Inchgarvie, the island in mid-channel. We pause on landing, and look upwards at the mighty towering structure. The Forth Bridge stands three hundred and sixty feet above water-level, below which its foundations at their greatest depth extend some ninety feet—giving an overall measurement of about four hundred and fifty feet—a height but little exceeded by the Great Pyramid of Egypt, which reaches four hundred and sixty feet, or by Cologne Cathedral and Old St Paul's, standing respectively five hundred and ten and five hundred and eight feet above ground-level.

The 'cage' which we now enter will accommodate about a dozen men. It is strongly constructed of steel, and differs but little from those similarly employed in coal-mines. The bar across the entrance is closed; a signal is given to the man in charge of the winding-engine, and we are off. Visits to collieries have been so frequently described, that the sensations generally experi-

enced are tolerably familiar, at least on paper, even to those who have never personally ventured on that somewhat trying novelty. But here all is reversed. The same cage is attached to a wire-rope, wound by a similar hauling-engine; but darkness gives place to light, and the dread feeling of sinking into the bowels of the earth never to return yields to a sensation of easy and luxurious elevation and airy ascension, as we rise higher and higher through complex masses of bracing and strutting, till we land on the platform at the summit, and jumping from the cage, experience a pleasing sense of exhilaration in the fresh breezes, the vast expanse of country open to our gaze, and the thought that we have beneath us the largest railway bridge in the world.

A glance over the edge reveals to us the very great height at which we stand. Far below in the giddy depth we see men, reduced to the size of pigmies, hurrying about; whilst the guardship is dwarfed into a toy-boat. The view is one never to be forgotten. It is a clear day, and one by one we see the islands of the Forth reposing on its placid surface, and mark the grand outline of the western hills, fading away into the blue distance. Arthur's Seat stands sharply marked against the glowing skies, and the smoky canopy of Auld Reekie fringes the glories of the beautiful grounds of Dalmeny. Turning northwards, Inverkeithing and 'Dunfermline gray' lie almost at our feet, and the Ochil Hills flank a scene seldom if ever surpassed.

We turn from the beauties of nature to the gigantic cantilevers beneath our feet, and mark the busy workers at their toil. No light task that, to labour hour after hour betwixt heaven and earth, summer and winter. All honour to British pluck and determination, to the minds that direct, and the hands that execute such an undertaking!

THE POET'S WORLD.*

He lives within a world which he has made
But for himself from out all things most fair,
Where perfect light dies into perfect shade
'Neath endless summer air.

There is not any winter in that land,
Nor spring-time born to fade and die too soon;
But every breeze by which his cheek is fanned
Breathes a perpetual June.

He crowns himself with royal crown of bay,
And laughing, bids the flowers to laugh with him;
Then wanders forth, all happy, till the day
Dies, and the eve grows dim.

He is a Child! O let him have his will,
And dream his dreams, and use his every breath
In song and rhyme and innocent mirth, until
His voice is hushed in death!

J. S. FLETCHER.

* Suggested by the peculiarity of one 'Daft Jemmie,' who innocently imagined himself to be a great poet.

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ARTIFICIALITY.

A DEFENCE of artificiality may seem scarcely compatible with the warnings against its dangers with which from our childhood we are made familiar. It is easy enough to see why, from the commonplace point of view, our parents and teachers so warmly inculcate the merit of naturalness; but is it not just possible that, on the contrary, most of us do not sufficiently study how to be gracefully artificial—that, in short, we neglect to introduce enough art into the artificiality of every-day life? Our pastors and masters preach to us the moral rectitude of being natural; but were the doctrine carried out to the letter, is it not clear that life with our fellow-creatures would become intolerable? Without a large dash of artificiality, it is certain that refined existence would be impossible. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine a state of existence from which all artificiality should be banished. Good-breeding in itself largely consists of what, when it comes to be analysed, is essentially artificial, for good-breeding demands a due consideration for the failings and weaknesses of those with whom one may be brought in contact. The concession to such weaknesses distinctly carries with it an element of artificiality from which it is impossible to escape.

Your horny-handed son of toil fresh from the fields is natural enough; but when brought into town, how little his awkwardness chimes in with the accepted standard of urban civilisation, or how little can it be held up as affording any of that moral beauty which, if we are to believe some teachers, is naturally associated with the possession of naturalness, and *mutatis mutandis*. The loud laughter of the uncultivated is natural enough; but how jarring is its effect on the nerves of the refined. We are apt, in a thoughtless way, to say that the noble savage is natural; but an acquaintance with his manners and customs proves how complicated, under its apparent absence of affectation, is the ritual of his existence.

With the very first germs of civilisation, artificiality may be said to have commenced its sway; indeed, civilisation may be said to consist in properly understood artificiality. As a matter of fact, our teachers, instead of warning us against the dangers of an absence of naturalness, should urge the introduction of more art into our artificiality. What, indeed, is that truly invaluable quality of tact, in which so many of us are sadly wanting, but a very highly developed form of artificiality? The artificiality of the well-bred man of the world, how admirably it serves him in cases where downright naturalness would simply disgust society! There is a good story told of Lord Palmerston once keeping a corporation dinner waiting some two hours or more after the appointed time. When at length his arrival seemed hopeless, it was determined that it would be best to commence without his presence. On his appearing, a few moments later, his ready tact enabled him to throw on his entertainers the whole awkwardness of his own want of punctuality, by expressing his delight at his hosts having commenced without waiting for him. Were it not for polished artificiality of this nature, how could life continue?

Those good folk who cry out so loudly for naturalness seem to be oblivious how largely the friction of every-day life is avoided by well-considered artificiality. What is more perfect than the artificiality which makes a well-bred person conceal his feelings from the persistent button-holder, or the even more polished and enviable artificiality which enables the well-bred possessor of tact to shake off the attentions of the bore, whose conduct, let it be remembered, is thoroughly natural? What is more graceful or necessary than the artificiality with which a person of delicate taste will conceal from a stranger or a dear friend the pain that is being endured or the grief that is felt?

Those folks who pride themselves on their naturalness are, after all, only indulging their innate selfishness; it costs a little trouble to be artificial; it is ever so much easier to speak

out whatever first enters our heads. Beshrew such naturalness! A little artificiality will contrive to rob of its sting and annoyance a criticism or a piece of advice which would otherwise fail utterly of its purpose, if it be any other than to ruffle the temper of the recipient. With a little more artificiality introduced into married life, is it not evident that the sum of misery caused by 'incompatibility of temper' would be reduced? But no. We are told that we must be natural; and so husband and wife go their own ways, regardless of each other's failings, to conciliate which in any manner would demand a call upon that artificiality which is so universally decried and clumsily practised. Would it not be far happier for both were they mutually to pretend to overlook, indeed not to notice, each other's troublesome failings? Would not thus a grain of artificiality succeed in enabling even characters otherwise utterly incompatible, to get on very satisfactorily? Indeed, were this not well understood by a great number of excellent people, how miserable would be the world!

Nowadays, those who move much among their fellow-creatures hear a good deal about what is termed Bohemianism, and it is argued that those who join its motley ranks have done so because they chafe against the artificiality of modern existence. It is a specious plea set up by every backslider from the paths of respectability. The truth is that the artificiality of social intercourse implies an element of restraint which is found irksome, and so your Bohemian—in the bad sense—and your ne'er-do-well, in order to enjoy themselves, fall back upon the society of those nominally free from artificial tendencies—with what result is it necessary to state?

Is it not clear that in cases such as these the artificiality of society has its good points? Discipline of every nature, military or official, is largely composed of artificial elements, without which government would be impossible. 'There is but a form between yourself and your shoemaker,' once remarked that model of well-bred artificiality, Bulwer-Lytton. The forms of everyday life, without which it would be difficult to exist, are artificial to a degree. The requirements of society in what is termed etiquette are essentially artificial, and the code has been drawn up with a care which is not the result of fancy or caprice. Deep artistic consideration has been given to every point. In the item of dress, which is specially artificial, how rarely man, but more particularly woman, is seen to advantage when natural! Painters and sculptors may admire humanity in its workaday costume, because that costume is appropriate to its wearer; but the artificiality of our complicated social existence has made it a hereditary instinct with most of us to be careful how we are too natural in the presence of those whom we wish to impress with a sense of our dignity. We are aware that it is dangerous to be seen by everybody in our shirt-sleeves, which constitute, however, a very natural dress.

Sum-total: It is evident that the ethics of artificiality have not received that attention to which as a science they are entitled. It is a deficiency in our social education that the bearings of rightly understood artificiality are not more thoroughly inculcated. Paradoxically, it

may be said that it is the absence of artificiality in our modern complicated ritual of every-day life which is the cause of much of that friction from which we all suffer.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXI.—CLEARING THE DECKS.

WARREN RELF had arranged for his mother and sister, with Elsie Challoner, to seek the friendly shelter of San Remo early in October. The sooner away from England the better. Before they went, however, to avert the chance of a disagreeable encounter, he met them on their arrival in town at Liverpool Street, and saw them safely across to the continental train at London Bridge. It chanced to be the very self-same day that Hugh Massinger had posted his second forged note to poor fatherless Winifred.

Elsie dared hardly look the young painter in the face even now, for shame and timidity; and Warren Relf, respecting her natural sensitiveness, concentrated most of his attention on his mother and Edie, scarcely allowing Elsie to notice by shy side-glances his unobtrusive preparations for her own personal comfort on the journey. But Elsie's quick eye observed them all, gratefully, none the less for that. She liked Warren: it was impossible for anybody not to like and respect the frank young painter, with his honest bronzed face, and his open, manly, out-spoken manners. Timid as she was and broken-hearted still, she could not go away from England for ever and ever—for Elsie never meant to return again—without thanking him just once in a few short words for all his kindness. As they stood on the bare and windy platform with which the South-Eastern Railway Company woos our suffrages at London Bridge, she drew him aside for a moment from his mother and sister with a little hasty shrinking glance which Warren could not choose but follow. 'Mr Relf,' she said, looking down at the floor and fumbling with her parasol, 'I want to thank you; I can't go away without thanking you once.'

He saw the effort it had cost her to say so much, and a wild lump rose sudden in his throat for gratitude and pleasure. 'Miss Challoner,' he answered, looking back at her with an unmistakable light in his earnest eyes, 'say nothing else. I am more than sufficiently thanked already.—I have only one thing to say to you now. I know you wish this episode kept secret from every one: you may rely upon me and upon my mate in the yawl. If ever in my life I can be of any service to you, remember you can command me.—If not, I shall never again obtrude myself upon your memory.—Good-bye, good-bye.' And taking her hand one moment in his own, he held it for a second, then let it drop again. 'Now go,' he said in a tremulous voice—'go back to Edie.'

Elsie—one blush—went back as he bade her. 'Good-bye,' she said, as she glided from his side—'good-bye, and thank you.' That was all that passed between those two that day. Yet Elsie knew, with profound regret, as the train steamed off through the draughty corridors on its way to Dover, that Warren Relf had fallen in love with her; and Warren Relf, standing alone upon the dingy, gusty platform, knew with an ecstasy of

delight and joy that Elsie Challoner was grateful to him and liked him. It is something, gratitude. He valued that more from Elsie Challoner than he would have valued love from any other woman.

With profound regret, for her part, Elsie saw that Warren Relf had fallen in love with her; because he was such an honest, manly, straightforward, good fellow, and because from the very first moment she had liked him. Yet what to her were love and lovers now? Her heart lay buried beneath the roots of the poplar at Whitestrand, as truly as Hugh Massinger thought it lay buried in the cheap sea-washed grave in the sand at Orfordness. She was grieved to think this brave and earnest man should have fixed his heart on a hopeless object. It was well she was going to San Remo for ever. In the whirl and bustle and hurry of London life, Warren Relf would doubtless soon forget her. But some faces are not easily forgotten.

From London Bridge, Warren Relf took the Metropolitan to St James's Park, and walked across, still flushed and hot, to Piccadilly. At the club, he glanced hastily at that morning's paper. The first paragraph on which his eye lighted was Winifred Meysey's earnest advertisement in the Agony Column. It gave him no little food for reflection. If ever Elsie saw that advertisement, it might alter and upset all her plans for the future—and all his own plans into the bargain. Already she felt profoundly the pain and shame of her false position with Winifred and the Meyseys: that much Warren Relf had learned from Edie. If only she knew how eagerly Winifred pined for news of her, she might be tempted after all to break her reserve, to abandon her concealment, and to write full tidings of her present whereabouts to her poor little frightened and distressed pupil. That would be bad; for then the whole truth must sooner or later come out before the world; and for Elsie's sake, for Winifred's sake, perhaps even a wee bit for his own sake also, Warren Relf shrank unspeakably from that unhappy exposure. He couldn't bear to think that Elsie's poor broken bleeding heart should be laid open to its profoundest recesses before the eyes of society, for every daw of an envious old dowager to snap and peck at. He hoped Elsie would not see the advertisement. If she did, he feared her natural tenderness and her sense of self-respect would compel her to write the whole truth to Winifred.

She might see it at Marseilles, for they were going to run right through to the Mediterranean by the special express, stopping a night to rest themselves at the *Hôtel du Louvre* in the Rue Cannebière. Edie would be sure to look at the *Times*, and if she saw the advertisement, to show it to Elsie.

But even if she didn't, ought he not himself to call her attention to it? Was it right of him, having seen it, not to tell her of it? Should he not rather leave to Elsie herself the decision what course she thought best to take under these special circumstances?

He shrank from doing it. It grieved him to the quick to strain her poor broken heart any further. She had suffered so much: why rake it all up again? And even as he thought all

these things, he knew each moment with profounder certainty than ever that he loved Elsie. There is nothing on earth to excite a man's love for a beautiful woman like being compelled to take tender care for that woman's happiness—having a gentle solicitude for her most sacred feelings thrust upon one by circumstances as an absolute necessity.—Still, Warren Relf was above all things honest and trustworthy. Not to send that advertisement straight to Elsie, even at the risk of hurting her own feelings, would constitute in some sort, he felt, a breach of confidence, a constructive falsehood, or at the very best a *suppressio veri*; and Warren Relf was too utterly and transparently truthful to allow for a moment any paltering with essential verities.—He sighed a sigh of profound regret as he took his penknife with lingering hesitation from his waistcoat pocket. But he boldly cut out the advertisement from the Agony Column, none the less, thereby defacing the first page of the *Times*, and rendering himself liable to the censure of the committee for wanton injury to the club property; after the perpetration of which heinous offence he walked gravely and soberly into the adjoining writing-room and sat down to indite a hasty note intended for his sister at the *Hôtel du Louvre*:

MY DEAR EDIE—Just after you left, I caught sight of enclosed advertisement in the second column of this morning's *Times*. Show it to Her. I can't bear to send it—I can't bear to cause her any further trouble or embarrassment of any sort after all she has suffered; and yet—it would be wrong, I feel, to conceal it from her. If she takes my advice, she will not answer it. Better let things remain as they are. To write one line would be to upset all. For heaven's sake, don't show Her this letter.—With love to you both and kind regards to Her, Your affectionate brother,
W. R.

He addressed the letter, 'Miss Relf, *Hôtel du Louvre*, Marseilles,' and went over with it to the box on the mantel-shelf, where Hugh Massinger's letter was already lying.

When Edie Relf received that letter next evening at the hotel in the Rue Cannebière, she looked at it once and glanced over at Elsie. She looked at it twice and glanced over at Elsie. She looked at it a third time—and then, with a woman's sudden resolve, she did exactly what Warren himself had told her not to do—she handed it across the table to Elsie.

Hugh's plot trembled indeed in the balance that moment; for if only Elsie wrote to Winifred, ignoring of course his last forged letter, then lying on the hall table at Whitestrand, all would have been up with him. His lie would have come home to him straight as a lie. The two letters would in all probability not have coincided. Winifred would have known him from that day forth for just what he was—a liar—and a forger.

And yet if, by that simple and natural coincidence, Elsie had sent a letter from Marseilles merely assuring Winifred of her safety and answering the advertisement, it would have fallen in completely with Hugh's plot, and rendered Winifred's assurance doubly certain. Elsie had sailed to Australia by way of Marseilles, then. In a novel, that coincidence would surely have

occurred. In real life, it might easily have done so, but as a matter of fact it didn't; for Elsie read the letter slowly first, and then the advertisement.

'Poor fellow!' she said as she passed the letter back again to Edie. 'It was very kind of him; and he did quite right.—I think I shall take his advice, after all.—It's terribly difficult to know what one ought to do. But I don't think I shall write to Winifred.'

Not for herself. She could bear the exposure, if it was to save Winifred. But for Winifred's sake, for poor dear Winifred's. She couldn't deprive her of her new lover.

Ought she to let Winifred marry him? What trouble might not yet be in store for Winifred?—No, no. Hugh would surely be kinder to *her*. He had sacrificed one loving heart for her sake; he was not likely now to break another.

How little we all can judge for the best. It would have been better for Elsie and better for Winifred, if Elsie had done as Warren Relf did, and not as he said—if she had written the truth, and the whole truth at once to Winifred, allowing her to be her own judge in the matter. But Elsie had not the heart to crush Winifred's dream; and very naturally. No one can blame a woman for refusing to act with more than human devotion and foresight.

Hugh Massinger had left the headquarters of Bohemia for twenty minutes at the exact moment when Warren Relf entered the Cheyne Row Club. He had gone to telegraph his respectful condolences to Winifred and Mrs Meysey at Invertnar Castle, on their sad loss, with conventional politeness. When he came back, he found, to his surprise, the copy of the *Times* still lying open on the smoking-room table; but Winifred's advertisement was cut clean out of the Agony Column with a sharp penknife. In a moment he said to himself, aghast: 'Some enemy hath done this thing.' It must have been Relf! Nobody else in the club knew anything. Such espionage was intolerable, unendurable, not to be permitted. For three days he had been trembling and chafing at the horrid fact that Relf knew all and might denounce and ruin him. That alone was bad enough. But that Relf should be plotting and intriguing against him! That Relf should use his sinister knowledge for some evil end! That Relf should go spying and eavesdropping and squirming about like a common detective! The idea was fairly past endurance. Among gentlemen such things were not to be permitted. Hugh Massinger was prepared not to permit them.

He passed a day and night of inexpressible annoyance. This situation was getting too much for him. He was fighting in the dark: he didn't understand Warren Relf's silence. If the fellow meant to crush him, for what was he waiting? Hugh could not hold all the threads in his mind together. He felt as though Warren Relf was going to make, not only the Cheyne Row Club, but all London altogether too hot for him. To have drowned Elsie, to be jilted by Winifred, and to be baffled after all by that creature Relf—this, this was the hideous and ignominious future he saw looming now visibly before him!

It was with a heavy heart that next evening at seven he dropped into the club dining-room. Would Relf be there? he wondered silently. And

if so, what course would Relf adopt towards him? Yes, Relf *was* there, at a corner table, as good luck would have it, with his back turned to him safely as he entered; and that fellow Potts, the other mudbank artist—they hung their wretched daubs of flat Suffolk seaboard side by side fraternally on the walls of the Institute—was dining with him and concocting mischief, no doubt, for the house of Massinger. Hugh half determined to turn and flee: then all that was manly and genuine within him revolted at once against that last disgrace. He would not run from this creature Relf. He would not be turned out of his own club—he was a member of the Committee and a founder of the society. He would face it out and dine in spite of him.

But not before the fellow's very eyes; that was more than in his present perturbed condition Hugh Massinger could manage to stand. He skulked quietly round, unseen by Relf, into the side alcove—a recess cut off by an arched doorway—where he gave his order in a very low voice to Martin, the obsequious waiter. Martin was surprised at so much reserve. Mr Massinger, he was generally the very freest and loudest-spoken gentleman in the whole houseful of 'em. He always talked, he did, as if the club and the kitchen and the servants all belonged to him.

From the alcove, by a special interposition of fate, Hugh could hear distinctly what Relf was saying. Strange—incredible—a singular stroke of luck: he had indeed caught the man in the very act and moment of conspiring.—They were talking of Elsie! Their conversation came to him distinct, though low. Unnatural excitement had quickened his senses to a strange degree. He heard it all—every sound—every syllable.

'Then you promise, Frank, on your word of honour as a gentleman, you'll never breathe a word of this or of any part of Miss Challoner's affair to anybody anywhere?'

'My dear boy, I promise, that's enough.—I see the necessity as well as you do.—So you've actually got the letter, have you?'

'I've got the letter. If you like, I'll read it to you. It's here in my pocket. I have to restore it by the time Mr Meysey returns to-morrow.'

Mr Meysey! Restore it! Then, for all his plotting, Relf didn't know that Mr Meysey was dead, and that his funeral was fixed to take place at Whitestrand on Monday or Tuesday!

There was a short pause. *What* letter? he wondered. Then Relf began reading in a low tone: 'My darling Winifred, I can hardly make up my mind to write you this letter; and yet I must: I can no longer avoid it.'

Great heavens, it was his own forged letter to Winifred! How on earth had it ever come into Relf's possession!

Plot, plot—plot and counterplot! Dirty, underhand, hole-and-corner spy-business! Relf had wheedled it out of the Meyseys somehow, to help him to track down and confront his enemy! Or else he had suborned one of the Whitestrand servants to steal or copy their Master's correspondence!

He heard it through to the last word, 'Ever your affectionate but heart-broken ELSIE.'

What were they going to say next?—Nothing. Potts just drew a long breath of surprise, and

then whistled shortly and curiously. 'The man's a blackguard, to have broken the poor girl's heart,' he observed at last, 'let alone this. He's a blackguard, Relf.—I'm very sorry for her.—And what's become of Miss Challoner now, if it isn't indiscreet to ask the question?'

'Well, Potts, I've only taken any other man into my confidence at all in this matter, because you knew more than half already, and it was impossible, without telling you the other half, fully to make you feel the necessity for keeping the strictest silence about it. I'd rather not tell either you or anybody exactly where Miss Challoner's gone now. But at the present moment, if you want to know the precise truth, I've no doubt she's at Marseilles, on her way abroad to a farther destination which I prefer on her account not to mention. More than that it's better not to say. But she wishes it kept a profound secret, and she intends never to return to England.'

As Hugh Massinger heard those words, those reassuring words, a sudden sense of freedom and lightness burst instantly over him in a wild rush of reaction. Aha! aha! poor feeble enemy! Was this all? Then Relf knew really nothing! That mysterious 'Yes' of his was a fraud, a pretence, a mistake, a delusion! He was all wrong, all wrong and in error. Instead of knowing that Elsie was dead—dead and buried in her nameless grave at Orfordness—he fancied she was still alive and in hiding! The man was a wind-bag. To think he should have been terrified—he, Hugh Massinger—by such a mere empty boastful eavesdropper!—Why, Relf, after all, was himself deceived by the forged letters he had so cleverly palmed off upon them. The special information he pretended to possess was only the special information derived from Hugh Massinger's own careful and admirable forgeries. He hugged himself in a perfect transport of delight. The load was lifted as if by magic from his breast. There was nothing on earth for him, after all, to be afraid of!

He saw it all at a glance now.—Relf was in league with the servants at the Meyseys'. Some prying lady's-maid or dishonest flunkey must have sent him the first letter to Winifred, or at least a copy of it: nay, more; he or she must have intercepted the second one, which arrived while Winifred was on her way to Scotland—else how could Relf have heard this last newly fledged fiction about the journey abroad—the stoppage at Marseilles—the determination never to return to England?—And how greedily and eagerly the man swallowed it all—his nasty second-hand servants'-hall information! Hugh positively despised him in his own mind for his ready credulity and his mean duplicity. How glibly he retailed the plausible story, with nods and hints and additions of his own: 'At the present moment, I've no doubt she's at Marseilles, on her way abroad to a farther destination which I prefer on her account not to mention.' What airs and graces and what comic importance the fellow put on, on the strength of his familiarity with this supposed mystery! Any other man with a straightforward mind would have said outright plainly, 'to Australia'; but this pretentious jack-anapes with his stolen information must make up a little mystification all of his own, to give himself importance in the eyes of his greedy gobe-

mouche of a companion. It was too grotesque! too utterly ridiculous! And this was the man of whom he had been so afraid! His own dupe! the ready fool who swallowed at second-hand such idle tattle of the servants' hall, and employed an understrapper or a pretty *soubrette* to open other people's letters for his own information! From that moment forth, Hugh might cordially hate him, Hugh might freely despise him; but he would never, never, never be afraid of him.

One only idea left some slight suspicion of uneasiness on his enlightened mind. He hoped the lady's-maid—that hypothetical lady's-maid—had sent on the forged letter—after reading it—to Winifred. Not that poor Winifred would have time to think much about Elsie at present, in the midst of this sudden and unexpected bereavement: she would be too full of her own dead father, no doubt, to pay any great attention to her governess's misfortunes. But still, one doesn't like one's private letters to be so vulgarly tampered with. And the worst of it was, he could hardly ask her whether she had received the note or not. He could hardly get at the bottom of this low conspiracy. It was his policy now to let sleeping dogs lie. The less said about Elsie the better.

Yet in his heart he despised Warren Relf for his meanness. He might forge himself: nothing low or ungentlemanly or degrading in forgery. Dishonest, if you like; dishonest, not vulgar. But to open other people's letters—pah!—the disgusting smallness and lowness and vulgarity of it! A sort of under-footmanish type of criminality. *Pecca fortiter*, if you will, of course, but don't be a cad and a disgrace to your breeding.

OLD SHIPS.

A FEW months ago the *Victory* was in imminent danger; Nelson's famous fighting ship showed symptoms of senile decay; her time-tried timbers were no longer strong enough to exclude the water that ripples caressingly against her hoary frame. The old ship was launched in 1765, and has therefore withstood the flight of time, the attack of the enemy, and the fury of the elements for more than a century. The necessary repairs have been made, and this revered specimen of an extinct system of naval architecture is good for another hundred years, provided she remain in her present position. The proud privilege of gazing upon the spot where Britannia's hero breathed his last will be transmitted unimpaired to future generations of his admiring countrymen. The sight of such a ship tends to perpetuate the glorious memory of the daring deeds of our forefathers, which have assured to their posterity the stability of our institutions and the supremacy of our flag. What a competition there would be in order to obtain a fragment of her frame if she were to be condemned! The smallest chip would become a treasured heirloom.

The *Sovereign of the Seas*, the first British three-decker, was, as a quaint old writer has it, 'built to the great glory of the English nation, and not

to be paralleled in the whole Christian world.' Her keel was one hundred and twenty-eight feet long, or but one quarter the length of our finest Atlantic steamships. She carried one hundred guns, and measured sixteen hundred and thirty-seven tons burden. It was deemed a happy omen for the king that her tonnage unexpectedly proved to be exactly the same as the year of her launch. Her cost was borne by the ship-money, the most notorious of all the illegal imposts of Charles I. The exaction of this tax led to the deposition and execution of the king, so that the omen was a left-handed one. The good ship saw much service against France and Holland, and was destroyed by fire, at a ripe old age, in 1696, at Chatham, where so many illustrious ships have met their fate.

The *President*, built sixty years ago, lies moored head and stern in the south West India Docks, London. She is a drill-ship for the men of the Royal Naval Reserve; and her inlaid wooden walls, studded with gaping portholes, look strangely out of place among the clipper-built iron and steel vessels of the present era. Half-a-dozen men-of-war that were built at Bombay in the infancy of the present century, and several of equal antiquity built in the home dockyards, are still afloat. Some of them possessed good sailing qualities, having regard to their bulk; but the modern ironclad has driven them from off the seas.

The *Resolute* scoured the Arctic seas in search of Sir John Franklin. She was frozen fast in the middle of a wide waste of ice, and abandoned by her crew. The ice setting outwards from the frigid zone, bore her southward; and after a remarkable drift, she was picked up by an American whaler. The United States government refitted and returned the derelict to Great Britain. She lay uncared for at her moorings in the Medway for several years, and was ultimately taken in dock and pulled to pieces. A suite of furniture was fashioned from her oaken timbers and presented to the President of the Republic. Small pieces of her were smuggled out of the dockyard, and many a wooden article is held dear at Chatham as a relic of the brave old discovery-ship.

The duel between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* (June 1, 1813) forms an interesting page in the history of the struggle between the United States and Great Britain from 1812 to 1815. The Americans had crowded the *Chesapeake* with inexperienced landmen, and had made ready, it is said, a feast on shore for the crew on their return flushed with victory. The unexpected happened as usual: the American frigate became the prize of the ship of the mother-country. The *Shannon* also was broken up at Chatham, and parts of her hull were sold at a premium.

Sir Francis Drake's tiny ship, the *Golden Hind*, at a still more remote period came to a similar end at Deptford. A chair made out of her timbers is treasured by the university authorities

at Oxford. In reference to this circumstance, Cowley has left the following felicitous epigram:

Drake and his ship could not have wished from fate
A happier station or more blest estate;
For lo! a seat of endless rest is given
To her in Oxford, and to him in heaven.

Our country could better have borne the destruction of a more costly vessel. The vandals might at least have left us a well-constructed model of her.

Would that Captain Cook's *Endeavour* could be rehabilitated! The great circumnavigator had mastered the mysteries of his profession as a seaman in a collier brig. He chose the *Endeavour*, a ship of the collier class, to place a girdle about the round world, in preference to a frigate placed at his disposal. Several of his scientific instruments are preserved to this day; but the good ship, where is she?

The French sent out two ships, the *Astrolabe* and the *Boussole*, soon after the return of Cook's successful expedition. They were lost with all hands among the rocky islets of the Pacific. The place at which they were wrecked was discovered, years afterwards, by an English captain. The French were unable to recover the vessels, but erected a Column in Paris to the memory of the unfortunate crews, and decorated it with such parts of the ships' outfits as they were able to wrest from Neptune.

The *Vitoria* made the first voyage round the world. Her commander was richly recompensed; and a terrestrial globe which bore the words 'Primus circumdedit me' was assigned to him as armorial bearings. The *Vitoria* was drawn up on to the dry land and preserved for many years. She was probably not so well looked after as our *Victory*, and no part of her has escaped destruction.

Once a year the red banner of St Mark with its golden lion waved over the heads of the doge of Venice and the principal personages of the haughty republic who thronged the decks of the *Bucentaur*, a two-decked highly ornamented gondola. Attended by an immense cortège of gondolas, she would leave the port and her consorts far behind. The doge, clothed in golden robes, would elevate his hands heavenwards and cast a sapphire ring into the Adriatic, saying: 'O sea! we espouse thee as a symbol of veritable and unending sovereignty.' Republic and ship have both passed away. A mast of the *Bucentaur* is preserved by the authorities at Venice. The gondoliers have some small portions of her: these are bequeathed to their heirs, and serve to recall from the dim distance the former importance of their fatherland and the days of its glory and liberty.

Some remarkable worn-out war-vessels have been sold to private firms, and broken up in order to get out the valuable copper bolts with which they are fastened together. Huge figure-heads of the *Queen* and *Goliath* are affixed to the entrance of a ship-knacker's yard adjacent to Vauxhall Bridge, London. They are curiosities in their way and afford food for reflection.

If the old warships could choose, they would probably prefer death to dishonour. There is a lower depth of degradation than to be dismantled and dismembered. Not long since we had occa-

sion to visit officially the Norwegian ships *Rota*, *Freia*, and *Galathea*. They had arrived with timber from American ports. Much to our surprise, we discovered that they were superannuated Danish men-of-war, built in 1822, 1824, and 1832 respectively. Sold out of the service, they had been bought by Norwegian merchants. Shorn of their high estate, there was, however, a massiveness and a dignity about their hulls that contrasted painfully with the poorness of their top-hammer and the scantiness of their crews.

A veteran warship appeals with fervency to the patriotic emotions of the veriest tyro in things nautical. She is an inspiration to a sea-loving youth; the picturesque embodiment of his day-dreams lies before him. The ships of Marryat, of Chamier, and of Armstrong have assumed a substantial form, and he seems to hear vividly the shrill scream of the pipe and the tramp of the blue-jackets along the deck. Will the sullen, sombre ironclads of to-day evoke similar enthusiasm? The old order passeth away, and the writer of nautical novels will find it hard to break out into raptures over the plated leviathans. The engineer has it all his own way now.

A halo of glory surrounds our old warships; but it is far otherwise with the vessels of the mercantile marine. The average life of a merchant-ship is from ten to fifteen years. Many survive but a few years; a few live to a painful old age. No matter how favourable the auspices may be when the merchant vessel glides down the ways, her hardships increase with old age, and her end is pitiable. Her early days are passed under sunny skies. Laden with fragrant teas and shimmering silks from far Cathay, she scuds before the gale or climbs the hill of impeding waters. Age grows on her apace, and she is sold at last to the Norwegians, those buyers of unseaworthy British ships. Then she may be seen struggling along with a cargo of timber, which alone she is fit to carry.

The *Betsy Caius* brought over William of Orange to this country in 1688, and was cast away in 1827—one hundred and thirty-nine years later. This historical ship, that helped to change a dynasty, was over one hundred and fifty years old when she ceased her combat with the winds and waves. The *Brothers*, a wooden brig, built at Maryport in 1786, is even now ploughing the waters of the North Sea. We noticed a good model of her in South Kensington Museum. She is one of those box-like craft that sailors say are built by the mile and cut off as they are wanted. The *Robert*, a wooden barquentine built at Barnstaple just ten years after H.M.S. *Victory*, is in active service. The *Truelove* of London, an American-built barque of 1764, would appear to be the oldest trader in this country, or indeed in the whole world. The *Goodwill*, built at Sunderland in 1785, the *Eliza*, built at Whitehaven in 1792, and the *Cognac Packet*, built at Bursledon in the same year, complete the tale of British ships remaining to us from last century. The Norwegians possess three vessels that have been employed actively for one hundred years. We have made an exhaustive analysis, and find there are two hundred and ninety vessels afloat that were launched before the accession of Her Majesty to the throne.

Some of the more modern merchant-ships become handmaidens to the steamships that are

fast taking their place in the carrying-trade. They have already supplanted them in the passenger traffic. Several famous vessels are anchored abroad as coal-hulks. The *Marlborough*, one of the old-fashioned East Indiamen, formerly commanded by Captain H. Toynbee, of the Meteorological Office, is moored at Gibraltar. How times have changed since she walked the waters like a thing of life, her white wings glistening in the sun! How many thousands of our troops she has borne in comfort and safety to our conquests in India. How many leagues of azure waters she has traversed in her voyages around the Cape of Storms! Her hands would man half-a-dozen equal-sized iron ships of the present day! Competition has not been an unmixt good to the British seaman nor to the shipowner. The *La Hogue* lies anchored off Funchal, Madeira. She was originally one of Duncan Dunbar's celebrated colonial passenger-ships. Her name is as familiar in Australia as a household word. When on board of her three years ago, we were informed by her captain that people would come from the interior to look once again on the good ship that brought them safely through the region of icebergs to the land of gold. How many well-to-do colonists have restlessly paced her deck without a penny in their pockets! What castles in the air were built on board of her by the emigrants whose children are the aristocracy of the rising cities! There are other ships of this kind stationed at Diego Garcia, Zanzibar, and elsewhere.

The competition between the tea-clippers of twenty years back awakened an intense excitement among the mercantile public. The British vessels in the end ousted the American clippers from the tea-trade, of which they enjoyed the monopoly; and other causes have conspired to destroy the supremacy of America as an ocean-carrier. Much money changed hands on the result of the ocean races. The *John Bertram* and the *Nightingale*, two of the famous American tea-clippers, were sold to the Norwegians. The former foundered in 1885 while bound to England with a cargo of petroleum from the American wells. We visited these two old vessels in their adversity, and dwelt with sadness on the days when they raced home against the London ship *Challenger* from Shanghai. Stakes were laid to the extent of twenty thousand dollars, which were won by the backers of the British ship. The *Thermopylae*, one of the most famous of the clippers, looks as fresh as ever. Her owners, George Thompson & Co. of Aberdeen, possess the finest fleet of ships that sail the seas; and the absence of loss of life in their extensive trade is phenomenal. This vessel sailed from London to Melbourne in sixty days; from Newcastle, New South Wales, to Shanghai, in twenty-eight days; and from China to England in ninety-one days—an unprecedented voyage, truly. The *Jerusalem*, one of this firm's old ships, has lately been sold to the Norwegians. What will become of the famous *Thermopylae*? She is worthy of a better fate.

Old ships serve as finger-posts along the path of progress. An interesting collection of models was exhibited by the Shipwrights' Company in 1882. There was one of the Viking's ship brought to light in 1880, having been embedded during one thousand years on the Scandinavian shore; and

another of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, previously referred to; and close by were others of the most advanced forms of steamship. The most superficial observer could not but be impressed with the rapid development of the art of the naval constructor.

MISS BARKLE'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER II.—A MEETING ON THE SANDS.

BEFORE that mysterious advertisement was explained, Midport society remained in the tortures of ungratified curiosity for five long days, for Miss Barkle had been summoned to London by telegram almost immediately after its appearance. During her absence, nothing was heard to enlighten her expectant friends; and when it became known that she was once more back at the cottage, that humble dwelling sustained something like a siege for the whole of the subsequent day.

The story Miss Barkle had to tell spread like wildfire, and received the usual variations from the gossips who passed the romantic tale from mouth to mouth, according to the ingenuity or veracity of the teller. We, however, can go straight to the fountain-head, and learn the actual facts, as Messrs Lambton and Warder told them to Miss Barkle. They had the honour of acting as executors to the late Mr George Penbury, and as such, wished to inform her that their late client had bequeathed to her the sum of ten thousand pounds, provided she was unmarried at the time of the testator's decease. Miss Barkle, as previously directed by Mr Brawn, had entered the office of the executors with her proofs of identity in her hand; and the matter so far as she could advance it was settled. But there was another phase of it to be considered. Mr Penbury had left a widow, a lady he had married only three years before his death; and Mrs Penbury had displayed so much resentment when the contents of her husband's will were made known to her, that Messrs Lambton and Warder felt it their duty to warn Miss Barkle that the bequest might form the subject of an action at law. They recommended her to let the business stand over for the present; the widow's feelings were most natural; but they had no doubt that a satisfactory settlement would be arrived at out of court if the legatee would bide her time.

Miss Barkle sat mutely at the lawyer's table, whilst he harped upon the possibility of a lawsuit and the hopes of an amicable arrangement to deaf ears. The name of her benefactor had awakened a train of thought scarcely pleasant to her now. Yes, she had known George Penbury sixteen years before; of her many admirers, he had been the most sincere and the least appreciated. She had laughed at him when he laid his wealth at her feet, for the Miss Barkle of twenty-one was a giddy ambitious girl, whose head had been turned by flattery. He left her without another word after his rejection, and they never met again. Long since she had totally forgotten him; his marriage had never come to her ears: his memory for her, however, had been more enduring, and she felt that his widow had some reason on her side for the hostile attitude she was expected to assume.

So Miss Barkle left the lawyer's office and made her way back to Midport, where her neighbours eagerly awaited her return. Of course they did not hear all the details of the case, but the bare reality was sufficient to raise her to the pedestal of a heroine in the eyes of her friends, and these dispersed their several ways, enchanted at having in their midst the central figure of so charming a little romance. We are certain of sympathy when fortune is kind to us, and the old ladies of Midport insisted on extolling Miss Barkle as the constant maid who had remained faithful to a lover unworthy of her regard. His bequest was pointed to as testimony of his remorse, and desire to do scant and tardy justice to a deeply injured woman, who deserved much more than she was to receive.

Mr Brawn was absent from Midport when she returned; he had been called away by his sister during her stay in London, and was not expected back for some time. He had not even left an address behind him, so Miss Barkle had to curb her impatience to claim his aid in meeting any steps Mrs Penbury might take towards disputing the clause in her husband's will. Although she was eager to do this, it is due to her to say that she appreciated the view Mrs Penbury might be expected to take of the matter, and purposed, if necessary, to make her aware of the extent of her acquaintance with her late husband. She had no wish to come in contact with the widow herself; but Mr Brawn should inform her how long it was since she had known the dead man, and how completely she had lost sight of him. It might not do much to pre-dispose Mrs Penbury in her favour; but it could do no harm to place that lady in possession of facts which she perhaps had no knowledge of, to the exclusion of theories which she might otherwise form for herself.

The cottage was now a favourite afternoon resort of the friends who rallied round Miss Barkle on her access to fortune. They had of course learned that there was the possibility of Mrs Penbury objecting; but the general consensus of opinion, led by Captain Mulbane, was favourable to the chance of the legacy being paid without serious opposition. Messrs Lambton and Warder were to write and inform her as soon as the widow made known to them the course she proposed to adopt; and until that decision arrived, Miss Barkle could not feel that the money was absolutely secure. If her friends did nothing else, they brought comfort to her anxious mind; it could not be very long before the business was settled one way or the other; and with Annie Carston living at the cottage and her numerous callers, she had little leisure to brood over it by herself.

It was a fine summer evening a few days after her return from London, when Miss Barkle, finding herself alone, was tempted to take a solitary walk along the beach. Armed with a novel, she set out along the stretch of sand that led far from the pier with its crowds of children and idlers.

Her thoughts, as they had often been since her late windfall, were occupied with Mr Brawn and that gentleman's 'intentions.' Would this money bring him any nearer her? She did him the justice to say to herself that it would have no

influence one way or the other; but still she could not altogether crush out a tiny lurking hope that it *might* further her wishes. She sat down and drew figures on the sand with her stick, whilst she surveyed the events of the past week in a dreamy way, as though they had happened to some one else, and had had no effect upon her prospects whatever. What a perfect evening it was: not a breath of wind, and not a cloud in the blue vault above. Her eyes wandered over the rippling sea to the distant fleet of fishing-boats, whose white sails flashed like wings in the setting sun.

She rose to continue her walk, but finding a little pebble in her shoe, sat down again, and having shaken it out, remained with it in her hand, thinking of the time when she was a little girl paddling on the beach with bare feet. An only child, she had been indulged in every possible way, and she laughed as the escapades of her girlhood rose to her recollection. If she could but live her life over again and once more be a child. The seaside was different then! A clear shallow pool lay before her, and some mischievous sprite suggested that she might enjoy a delicious little paddle there now. Miss Barkle blushed at the very thought at first; but presently took a careful look all round. No one was in sight; and so, smiling at her own childishness, she laid aside shoes and stockings and stepped warily across the sand to the water's edge. How the old women would chatter if they heard of this.—But how? Eh? Wasn't that sound suspiciously like a man whistling?—and no great distance from her, either?

She looked round and turned pale, for not a hundred yards away she discerned the portly form of Captain Mulbane, whose approach had been hitherto concealed by the rocks! Throwing an agonised glance in the direction of her shoes, she saw that the gentleman must pass close by the place where she had left them. Instant action was her only hope, and she made a dash to recover her property before he came up. In her blind haste she missed the spot, and then to her horror found she was too late. He had recognised her, of course; but a kindly ledge of rock concealed her feet; and as the captain came round it to greet her she sank down on the sand overwhelmed with confusion, smiling faintly. Captain Mulbane, of all men! If he knew it, all Midport would know it; and poor Miss Barkle shrank from the playful badinage she might expect from her friends. Anything would be preferable to discovery; she would sit there all night, if she died of cramp, rather than take him into her confidence. He had detected nothing yet, for he sat down, and in his usual easy way prepared for a chat. The opportunity seemed to him favourable for a little quiet love-making. His admiration for the lady had been stimulated by her reported good fortune; so he made himself as comfortable as a fifteen-stone man can on a seat of hard sand, and gazing amorously at Miss Barkle, began operations with a heavy sigh.

'It's a beautiful evening, Miss Barkle,' he observed with some lack of originality.

'Very fine,' replied the lady, who was relieved to find her companion's eyes fixed upon her face. 'If he only does that, I may get rid of him without being found out,' she thought.

A long pause. Miss Barkle was not going by conversation to encourage him, and the captain was racking his brains for something to say. He wanted to make a beginning, but how to do it he did not know.

'Ain't you afraid of cold, sitting out of an evening, Miss Barkle?' How utterly unable he felt to soar above stupid commonplaces to-night. He couldn't understand it, for he had plenty to say to her as a rule.

'O no. I'm very fond of spending an hour like this,' she said.—Like this! Heaven forgive the little fib!

Another pause, whilst Miss Barkle cast stealthy looks around for those shoes, and thought in despair that the interview might last for hours. The captain was thinking hard, and an idea struck him suddenly: he would begin with another love affair which all Midport was just noticing for the first time, and then work round to his own feelings from that.

'Brawen's been paying your friend Annie Carston a good deal of attention lately,' he said.

'That child!' said Miss Barkle. 'I don't think Mr Brawen is the man to be attracted by her pretty face, though she is as good a girl as I know.'

'You don't think there's anything in it, then?'

'Nothing serious, I imagine,' she replied thoughtfully. 'Annie is with me at the cottage now, and I should have heard, had there really been anything between them.'

'Then, if he means nothing, he's got no business to hang about after her as he does,' said the captain indignantly. 'It isn't fair to the girl.'

Miss Barkle forgot her unpleasant situation and pricked up her ears. This was something new. It was odd she had never heard a whisper of it before.

'I don't know that he does hang about after her, as you express it, Captain Mulbane,' she said.

'Then will you tell me what on earth takes him to your house three or four times a week, Miss Barkle?' he asked vehemently. He really meant no disparagement to her herself, but that she might be the attraction never occurred to him.

The lady longed to say, 'Miss Barkle,' but couldn't well do that, so shook her head with a slight but knowing smile as she murmured 'time would show.'

Captain Mulbane saw the smile, and a thrill of jealousy pierced his soul. Were the Midport gossips wrong? (They were more often so than not.) Was it possible that that little lawyer fellow was also a worshipper of the lady before him? That is not love which sees not in every fellow-man a possible rival. Our nautical friend was an observant individual, but he could not recall anything which would lend colour to the belief that Miss Barkle was John Brawen's idol. Still, she seemed to think she was. The captain was nonplussed, and stared blankly before him, till the lady, fearful of discovery, hastened to attract his attention.

'People might ask what brings you to my house, Captain Mulbane,' she said with unusual sweetness. Oh, if he would only go! She was growing dreadfully stiff!

Her tone gave him new heart. Surely this was

the chance he wanted, and he turned over half-a-dozen 'forms of declaration' in his mind as he struggled into a more suitable position in which to make one. A small cleft rock separated him from the object of his affections, and on this he rested his elbow 'whilst he feasted his yearning eyes, and began with impressive tenderness. 'Lina,' he said. The lady looked up quickly, and the captain's arm slipped into the cleft rock; he glanced down as he withdrew it, and his gaze remained rooted where it fell. Slowly and perplexedly, he drew out something, and raising his eyes, met those of Miss Barkle, who sat petrified. There was an awful pause for a minute, and she hid her face in her hands, whispering almost in tears: 'They're mine.'

Captain Mulbane was dumfounded, and for a few seconds he sat gaping awkwardly. It was an embarrassing check for any one to receive when he was on the very verge of an ardent avowal of love. He collected himself, and wisely decided on instant flight. He was deeply disappointed at their tête-à-tête being brought to so abrupt and singular a close, but could not help seeing that his only policy now was to cut it short at once.

'I'll say good-evening, if you will excuse me, Miss Barkle,' he said; 'I'm in a hurry to go to the club.'

He had not taken his eyes off those little shoes since he first discovered them, and hardly knew what he was saying to cover his retreat; but the lady gladly saw him turn away, and watched him out of sight with mingled feelings of relief and dismay. She prepared for her walk home in a very downcast frame of mind. Captain Mulbane's love of repeating such tales was, she well knew, so great that even his regard for her might not suffice to keep him silent, and she wondered how long it would be before the story came round to her, and what shape it would wear when it did come. He had been on the point of proposing to her, when his arm slipped and he made the discovery. Oddly enough, that phase of the meeting had been almost forgotten until this moment, when she seized upon it joyfully as a point that justified her in believing her garrulous friend would say nothing about it. She made up her mind to be particularly engaging in her manner to him, by way of insuring his continued silence, and then bent her thoughts on his remarks about Mr Brawen and Annie Carston. They had met frequently at her house, it was true, and were on very good terms, but nothing more, so far as she could judge. Still, there might be something in it, though Captain Mulbane was such an old gossip. She shrank from speaking to Annie on the subject, after the chat they had had on the evening the young lady came and begged the hospitality of the cottage; she had told her confidante then that she was sure Mr Brawen would declare himself before long, and now—hardly a week afterwards—she hears that the gentleman has been observed to pay marked attention to the confidante herself! She felt that she stood in rather a false position towards her friend, and entered her house harassed with jealous doubts. If she had been anxious for Mr Brawen's return before, she was doubly anxious now; his presence and nothing else could put matters right.

Captain Mulbane meantime was on his way to his own lodgings, bewildered and piqued. He

had seen Miss Barkle run up the beach, but had not noticed how she had been amusing herself; never suspected it till the look she gave when he used her Christian name startled him into making the slip which resulted in that unlucky find. No wonder she had been silent and constrained, no wonder he had found it difficult to talk to her. Why, from the moment he sat down she must have been praying silently for him to take himself off; and he, not only had he kept her in suspense for a good half-hour—quite enough to disgust her with him—but, like a blundering jackass, he must select that opportunity of all others to try and propose to her!

'Nice hash I've made of it,' said the gallant officer to himself. 'I've put my foot in it often before; but if ever I executed a worse manœuvre than this, I'm—I'm scuttled,' he concluded, casting about for an expression strong enough to suit his frame of mind.

He reached his lodgings, and taking an arm-chair, began to consider the case in earnest over a pipe, for he felt the necessity of 'repairing damages' at once. It was a difficult point, and the captain knitted his brows and smoked vigorously as he concentrated his mind upon it. He couldn't go up to the cottage and apologise for taking so innocent a share in the *contretemps*. He had been in no way to blame, and it wouldn't help him to assume that he had. At the same time he wished to avert the unpleasantness that might attend their next meeting if it took place before the freshness had worn off the incident.

'It's just as unlucky a business as ever I had a hand in,' ruminated the captain; 'now, particularly, when that money has just come to her and the lawyer fellow is hanging about. Most unfortunate! However, she isn't likely to tell any one but the little Carston girl, perhaps; and William Mulbane won't be such a fool as to mention it either. No fear of it.'

So the captain came to a conclusion that would have cheered Miss Barkle's heart had she known of it. She had said nothing about her afternoon's adventure to Annie Carston, and that sprightly young lady was at a loss to account for her friend's dejection. She took her own troubles very philosophically, and her one anxiety now was to know when John Brawen would return. A letter was awaiting her at home, but her step-mother had refused to give it up until Annie returned to the house. As the writer would be back before long, she preferred to go without it rather than pay such a price. It would be easy to explain her silence, and she waited patiently for his reappearance.

The morning that succeeded the little episode on the beach found Miss Barkle in high spirits. Mr Brawen had written to beg for her assistance in finding a house suitable for his sister and himself; he was sorry to trouble her at a time when she had doubtless much to do herself, but he had not even looked into his sister's affairs yet, and hoped he might count upon her kindness. Miss Barkle was enchanted with this mark of confidence, which she thought capable of bearing a double signification, and showed the letter to Annie with a complacent smile.

'You must come and help me,' she said; 'I couldn't undertake the responsibility alone.'

Annie was quite willing to assist, and the two

started on their house-hunting expedition with thoughts curiously similar.

'It's his nice way of consulting me about the house,' mused Miss Barkle. 'I suppose we should have to live in Midport, since John has his business here; but I'd rather settle near town if I could choose.'

'It's jolly to have a voice in taking a house one has an interest in,' thought Annie Carston. 'I hope the sister won't be with us always, though; and I wish we could live anywhere but in Midport.'

They were careful, however, to conceal their ideas from each other; but when the actual business was in hand, and they were looking through the furnished villa they selected to go over first, the elder lady was within an ace of betraying herself a dozen times.

'That little room will just suit you, Annie, when you come—I mean if you go—that is, if Mr Brawen's sister asks you to visit her.' Miss Barkle had nearly tripped into saying, 'when you come to stay with us,' and wisely resolved to try and regard the matter for the present as one in which she had no personal concern; but constant watchfulness was essential to succeed in this.

They satisfied themselves at length, and arrangements were made for 'Lansdale House' to be cleaned and got ready for the occupants. A telegram to Mr Brawen to announce what had been done was crossed by another from that gentleman saying that he had left his sister's concerns in the hands of her own solicitors and would be down with her on the following day.

'It's lucky we didn't lose an hour, Annie,' said Miss Barkle that evening; 'it will take us all our time to get the place presentable before they come to-morrow.'

They arranged to meet the travellers at the house to show them anything that might be necessary. They should then leave Mr Brawen alone with his sister, who would not care about seeing strangers yet.

Their labours were scarcely over the next morning, when John Brawen and his sister arrived, and were received at the door by the two ladies.

'Miss Barkle has kindly put the house in order,' said he to the widow, who entered beside him.—'Let me introduce my sister to you, Miss Barkle—Mrs Penbury.'

MUNGO.

My friends often ask me how it is that I can show so much attachment towards Mungo, a hideous little dog who is my companion in my walks, and trots at my heels just as if there was nobody and nothing else he cared for in the world. From an æsthetic point of view, I confess Mungo is a complete failure; and from the same standpoint I might be regarded as a person of deplorably bad taste. Picture to yourself all possible points of beauty in a dog, imagine exactly the opposite in every particular, and there you have Mungo. His hairless body, with its hideous patches in various colours, and his ill-shaped limbs, make him look like one of those creatures that the victims of delirium tremens see in their dreams. But my attachment towards Mungo is too deeply

rooted to be disturbed by his unattractive appearance. It is to him that I once owed my life, and so long as he lives I will look after him. This is how it happened.

Towards the close of my term of service in India, Mungo—a native mongrel of some sort or other—used to prowl about the barracks picking up bits here and there, although kicked and cuffed alike by officers and men. As, however, he seemed to be half-starved, I used to throw him some bones and scraps of food, so that after a time he began to get into quite a plump condition. For these little attentions he showed his gratitude by attaching himself to me and following me about as a well-bred English dog would do. At that time we used to go out once a month or so, on shooting expeditions into the jungle, and it was on one of these occasions that the event occurred which has made so indelible an impression on my memory. I was not in very cheerful spirits, for an incident of the previous night had somewhat troubled me. The sergeant's wife, one of the smartest little women in camp, had been left alone with her little boy, ten years old, her husband having been unexpectedly called away on duty. Soon after dusk they were horrified to see the head of a monstrous tiger come through a hole in the veranda, the eyes being fixed on them. Almost beside themselves with terror, they scarcely knew what to do; but a thought suddenly struck the mother. Picking up a tray, she placed it against the hole, thus compelling the monster to withdraw his head. But the tray had to be held there, in case the tiger should return; and mother and son relieved one another in standing there throughout the whole night, afraid to open the door to give an alarm, lest the tiger should be prowling about in search of another entrance to the room.

My thoughts were so fixed on this incident as we walked along through the jungle that I failed to keep up with the other members of the party, who had got on some distance ahead; when suddenly I heard a rustle in the underwood, and almost at the same moment an enormous tiger presented himself and prepared to spring upon me. I had never seen a more magnificent beast, and I could not help admiring him, notwithstanding the danger of my position. But there was no time to be lost. I immediately presented my rifle and fired. As ill-luck would have it, neither shot struck; and in another second the tiger was on me and had thrown me down, his claws buried in my left shoulder. I had no particular sensation of fear, and I remember thinking quite calmly as I lay on the ground, the tiger's hot breath coming against my face, 'It's all up with me now.' But at that moment my faithful little Mungo came to the rescue: he bit the tiger's tail so severely, that the beast immediately released his hold and turned round to seize its new adversary. But Mungo, as sharp and wary as he was plucky, was off in the tall grass in an instant. The tiger followed; but the dog had the advantage over him, as it could run through the grass and under the brushwood at a pace which the other could not keep up with. In fact it was almost comical to see how the great creature bounded about in its useless chase after the dog. But I knew that the tiger, disappointed

of seizing Mungo, would soon be back again to attack his master; so I reloaded my gun and stood awaiting his return. In a short time he was before me once more; and again I levelled my gun as well as I could, considering the pain in my left shoulder. The first shot missed; but the second struck the tiger in the shoulder, crippled him, and made him roll about in agony. Reloading as rapidly as possible, I went nearer to him, aimed very deliberately, and this time gave him his quietus. Scarcely had I done so before Mungo came bounding up to me, looking into my face, and whining as if with joy at seeing me safe. How I patted and fondled him, and how utterly unconscious I was then of his extreme ugliness, can easily be imagined.

I examined the tiger's tail, saw the marks left on it by Mungo's severe bite, and then returned to camp to get the assistance of some of my comrades in removing the animal's skin as a trophy of my adventure, and as a practical proof that I was entitled to the reward which was allowed us for every tiger we killed.

ECONOMICS OF RAILWAYS.

RAILWAYS are so familiar in present-day thoughts and habits, that few of us perhaps realise what an immense economic force they have become, not only in our own country but also in the world at large; and yet only sixty odd years have elapsed since that now historic incident, the construction of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The Act of Parliament authorising it was passed in 1821, and the line was opened in 1825. But the Stockton and Darlington was not the first railway, nor does its first Act make any mention of steam-engines; and in 1823 it had to apply for another Act for power to use locomotives. It was in this year that the first Act of Parliament was passed authorising the conveyance of passengers on a public railway by means of locomotive engines. But really the first Railway Bill was passed twenty-two years previously, namely, in 1801, for the construction of a line from Wandsworth to Croydon. In 1803 another line was authorised from Croydon to Reigate; and in 1804 another from Swansea to Oystermouth. These were the pioneer lines; and there were several others sanctioned by Parliament before the Stockton and Darlington scheme was submitted in its first form. But although there was no mention of steam-power in these schemes, the locomotive had prior existence, for Symington's locomotive was drawing barges along the Forth and Clyde Canal in 1785, although Trevethick's engine—tried first in 1804—was three years later than the first public railway. Of course everybody knows that it was the success of Stephenson's locomotive which led to its adoption on the Stockton and Darlington Railway, and of what resulted from that bold experiment; but everybody does not know the other little facts given above.

We do not propose to tell again the oft-told tale of the Stockton and Darlington and Chatmoss railways; but we propose to give some interesting matter illustrative of what we mentioned at the outset—the great economic force which has

developed in railways. For many of the facts and most of the figures we are indebted to Mr J. S. Jeans, whose work on *Railway Problems* is a marvel of industrious labour and of intelligent application.

In the time when stage-coaches ran between London and Edinburgh, many days were taken to complete the journey. At the beginning of the century it cost thirteen pounds per ton to convey goods by wagon from Leeds to London; and two pounds per ton from Liverpool to Manchester. Even in 1825 it was complained in Parliament that cotton, which came three thousand miles across the Atlantic in twenty days, required *six weeks* to traverse the thirty odd miles between the Liverpool docks and the Manchester mills.

Within about a dozen years after this time, there were nearly five hundred miles of railway in England and Wales, and about fifty miles in Scotland, open for public traffic. And what is there now? The total length of railways in the United Kingdom is now, with sidings, estimated at close upon twenty-five thousand miles, and the capital invested in them at over eight hundred and twenty millions sterling.

Let us see for a moment what this means as regards labour-power. Our railways carry in round numbers one hundred and seventy millions of tons of 'minerals' annually. Supposing the average distance carried be twenty miles, this means that they carry four thousand millions of tons of minerals *one mile* every year. The same method applied to American railways will show that in the United States between forty-five and fifty thousand millions of tons of traffic are annually moved *one mile*.

The total volume of actual goods carried to all distances on the railways of Europe and the United States is over a thousand millions of tons per annum. This gives an average of about three tons per inhabitant. But in the United Kingdom the average of actual traffic carried is 7·5 tons per inhabitant; and in the United States it is 7·6. Were the same average attained throughout Europe, the total annual traffic would be two thousand five hundred and twenty-five millions of tons. It will help us to understand the significance of these figures if we remember Dr Lardner estimates that a horse of average strength, working for eight or ten hours a day, cannot transport on his back more than two hundredweight, and can only carry this at the rate of twenty-five miles a day over an average level country.

And now about passengers. In 1885 the railways of the United Kingdom carried six hundred and ninety-seven and a quarter millions of persons, which, in round terms, is about equal to every inhabitant making twenty journeys in the year. No other country in the world approaches such an average; the corresponding figure in the case of Belgium, which is the next highest, being only about eleven journeys per inhabitant; while the United States average is six; that of Germany and France about five and a quarter; and that of Austria, Spain, and Italy between one and two. Of course, many persons in all these countries do not travel at all by railway from one year's end to the other, and the sum of population includes both women

and children. But there are no means of getting at the actual number of journeys performed by each traveller; that is to say, that although we know that six hundred and ninety-seven and a quarter millions of 'passengers' were booked by the railways of the United Kingdom in 1885, we cannot possibly tell how many times a single individual is represented in the total. There were six hundred and ninety-seven and a quarter millions of *journeys* made; but by how many separate persons is not recorded, so we can only fall back on 'averages.' But if we extend the average of the passenger traffic of the United Kingdom to the continent of Europe, we shall see that, instead of seven hundred millions of travellers, the continental railways would have five thousand four hundred and fifty-six millions of travellers per annum! And who shall say that such a result will never be reached, when we look back on the rapid development in our country?

One may get some idea of what railways mean in the saving of time and money to passengers, by taking the case of London. It is estimated that about half a million persons, or about one-tenth of the population of the entire area of the metropolis, require to travel to and from their business every day all the year round. If we remember the distances, it is not too much to assume that the railway will economise for each at least two hours in the week—or, say, five days per annum each. This over half a million of people means two and a half millions of days—or an economy of eight thousand three hundred years of three hundred working-days each! Suppose the average earnings of these half-million of people to be one hundred pounds per annum each—not too high an average when we remember the number of millionaires included in the total—we shall see a total money-saving—in the sense of time being money—of equal to eight hundred and thirty thousand pounds per annum. And this in London alone!

We have said that the capital invested in British railways is over eight hundred and twenty millions sterling. A good deal of that has been misspent money—that is to say, money spent in parliamentary contests, extortionate 'compensations,' hush-money to overcome threatened opposition, and the like. In Germany, the railway capital-cost is stated to be four hundred and sixty-five millions; in France, four hundred and sixty-two millions; in Austria, two hundred and sixty-four millions; in Russia, two hundred and eighty-five millions; in Spain, ninety-one millions; and in Belgium, forty-three millions; but in most if not all of these countries some of the railways have been constructed by the State, whereas in Britain every inch has been constructed by private enterprise. The United States, however, have a still more stupendous investment, for the capital embarked in the railways of that country in 1884 was one thousand five hundred and ninety-nine and a quarter millions sterling, and it has grown considerably since. But in the United States also, a considerable part of the railway system was constructed at State cost.

The railways in the United Kingdom constructed up to the end of 1884 cost an average of £42,486 per mile. Our railways are the

dearest in the world; for the average cost in France was only £27,704; in Belgium, £36,508; in Germany, £21,236; in Russia, £20,000; in Scandinavia, £10,000; and in the United States, £11,000 sterling per mile. The large cost in England seems due to these among other causes: the greater cost of the land—generally bought at fancy prices—the greater strength of the permanent way, the larger proportion of double-line, and the heavy expenses of parliamentary and other contests, already alluded to.

The total amount of land acquired and possessed by our Railway Companies was stated in 1868 to be over two hundred and fifty square miles, which is equal to over twelve acres per lineal mile of railway, and to an average width of one hundred and two feet over the whole. If the purchases since have been in the same proportion, the railways must now own about two hundred and thirty-five thousand acres, or one-three-hundred-and-twenty-third ($\frac{1}{323}$) part of the entire area of the United Kingdom. Mr Jeans places the capital outlay by the railways for land at an average of four thousand pounds per mile of railway, which would mean that seventy-six millions sterling of the capital has been expended on land-purchases. Curiously enough, this would give an average cost of three hundred and twenty-three (323) pounds per acre.

The following table shows the actual total of railways open in the several countries in 1883, which is the latest year in which we can find returns from all the countries:

Countries.	Railways Open.
Germany.....	22,423 miles.
Belgium.....	2,700 "
France.....	18,725 "
Switzerland.....	1,795 "
Italy.....	5,871 "
Austria.....	12,846 "
Holland.....	1,406 "
Denmark.....	1,005 "
Norway.....	970 "
Russia.....	14,478 "
United States.....	120,549 "
United Kingdom.....	18,681 "

With regard to these figures, it is to be noted that the number of 'miles open' for traffic does not mean the total mileage of railway tracks; for there are sidings and so forth which do not count in the traffic returns. Thus, the United States had actually 149,181 miles of rails, although only 120,549 miles were open for traffic; and the figure for the United Kingdom including sidings is now close upon twenty-five thousand miles.

As regards colonial railways, the totals in 1884 were as under:

Countries.	Railways Open.
India.....	10,447 miles.
Canada.....	9,575 "
Cape Colony.....	1,344 "
Victoria.....	1,562 "
New South Wales.....	1,618 "
New Zealand.....	1,396 "
Queensland.....	1,207 "
South Australia.....	1,036 "

Total.....28,185 miles.

This gives an average of one mile of railway to every two hundred and sixty-nine square miles of area, and every seven thousand three hundred and seventy-nine inhabitants. But in the United

States there is one mile of railway to every twenty-five square miles, and every two thousand three hundred and twenty-one inhabitants; and in the United Kingdom, one mile of railway to every six miles of area, and every two thousand inhabitants. What room for possibilities there is for railway expansion in the colonies, these figures can help us to guess.

The economics of railways cannot be considered without some examination of them as forms of invested capital—vehicles, so to speak, of industrial production, for a railway is in one sense as much an instrument of production as is a factory. Many Railway Companies are indeed manufacturers in a large and literal sense, making locomotives, wagons, &c. for their own use; while each of them is a large employer of labour, and all of them form a system which is indispensable to the industrial existence of the country at large.

The most noticeable thing about British railways, as a form of invested capital, is that since 1854 there have only been three years when the average dividend fell below four per cent., and only three years in which it exceeded four and a half per cent. From this, then, it would appear that the normal average return over a period of years ranges between four and four and a half per cent.; but while the average remains so stable, there are, of course, considerable and frequent fluctuations in the fortunes of the individual lines. Then, as regards the component parts of the United Kingdom—the system of England and Wales pays an average of 4·27 per cent.; that of Scotland, one of 3·6 per cent.; and that of Ireland, one of 3·5 per cent.—taking the returns of 1884 as bases. The average would be higher in each case but for the fact that there are a number of lines so loaded with ‘guaranteed’ and ‘preferential’ capital, that the ordinary share-capital has not received any dividend at all for years. In 1884 there was a total of about two hundred and ninety-nine millions sterling of such capital which has received no dividend since 1870. As a set-off to this, we find that the five largest railways in the country—the Midland, the London and North-Western, the Great Northern, the North-Eastern, and the Great Western—representing together about three hundred and thirty-eight millions sterling—paid in 1884 an average of over six per cent. on the ordinary share-capital.

In the United States, the one thousand five hundred and ninety-nine and a quarter millions sterling invested in railways yielded an average dividend of 5·4 per cent.; but yet more than eighteen per cent. of the whole paid either nothing at all or less than one per cent.

Few persons are aware of the enormous mass of labour employed, as well as saved, by railways. In the United Kingdom, according to a return obtained by Mr Broadhurst in the House of Commons, there were in 1884 no fewer than 367,793 persons directly employed on and in connection with the railways. In the United States, the railway employees numbered 630,000; and on the Continent, 1,076,649. This gives a total of over two millions of individuals whose labour is directly employed in railway enterprise; but this total does not by any means represent all who are indirectly employed, in the manufacture of rails, locomotives, sleepers, stores, in furnishing

fuel, &c. In our country, our textile and mining industries employ directly more persons than do our railways; but in the United States there is no single industry, except agriculture, which absorbs so much labour as do their railways.

Now, how do the earnings of our railways compare with the profits from other capital investments forming the wealth of the country? In 1884 the net profits of railways were, say, thirty-three and a quarter millions sterling; the rents of house-property, one hundred and twenty-seven millions; the rents of landed property, sixty-five and a half millions; the returns from mines, seven millions; from iron-works, three millions; from gas-works, four millions; and from quarries, nine millions. All of these sources of income fluctuate very much more, over a term of years, than do railways, and are, therefore, not so attractive for steady investment. But taking the figures as they are, we see that railways represent one of the most important capital-stocks in the country. We may look at it in another way. If all the agricultural land in the United Kingdom were capitalised on an average of twenty shillings per acre and twenty years’ purchase, the capital value of the land would now be one thousand millions sterling. Our railways, as we have seen, represent a capital value of eight hundred and twenty millions sterling, or only one hundred and eighty millions less than our agricultural land.

Thus, we see that King Railway is growing to be the most powerful economic force in the world, with reference to both labour and capital.

We may see, and be thankful for it, that railways have really been the factor which has cheapened the cost of living to our struggling millions; has opened up the great New World in the West, and enabled it both to produce and to find markets for its produce; has placed alike the Russian peasant and the Indian ryot in touch with the Western world; has welded the nations together as with an iron hand. One may go further, and say that King Railway has done more than either the Peace Society or the ingenuity of inventors of destructive weapons in preventing and shortening wars. The nations still quarrel and still fight; but campaigns are now short, if sharp, and the more railways are extended, the shorter and less frequent must they become.

AT A VILLAGE OFF THE MAIN ROAD IN PERSIA.

WE had started at midnight. It is raining cats and dogs. We are pretty well wrapped up, my wife and I; but the continuous downpour is beginning to penetrate, and I get suggestive hints as to the luxury of a good cry. We are marching; that is to say, day after day we are riding stages of twenty to thirty miles. Without any break, our journey will last twelve days. Our twenty mules, carrying our luggage, road-kit, and servants, are some ten miles behind, for with our head-man we have pushed on in hope of shelter. The rain comes down in sheets. My heavy ulster, soaked with moisture but still waterproof, seems to be a ton-weight upon my tired shoulders; a tiny stream of icy water is trickling

into my right boot. I have taken off my gloves some time ago—they were as wet sponges. My wife is in a similar plight. She is wearing a Mexican blanket—with a hole in it, through which she has thrust her head—over her habit. Her mare has cast a shoe, and has consequently gone lame. My tobacco has given out. Our plight is sufficiently miserable. At our side, alternately thrashing his wretched muleteer's pony and cursing his luck, rides our treasure, our factotum, Malek Mahommed, my servant of twelve years, the man whose talents as a cook and intriguer make life in Persia bearable, and even pleasant. The load on which he is perched gives out a metallic clank. From his pack-saddle on one side hangs a smouldering firepot; on the other, a huge leathern water-bottle. He is smoking his *kahian*, or hubble-bubble. My man is quite dry, for he has on a *yapunja*, or shaggy woollen coat. It is black in colour, and exactly like a very shaggy bearskin in appearance.

All at once out goes the hand of Malek Mahommed. 'There it is, sahib. I see the smoke.'

Sure enough, just then something looms up out of the mist and rain. There is no doubt, for we hear the welcome barking of the village dogs. My man gives a yell and rides on. When we arrive, we find him pounding on the apparently inhospitable gates of a walled village two hundred yards square. 'Dogs, sons of burnt fathers, open! May your,' &c.—Not a sound save the violent barking. Is it uninhabited? No; the telltale smoke answers this question. 'Asses, fools! I tell you it is a sahib!' yells Malek Mahommed as he rattles at the wooden gates.

I now join him in shouting, and assure the reluctant inhabitants that all is right. In the meanwhile our horses are literally knee-deep in mud, and down comes the rain. At length a shrill voice demands what we want.

'Want!' shrieks Malek Mahommed—'want! daughter of the nether regions. Shelter, of course!'

The gates are flung open; and an aged crone of repulsive aspect, leaning on an iron-headed stick, appears; a crowd of lean and barking curs rush upon us; a few cuts from my hunting-whip make them slink back. Slowly we blunder into the gateway through the black and slippery mud. Within the village walls there is no sign of life save the smoke and the loud bleating of lambs.

There are some twenty hovels of a beehive shape, some sheds; a few of the rough implements of Persian agriculture are strewn about. The hag precedes us.

'This way, my darling—this way, lord of my soul.'

Why all this sweetness? Whence this welcome? Does not the old woman's hand clasp a bright *keran* (tenpence), and is she not aware that we are Europeans? A Persian bigwig enters a village or house by force—by force he lives at free quarters on the inhabitants. If the place suits him, he will not leave until compelled, or bribed, to do so. The European of course pays for what he has, gives a small present in leaving, and is ever a welcome guest.

At the door of one of the beehives I descend;

a woman takes our horses, when I have helped down my wife. We enter the beehive by a door four feet high. The place is full of smoke, acrid smoke. We get out of our dripping wraps; a smiling and unveiled village woman takes them. We hurriedly lie down on the carpet, for only the upper part of the beehive is full of smoke. Now we escape it. Our boots are removed by giggling women. Our cook has taken possession of an adjoining beehive. As we sprawl on the carpet, we take stock of the place. We lean on the rolls of bedding of our village host; it is poor, but scrupulously clean. The lower part of the walls is whitened; the upper part, jet black from the smoke, which makes its exit from a round hole in the apex of the hive. This curious room is some twenty feet in diameter, and is lighted by the chimney-hole and the door. Another door communicates with another hive-like room at the side. Furniture there is none. A few timeworn leathern trunks contain our host's worldly wealth; a few grimy jars his treasure, his opium harvest. Some cotton pods lie in one heap, some barley in another. He trusts us entirely, or rather his wife does, for all the able-bodied men are at work in the fields in the rain.

Malek Mahommed enters smiling, and divested of his wraps. A ferocious-looking fellow truly. A broad *kummar*, or straight sword, hangs from his side; a single-barrelled pistol and a straight knife are in his girdle, into which is also thrust a riding-whip with many tails and a short handle. His boots—carefully wiped—and his gay scarf add to his tremendous appearance. His nose is red from exposure; his eyes run from standing over the smoky fire. But he smiles as he hands us the steaming tea he has just prepared, and then hurries off to bring my private hubble-bubble. We swallow our tea. I smoke my pipe, and as I do so, I hear the shouts of our servants and the muleteers, who are just arriving. We drop off to sleep: it is ten o'clock in the morning.

We awake, and lazily stretch ourselves. It is now one. What a change! The sunlight is streaming in at the open door. It is hot, terribly hot. The rain is over. We gingerly make our way over the stepping-stones through the black mud. In front of and outside the village is a piece of turf; here are some thirty women and girls gossiping. From a pen in the centre of the grass comes the bleating of lambs; there the little things lie and cry in a party-coloured mass of black, white, brown, and gray. Malek Mahommed is selecting a victim for our dinner: he finds at length the fattest of the flock; he pays two shillings to the owner, after some haggling. Both parties are evidently pleased, for both grin happily. And we are now surrounded by the women, all unveiled, for the villager only veils in the towns. Such questions, such laughter, such compliments. Tongues go twenty-four to the dozen. We inform the village beauty that she has eyes like a gazelle; she discreetly retires, smiling, but lowering her veil. Some little joking takes place. My wife distributes a few needles. We are all like old friends. But the bleating from the pen becomes more urgent; responsive baas are heard approaching. Shouts and barking proclaim the arrival of the village flock and shepherds. The ewes rush violently

towards the pen; so do the village wives and maidens. Each singles out a lamb and rushes with it to its expectant mother. There is a considerable mixture; many mistakes occur; indignant mothers repudiate lambs not their own. At last, each ewe having found its offspring reposes at ease. The loud bleating decreases. The sons and fathers of the village now make their appearance. My wife retires. I sit and smoke, chatting with the village graybeards—local politics, the price of grain, the wickedness of provincial governors. 'Yes, sahib, the opium, the opium—that is our salvation; but it is gambling, pure gambling.' We assent; and so on, and so on.

These Persian villagers are dressed cheaply but comfortably; in fact they are well and warmly clad. Every man has his thick felt overcoat, impervious to wind or weather; his blue cotton *pyjamas* and shirt. They are all barefooted, for it is muddy; but each man carries his *ghevas*, or shoes of leather-bound cotton, in his girdle. Every man has his conical hat or round cap of brown felt. By judicious pumping, I get a pretty accurate insight into the life of the Persian villager. He lives well, he dresses in a homely fashion, and if his landlord or the government tax-gatherer arrives—taxes are paid in kind—he puts on his most ragged garments. Money he seldom sees; barter is the usual mode of conducting business. If he gets hold of actual coin, he buries it; for in Persia there are no banks save in the great towns, and even there the bankers are in the position of mere tradesmen and live by usury. The villager seldom sees roast-meat; but he lives well on bread, boiled rice, soup, milk, butter, cheese, and curds. Fruits are a staple food, as grapes, apples, apricots, and plums. So are vegetables, as radishes and cucumbers. The latter are eaten in immense quantities, and are quite harmless.

This is a village off the main road, and we are the first Europeans the women-folk have ever seen. The sun is nearly set as we sit smoking and chatting. And now my smiling *peishkhidmut* (table-servant) announces dinner and that our beehive is carpeted and furnished. Welcome news! I hasten off, for we must be in the saddle again an hour after midnight. We travel thus to avoid the noonday sun.

A DEFENCE AGAINST SCAMPED AND DEFECTIVE PLUMBER-WORK.

Some years have now elapsed since the Court of the London Plumbers' Company recommended a scheme for the registration of efficient plumbers, both masters and journeymen, and for giving technical instruction in plumbing and for the thorough inspection of work done. The conference on this subject at the 'Healtheries' in 1884 was a great success, and somewhat advanced the question. The Plumbers' Company has already spent two thousand pounds in advancing the matter, and have received between seven and eight hundred pounds in registration fees. The movement has spread to Scotland; and at influential meetings held in Edinburgh and Glasgow co-operating district Councils have been formed for the east and west of Scotland. The design

of the movement is to enable the public to distinguish between qualified and unqualified plumbers. The system of registration adopted makes it necessary that there shall be one standard of excellence to which all men must attain before they can be registered as plumbers. No man can receive a certificate of registration until he has given satisfactory evidence that he is capable of doing his work thoroughly and well; and failing this, no one will be put on the register of plumbers.

The London and Scottish conferences brought out the same facts. To sanction inferior plumber-work was a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. The work of the mason and painter can be so far inspected and criticised; that of the plumber is largely secret and hidden. Defects become known through a leakage of gas, or of foul air from a soilpipe. The bursting of a pipe sometimes destroys twenty times the value of the plumber-work which caused the mischief. Loss of health can sometimes be directly traced to bad plumber-work. Mr G. Shaw, the originator of the movement, is of opinion that our present system of building, which prevents the architect from coming into direct contact with the plumbers, is a vicious one. Contracts were given to general builders who had little or no knowledge of plumber-work, and who employed incompetent men at a lower rate of wages than was paid to efficient plumbers, who should be held responsible for the effective nature of the work done. The co-operation is sought of local authorities, architects, the medical profession, and others who can practically advance this work. It is also proposed to help the formation of technical classes of instruction for plumbers. This movement is so bound up with the interests of suffering humanity, that we heartily wish it all success.

THE FLOWER QUEEN.

A DEWY rose, blood-red,
Sweet perfume whilom shed,
For me alone:
It was the last of all;
And now its petals fall,
Their crimson radiance gone, their odorous duty done.

The bright flowers of the sun,
Though day is long begun,
Hang sadly down;
They mourn the dying Queen;
And all their golden sheen,
My garden's sunny crown, has faded into brown.

Pale, snow-white lily-bells
Ring sweet sad soundless knells,
Mourning the dead;
Dim requiems of the breeze
Sigh 'mid the tasselled trees,
Where Autumn's gold and red with fading leaves are wed.

H. DAWSON LOWRY.

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EMIN PASHA.

ALTHOUGH the name of the heroic governor of the Equatorial Province of the Soudan is now familiar to every schoolboy in both hemispheres, it is not every one who knows that the name is an assumed one. The word 'Emin' is Arabic; it means 'The Faithful One,' and surely never was adopted name more appropriate to the person using it.

The real name of the bearer of it is Eduard Schnitzer, a native of the small town of Oppeln, in Prussian Silesia, where he was born on the 28th of March 1840. His father was a merchant, who in 1842 removed to Neisse, in the same province, where his mother and sister still reside. According to a biographical sketch in a work published in Germany last year, and a translation of which has recently been published in this country under the supervision of Dr Felkin,* Eduard was educated first at the Gymnasium at Neisse, and then at the Universities of Breslau and Berlin, at the latter of which he graduated in medicine in the year 1864. He was distinguished even as a boy by a strong desire to travel and a great love for natural history; and it was for the gratification of both feelings that, after receiving his degree, he began to look for work in a foreign land. About the end of 1864 he went to Turkey, and there made the acquaintance of the Vali Mushir Divitji Ismail Hakki Pasha, who gave him a post on his staff during official journeys through Armenia, Syria, and Arabia. This appointment seems to have occupied Dr Schnitzer until 1873, when Hakki died. After spending a couple of years or so in Turkey, Schnitzer returned to Neisse, and spent a few months with his family there, devoting himself the while to the study of natural history. But the wandering spirit was irrepressible, and in 1876 Dr Schnitzer went to Egypt and entered the service of the Khedive as Dr Emin Effendi. His

reason for adopting this name was that he might get rid of every external indication which might stand in the way of his usefulness in the Mohamadan world in which he was resolved to labour. He knew the prejudices of the followers of Islam, and their dislike, and even hatred, of anything of 'Frankish' association, and he believed that he could best carry on his work by discarding his German name. Writing to his sister from Trebizond, he informs her that he has quickly gained a reputation as a doctor among the Turks, and adds: 'This is due to the fact that I know Turkish and Arabic as few Europeans know them, and that I have so completely adopted the habits and customs of the people, that no one believes that an honest German is disguised behind the Turkish name. Don't be afraid: I have only adopted the name; I have not become a Turk.'

His German biographer informs us that Emin has an extraordinary gift for the acquisition of foreign languages. Besides German, French, English, and Italian, he knew several Slavonic languages, and Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. No doubt he is now quite proficient in many of the dialects of Central Africa. To this talent, so invaluable in a traveller, must be ascribed a large measure of Emin's success. Then his medical training has been greatly in his favour; and his cast of mind and of temper seems to be eminently fitted for dealing with the dark races of Africa. He seems, moreover, to have all the firmness and decision of character of his great predecessor, Gordon, without the latter's nervous temperament.

It was under Gordon that Emin served his apprenticeship to African life. Gordon was in 1876 governor of the Equatorial Province, and Emin was sent to him to act as chief medical officer. But Gordon soon saw that the German doctor could be of much more effective service than in walking the hospital, and he was accordingly despatched on various tours of inspection through the districts, and was also sent on important missions to the kings of Uganda and Unyoro—countries and potentates which bulk so

* *Emin Pasha in Central Africa: being a Collection of his Letters and Journals.* Edited and annotated by Professor Schweinfurth, Professor Ratzel, Dr Felkin, and Dr G. Hartlaub. London: George Philip and Son.

largely in the story of Africa. Gordon relinquished his governorship of the Equatorial Province in 1877, and returning to Egypt, was succeeded by incompetent and corrupt native officers, who soon undid all that he had organised. He left the province peaceful and settled, although labouring under a heavy debt; but his successors quickly reproduced the system of oppression, brutality, and injustice, which had taken so much labour and so many years to put down. Emin, meanwhile, was surgeon-in-chief, but without any definite rank, owing to the intrigues of Khartoum officials. But in the early part of 1878, Gordon came back to Khartoum as governor-general of the whole Soudan, and appointed Emin to be governor of the Equatorial Province, the post which he had himself held for over three years.

That province was once more in a state of disorganisation. It was peopled by a number of different tribes, who had thriven under Gordon's rule, but were now suffering under the oppression of his successors. The slave-dealers had recommenced their operations, and were settled in fortified villages all over the land. The officials were mostly disreputable men—criminals in many cases, banished from Egypt, but whose sentences had expired—and the Egyptian soldiers were untrustworthy. The stations had fallen into disrepair, and a block on the Nile cut off Emin's supplies for the first two years of his rule.

Within a year, however, Emin had reduced the province to order. 'Slowly but surely, and with ever-increasing success,' says Dr Felkin, 'he became master of the situation; and when I passed through his province for the second time in 1879, a most wonderful change had taken place. Stations had been rebuilt, discontent was changed into loyal obedience, corruption had been put down, taxation was equalised, and he had already begun the task of clearing his province from the slave-dealers who infested it. This was a difficult and dangerous undertaking, for they had rooted themselves very firmly in the soil, and most of the officials in Emin's employ were in full sympathy with them. Emin was entirely alone: no friend or helper was near. Indeed, with the exception of a few months when Lupton Bey was his second in command, he has been alone from the day of his appointment in March 1878 until the present time.'

Before the end of 1882, Emin had proved himself not only a capital doctor, a capable and humane governor, and a skilful general, but also a most successful economist and financier. Not only were the slave-dealers banished and the Egyptian soldiers replaced by trustworthy natives, but also large districts had been added to his territory by peaceful diplomatic negotiation, and the people had settled down to the cultivation of cotton, indigo, rice, coffee, sugar, &c. Gardening was being industriously prosecuted at the stations, the roads between them were being made permanently passable, and a weekly post had been established through the territory. And lastly, a province which even in Gordon's time could not pay its own expenses, and involved a charge of over thirty thousand pounds sterling a year on the Egyptian exchequer, was not only now self-supporting, but was showing

a clear profit of eight thousand pounds, and later of ten thousand pounds sterling per annum. It is well, indeed, for Emin that he did make the province self-supporting, since, from 1878 to 1884, only six steamers had come to Lado (his chief station) from Khartoum with supplies; and since 1884—the year of the Mahdi successes—he has been wholly shut off from the world.

Of course, during the disturbances of the Mahdi revolt, the prosperity of the province suffered considerably; and indeed at one time it seemed as if Emin would have to follow the example of Lupton and surrender to the False Prophet. Those disturbances began so far back as 1881, although it was not till December 1884 that they reached a climax in the fall of Khartoum and the murder of Gordon, who had returned, as all know, at the request of the British government, at a time when he was preparing to go to the Congo. It was towards the end of 1883 that Emin began to feel things uncomfortable, and to receive reports of the serious troubles in the north. Dr Junker reached him towards the end of January 1884, but was unable to progress farther down the Nile, and had to remain with Emin until January 1885. Then he made a push through Uganda, was enabled to despatch some needful supplies to Emin, and managed finally to reach Cairo by way of Zanzibar, in time to meet Stanley on his way out to relieve Emin. Writing in August 1884, Emin says that for fourteen months he had had no news from Khartoum, and that his magazines were empty; but he had heard of the surrender of Lupton, and had himself been called on peremptorily by one of the Mahdist commanders to surrender also. His troubles and difficulties then were many and great; but he held on, and by-and-by heard of the Mahdist reverses, which confirmed him in his determination to stick to his post and his trust. In March 1886, he received from Dr Junker a packet of letters and newspapers, which for the first time made him acquainted with all the events in Egypt and in the Soudan, and also with the first news from Europe he had had for over three years. He writes: 'So now I had the whole of the sad drama before me which ended in Gordon's death, the retreat of the English, and the loss of the Soudan; and it came back to my mind most vividly how the editor of the *Times* had remarked in a note to a communication from me that I took too gloomy a view of the situation; for I had warned the English not to think too lightly of the state of affairs in the Soudan, and not to let themselves be deceived by an illusory religious movement where very different objects were really aimed at. Poor Gordon!'

With the packet from Dr Junker he received a despatch from the Egyptian government, informing him that they were unable to assist him, that the Soudan was to be given up, and that he might leave the country as soon as he pleased. Emin calls this 'a cool business despatch in the fullest sense of the word,' and says: 'They simply suggest to me the way to Zanzibar just as they would a walk to Shubra.' But the way to Zanzibar was no longer open; and even if it had been, Emin would not forsake his people and the country which he had

laboured so long and so successfully to bring into a condition of order and prosperity.

Of the future of the country, he has large expectations: its natural beauties, its fertility, its mineral resources, and the growing habits of industry of the people, all mark it as a promising field for commercial expansion. The products are such as Europe requires—india-rubber, ivory, sugar, coffee, cotton, skins, &c.—and the people are settling into a condition for requiring European manufactures in return.

So far we have looked at Emin in his administrative capacity mainly; but in his journals and letters we find him to be distinctively a man of science. Nothing escapes him, and his powers of observation are remarkable. Dr Hartlaub says: 'The amount of work which Emin Pasha has performed in making zoological collections, observations, and notes, is astonishing in the highest degree. It could only have been performed by a man whose heart was aglow with the pure fire of scientific instinct, with enthusiastic, absolutely unselfish, love of Nature, and with an irresistible impulse to add to the knowledge of her treasures to the full extent of his powers. Emin was able to turn this impulse into action, notwithstanding the pressure of difficult surrounding circumstances and the many and varied duties which his high position compelled him to fulfil.'

The journals as yet received, and now published, contain the records of a number of journeys made through his territories down to 1887. They are so full of most interesting information about the physical characteristics of the country, about the people, the botany, the zoology, &c., that it is difficult to know what selection to make for the purposes of this paper.

One of the most striking things to be met with in the earlier pages is a reference to a report which is brought to him between Lado and Dufile on the Upper Nile, that a race of dwarfs inhabit mountain caves to the west of Bedén. They were said to be only forty inches high, of a brown colour, and of great agility, to eat white ants and roots, and to shoot with very small arrows which are poisoned, and very difficult to extract. These pygmies he was inclined to regard as the remainder of a dwarf population which ages ago spread itself over Central Africa. Four years later, he himself comes upon some specimens of the Akka, a pygmy people, divided into numerous small tribes, who lead a nomadic life in the Monbuttu country. One of these Akka 'had a reddish but rather dark skin (probably dirt), was very prognathous, rather swag-bellied, but exceedingly nimble. His height was three feet six inches. His whole body was covered by thick stiff hair, almost like felt, which was especially thick on the breast.' A girl fourteen years of age measured three feet and seven-eighths of an inch in height! These people are said to be very expert hunters, but also very vindictive, so that the neighbouring tribes are glad to let them have all they want for maintenance in return for skins and feathers, the products of the chase, which they prosecute with bows and arrows alone.

In the country of the Bari (near Gondokoro or Lado) Emin had a curious experience with a lion. One day he came upon one caught in a pitfall, and a chief named Lottor was sent for to get it out. He pushed into the pit branches of trees, by

means of which the lion came out of the hole, and after giving a roar of acknowledgment, walked off unharmed. This is mentioned as illustrative of the fact that 'the lions here are really good-tempered, and also much admired.' He was told by the negroes that this Lottor always keeps two tame lions in his house, and as long as he receives occasional presents of corn and goats, prevents the wild lions from doing any mischief.

Among one of the Dinka tribes he comes upon an ingenious method of utilising snakes. These are secured by stratagem, and then a pool of water is enclosed by a strong thorn fence, so arranged that the game coming to drink must pass through a narrow lane. The snakes, which are fastened by a hole bored through the tail, and placed near this opening, bite the animals as they attempt to pass. In this way a supply of game is always obtainable without the trouble of hunting.

A curious method of salutation is noted among the Shuli, a people who inhabit the Fatiko district. They are very polite, but must be somewhat uncomfortable acquaintances. They are always greeting each other, and always inquiring after the health of those they encounter, and their method of greeting is to raise the arms of the visitor four or five times above his head. Morning-calls in that country must be a severe and fatiguing gymnastic exercise.

In the Kedebu country we come upon the pile-dwellings. 'A platform supported upon over three hundred stout piles, each one six feet high, stood within a broken-down bamboo fence. It had a length of ninety feet, a width of eighty feet, and was made of timber and brushwood, and covered with clay and cow-dung, to form a level flooring. The ground-floor among the piles serves as a kitchen and storehouse; the water-jars and the *murhakka* (grindstone) are placed in it, and the servants sleep there. A square hole in the centre of the platform provides this lower room with light, and ladders lead through the hole to the platform. This latter is divided by a reed-fence into an outer and an inner compartment, the former containing two large huts, each about fifteen feet in diameter, with neat mud walls about three feet high, and a lofty conical roof. These two huts serve as a dwelling-place for the master of the house. The inner compartment, or harem, contains six smaller huts. The whole arrangement is really curious, especially here, where the ground is not swampy, and where termites [white ants] are only seldom found, so that there appears to be no real reason for such a method of house-building.' Around each homestead is a garden, in which are grown maize, onions, beans, egg-apples, bananas, lemons, bitter oranges, &c.

The journals are full of curious matter, from which we would willingly extract further did space permit. The chief practical interest, however, consists in the manner in which Emin has contributed to the more accurate mapping out of the whole country, and in the attention which he has given to testing the fertility of the land and its suitability for productive and commercial cultivation. Doubtless more will be heard from him on these points when Stanley returns.

That one who has lived so long in this isolated region, and who has so identified himself with the people, should be able to present us with more

life-like descriptions and more accurate reports than any mere occasional traveller, goes without saying. It may therefore be truly said that the world will owe more to Emin for knowledge of Central Africa than to any other single individual. His powers of description are great; and we have Dr Felkin's testimony that his whole heart is centred in the welfare of his people and in the advancement of science, without any thought of personal fame. But such fame he has already secured by the peculiar nature of his situation, and by the heroic manner in which he has clung to his post and devoted himself to the duty bequeathed to him by Gordon. No figure in all the strange and moving romance of African story will stand out with greater distinctness and in greater eminence than that of the unselfish, hard-working, science-loving, and humanitarian German doctor now known as Emin Pasha.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXII.—HOLY MATRIMONY.

THE way of the transgressor went easy for a while with Hugh Massinger. His sands ran smoother than he could himself have expected. His two chief bugbears faded away by degrees before the strong light of facts into pure nonentity. Relf did not know that Elsie Challoner lay dead and buried in a lonely grave at Orfordness; and Winifred Meysey was not left a ward in Chancery, or otherwise inconvenienced and strictly tied up in her plans for marrying him. On the contrary, the affairs of the deceased were arranged exactly as Hugh himself would have wished them to be ordered. The will in particular was a perfect gem: Hugh could have thrown his arms round the blameless attorney who drew it up: Mrs Meysey appointed sole executrix and guardian of the infant; the estate and Hall bequeathed absolutely and without remainder to Winifred in person; a life-interest in certain specified sums only, as arranged by settlement, to the relict herself; and the coast all clear for Hugh Massinger.

Everything indeed had turned out for the best. The late Squire had chosen the happiest possible moment for dying. The infant and the guardian were on Hugh's own side. There need be no long engagement, no tremulous expectation of dead men's shoes now: nor would Hugh have to put up for an indefinite term of years with the nuisance of a father-in-law's perpetual benevolent interference and well-meant dictation. Even the settlements, those tough documents, would be all drawn up to suit his own digestion. As Hugh sat, decorously lugubrious, in the dining-room at Whitestrand with Mr Heberden, the family solicitor, two days after the funeral, he could hardly help experiencing a certain subdued sense of something exceedingly akin to stifled gratitude in his own soul towards that defective breech-loader which had relieved him at once of so many embarrassments, and made him practically Lord of the Manor of Consumptum per Mare, in the hundred of Dunwich and county of Suffolk, containing by admeasurement so many acres, roods, and perches, be the same more or less—and mostly less, indeed, as the years proceeded.

But for that slight drawback, Hugh cared as

yet absolutely nothing. One only trouble, one visible kill-joy, darkened his view from the Hall windows. Every principal room in the house faced due south. Wherever he looked, from the drawing-room or the dining-room, the library or the vestibule, the boudoir or the billiard-room, the Whitestrand poplar rose straight and sheer, as conspicuous as ever, by the brink of the Char, where sea and stream met together on debatable ground in angry encounter. Its rugged boles formed the one striking and beautiful object in the whole prospect across those desolate flats of sand and salt marsh, but to Hugh Massinger that ancient tree had now become instinct with awe and horror—a visible memorial of his own crime—for it *was* a crime—and of poor dead Elsie in her nameless grave by the Low Lighthouse. He grew to regard it as Elsie's monument. Day after day, while he stopped at Whitestrand, he rose up in the morning with aching brows from his sleepless bed—for how could he sleep, with the breakers that drowned and tossed ashore his dear dead Elsie thundering wild songs of triumph from the bar in his ears?—and gazed out of his window over the dreary outlook, to see that accusing tree with its gnarled roots confronting him ever, full in face, and poisoning his success with its mute witness to his murdered victim. Every time he looked out upon it, he heard once more that wild, wild cry, as of a stricken life, when Elsie plunged into the careering current. Every time the wind shrieked through its creaking branches in the lonely night, the shrieks went to his heart like so many living human voices crying for sympathy. He hated and despised himself in the very midst of his success. He had sold his own soul for a wasted strip of swamp and marsh and brake and sand-hill, and he found in the end that it profited him nothing.

Still, time brings alleviation to most earthly troubles. Even remorse grows duller with age—till the day comes for it to burst out afresh in fuller force than ever and goad its victim on to a final confession. Days and weeks and months rolled by, and Hugh Massinger by slow degrees began to feel that Othello was himself again. He wrote, as of old, his brilliant leaders every day regularly for the *Morning Telephone*: he slashed three-volume novels with as much vigour as ever, and rather more cynicism and cruelty than before, in the *Monday Register*: he touched the tender stops of various quills, warbling his Doric lay to Ballade and Sonnet, in the wonted woods of the *Pimlico Magazine* with endless versatility. Nor was that all. He played high in the evening at Pallavicini's, more recklessly even than had been his ancient use; for was not his future now assured to him? and did not the horrid picture of his dead drowned Elsie, tossed friendless on the bare beach at Orfordness, haunt him and sting him with its perpetual presence to seek in the feverish excitement of roulette some momentary forgetfulness of his life's tragedy? True, his rhymes were sadder and gloomier now than of old, and his play wilder: no more of the rollicking, humorous, happy-go-lucky ballad-mongering that alternated in the *Echoes from Callimachus* with his more serious verses: his sincerest laughter, he knew himself, with some pain was fraught, since Elsie

left him. But in their lieu had come a reckless abandonment that served very well at first sight instead of real mirth or heartfelt geniality. In the old days, Hugh had always cultivated a certain casual vein of cheerful pessimism: he had posed as the man who drags the lengthening chain of life behind him good-humouredly: now, a grim sardonic smile usurped the place of his pessimistic *bonhomie*, and filled his pages with a Carlylese gloom that was utterly alien to his true inborn nature. Even his lighter work showed traces of the change. His wayward article, 'Is Death Worth Dying?' in the *Nineteenth Century*, was full of bitterness; and his clever skit on the Blood-and-Thunder school of fiction, entitled *The Zuluhiad*, and published as a Christmas 'shilling shocker,' had a sting and a venom in it that were wholly wanting to his earlier performances in the same direction. The critics said Massinger was suffering from a shallow spasm of Byronic affectation. He knew himself he was really suffering from a profound fit of utter self-contempt and wild despairing carelessness of consequence.

The world moves, however, as Galileo remarked, in spite of our sorrows. Three months after Wyville Meysey's death, Whitestrand received its new master. It was strange to find any but Meyseys at the Hall, for Meyseys had dwelt there from time immemorial; the first of the bankers, even, though of a younger branch, having purchased the estate with his newly-gotten gold from an elder and ruined representative of the main stock. The wedding was a very quiet affair, of course: half-mourning at best, with no show or tomfoolery; and what was of much more importance to Hugh, the arrangements for the settlements were most satisfactory. The family solicitor wasn't such a fool as to make things unpleasant for his new client. Winifred was a nice little body in her way, too; affectionately proud of her captive poet: and from a lordly height of marital superiority, Hugh rather liked the pink and white small woman than otherwise. But he didn't mean to live much at Whitestrand either—'At least while your mother lasts, my child,' he said cautiously to Winifred, letting her down gently by gradual stages, and saving his own reputation for kindly consideration at the same moment. 'The good old soul would naturally like still to feel herself mistress in her own house. It would be cruelty to mothers-in-law to disturb her now. Whenever we come down, we'll come down strictly on a visit to her. But for ourselves, we'll nest for the present in London.'

Nesting in London suited Winifred, for her part, excellently well. In poor papa's day, indeed, the Meyseys had felt themselves of late far too deeply impoverished—since the sandhills swallowed up the Yondstream farms—even to go up to town in a hired house for a few weeks or so in the height of the season, as they had once been wont to do, during the golden age of the agricultural interest. The struggle to keep up appearances in the old home on a reduced income had occupied to the full their utmost energies during these latter days of universal depression. So London was to Winifred a practically almost unknown world, rich in potentialities of varied enjoyment. She had been there but seldom, on

a visit to friends; and she knew nothing as yet of that brilliant circle that gathers round Mrs Bouverie Barton's Wednesday evenings, where Hugh Massinger was able to introduce her with distinction and credit. True, the young couple began life on a small scale, in a quiet little house—most æsthetically decorated on economical principles—down a side-street in the remote recesses of Philistine Bayswater. But Hugh's coterie, though unsuccessful, was nevertheless *ex officio* distinguished: he was hand-in-glove with the whole Cheyne Row set—the Royal Academicians still in embryo; the Bishops Designate of fate who at present held suburban curacies; the Cabinet Ministers whose budget yet lingered in domestic arrears; the germinating judges whose chances of the ermine were confined in near perspective to soup at sessions, or the smallest of small devilling for rising juniors. They were not rich in this world's goods, those discounted celebrities; but they were a lively crew, full of fun and fancy, and they delighted Winifred by their juvenile exuberance of wit and eloquence. She voted the men with their wives, when they had any—which wasn't often, for Bohemia can seldom afford the luxury of matrimony—the most charming society she had ever met; and Bohemia in return voted 'little Mrs Massinger,' in the words of its accepted mouthpiece and spokesman, Hatherley, 'as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria.' The little 'arrangement in pink and white' became, indeed, quite a noted personage in the narrow world of Cheyne Row society.

To say the truth, Hugh detested Whitestrand. He never wanted to go near the place again, now that he had made himself in very deed its lord and master. He hated the house, the grounds, the river; but above all he hated that funereal poplar, that seemed to rise up and menace him each time he looked at it with the pains and penalties of his own evil conscience. At Easter, Winifred dragged him home once more, to visit the relict in her lonely mansion. The Bard went, as in duty bound; but the duty was more than commonly distasteful. They reached Whitestrand late at night, and were shown upstairs at once into a large front bedroom. Hugh's heart leaped up in his mouth when he saw it. It was Elsie's room: the room into which he had climbed on that fateful evening; the room bound closest up in his memory with the hideous abiding nightmare of his poisoned life; the room he had never since dared to enter; the room he had hoped never more to look upon.

'Are we to sleep here, Winnie?' he cried aghast, in a tone of the utmost horror and dismay. And Winifred, looking up at him in silent surprise, answered merely in an unconcerned voice: 'Why, yes, my dear boy; what's wrong with the room? It's good enough. We're to sleep here, of course—certainly.'

He dared say no more. To remonstrate would be madness. Any reason he gave must seem inadequate. But he would sooner have slept on the bare ground by the river-side than have slept that night in that desecrated and haunted room of Elsie's.

He did not sleep. He lay awake all the long hours through, and murmured to himself, ten thousand times over, 'Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie!'

His lips moved as he murmured sometimes. Winifred opened her eyes once—he felt her open them, though it was as dark as pitch—and seemed to listen. One's senses grow preternaturally sharp in the night watches. Could she have heard that mute movement of his silent lips? He hoped not. O no; it was impossible. But he lay awake till morning in a deadly terror, the cold sweat standing in big drops on his brow, haunted through the long vigils of the dreary night by that picture of Elsie, in her pale white dress, with arms uplifted above her helpless head, flinging herself wildly from the dim black poplar, through the gloom of evening, upon the tender mercies of the swift dark water.

Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie! It was for this he had sold and betrayed his Elsie!

In the morning when he rose, he went over to the window—Elsie's window, round whose sides the rich wistaria clambered so luxuriantly—and looked out with weary sleepless eyes across the weary dreary stretch of barren Suffolk scenery. It was still winter, and the wistaria on the wall stood bald and naked and bare of foliage. How different from the time when Elsie lived there! He could see where the bough had broken with his weight that awful night of Elsie's disappearance. He gazed vacantly across the lawn and meadow towards the tumbling sandhills. 'Winifred,' he said—he was in no mood just then to call her Winnie—'what a big bare bundle of straight tall switches that poplar is! So gaunt and stiff! I hate the very sight of it. It's a great disfigurement. I wonder your people ever stood it so long, blocking out the view from their drawing-room windows.'

Winifred rose from the dressing-table and looked out by his side in blank surprise. 'Why, Hugh,' she cried, noting both his unwonted tone and the absence of the now customary pet form of her name, 'how *can* you say so? I call it just lovely. Blocking out the view, indeed! Why, it *is* the view. There's nothing else. It's the only good point in the whole picture. I love to see it even in winter—the dear old poplar—so tall and straight—with its twigs etched out in black and gray against the sky like that. I love it better than anything else at Whitestrand.'

Hugh drummed his fingers on the frosted pane impatiently. 'For my part, I hate it,' he answered in a short but sullen tone. 'Whenever I come to live at Whitestrand, I shall never rest till I've cut it down and stubbed it up from the roots entirely.'

'Hugh!'

There was something in the accent that made him start. He knew why. It reminded him of Elsie's voice as she cried aloud 'Hugh!' in her horror and agony upon that fatal evening by the grim old poplar.

'Well, Winnie,' he answered much more tenderly. The tone had melted him.

Winifred flung her arms around him with every sign of grief and dismay and burst into a sudden flood of tears. 'O Hugh,' she cried, 'you don't know what you say: you can't think how you grieve me.—Don't you know why? You must surely guess it.—It isn't that the Whitestrand poplar's a famous tree—a seamark for sailors—a landmark for all the country round—historical almost, not to say celebrated! It isn't that it

was mentioned by Fuller and Drayton, and I'm sure I don't know how many other famous people—poor papa knew, and was fond of quoting them. It's not for all that, though for that alone I should be sorry to lose it, sorrier than for anything else in all Whitestrand. But, oh, Hugh, that *you* should say so! That *you* should say, "For my part, I hate it."—Why, Hugh, it was on the roots of that very tree, you know, that you saw me for the very first time in my life, as I sat there dangling my hat—with Elsie. It was from the roots of that tree that I first saw you and fell in love with you, when you jumped off Mr Relf's yawl to rescue my poor little half-crown hat for me.—It was there you first won my heart—you won my heart—my poor little heart.—And to think you really want to cut down that tree would nearly, very nearly break it.—Hugh, dear Hugh, never, never, never say so!'

No man can see a woman cry unmoved. To do so is more or less than human. Hugh laid her head tenderly on his big shoulder, soothed and kissed her with loving gentleness, swore he was speaking without due thought or reflection, declared that he loved that tree every bit as much in his heart as she herself did, and pacified her gradually by every means in his large repertory of masculine blandishments. But deep down in his bosom, he crushed his despair. If ever he came to live at Whitestrand, then, that hateful tree must for ever rise up in mute accusation to bear witness against him!

It could not! It should not! He could never stand it. Either they must never live at Whitestrand at all, or else—or else, in some way unknown to Winifred, he must manage to do away with the Whitestrand poplar.

IN THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND.

It lies asleep, this beauty-spot of mine, in a far corner of fair Kent; and when you pass out of the shingle-roofed cottage on the hill and linger by the skirts of the wood, there opens before you such a prospect as Fancy, with half-closed eyes, might love to picture. I am standing on the velvet ridge of Harbledown, close by the time-stained almshouses which in the olden days gave shelter to the hapless leper. You may still see the high casement from which was wont to swing the opened wallet that pleaded dumbly for charity from the passers-by, from the pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St Thomas à Becket down in the hollow yonder. They are alike at rest now, pilgrim and suppliant; but the shrine remains, and we ourselves are but pilgrims of a later day. Nor can you rid yourself of the subdued emotions which the place and the prospect inspire. It is the same scene which greeted the eyes of those long-past travellers with staff and scallop-shell, after their self-appointed toils. Here are only images of rest—gleaming meadows with slumberous cattle in their midst, such as Sidney Cooper (the English Cuyt) delights to paint; golden mazes of the hop-vine; and gently undulating groves, that here and there open out into cool green glades and give glimpses of distant cottage roofs or church spire. There are here no rude manifestations of nature—no brawling streams or rugged rocks, or shaggy undergrowth

or dense wood. In this spot the north wind has long forgotten to blow. The wind that comes in from the far-off sea where the white cliffs are for ever gleaming is the softest of zephyrs, that scarce stirs the rose-leaves, and only whispers now and again in the long sedge-grass. And as you descend the hill, your way lies through ripening orchards and scented copses where the filbert and the hazel grow.

It is high noon, and the stillness is profound as you pass in under the overarching orchards with their carpets of softest turf. It is the silence as if of some vast cathedral, whose 'long drawn aisles' and fretted columns are here reproduced in the twilight vistas beneath the trees. Now and again come a faint rustle and twitter: it is the little brown birds that are clinging close to the darkened boughs. Just now they are songless; but when great Orion begins to slope westward and the leaves to play in the afternoon breeze, they will take up the thread of their song.

It is thus you go onwards towards Canterbury, through gardens of fruit and across rich spaces of meadow-land, past ivy-clad churches, and red-tiled cottages half smothered by the clinging embrace of jessamine or honeysuckle, with the river Stour gleaming in front like a silver ribbon, and the great towers of the cathedral standing solemnly against the sky. And there is its great clock, too, and its pendulum, which is for ever swinging, and saying:

For ever, never;
Never, for ever.

You can almost hear, distant as you are, its silver-tongued bell. To come upon it in this fashion is like a prelude of sweet music; it attunes the mind to the place and its surroundings. If you care, however, you may dash into the ancient city at express speed, either by the London, Chatham, and Dover, or the South-Eastern Railway, in little more than an hour after leaving London; and in half an hour more, with guide-book in hand, you may 'do' all the principal sights in the place. But such methods are only fitted for the soulless being who would visit Jerusalem as a Cook's excursionist, or get himself personally conducted through the Vale of Tempe, or play skittles on the Pyramids. The quiet old city does not lend itself to such treatment. Therefore it happens that after the shrieking train has disgorged its human load, a very short time suffices to satisfy the ordinary sightseer. A hasty scramble through the cathedral, and a beefsteak at the old *Rose*, added to the purchase, perchance, of a shilling set of views—these are the pleasures which suffice most tourists until the train is ready to whirl them somewhere else, leaving the place once more to quietness and to me. Let such people, so far as Canterbury is concerned, go stay at home. It has no charms for the great army of professional sightseers. Its charms of sentiment and association cannot be weighed, measured, and duly labelled. They reside, mayhap, in the crumbling stones of an old ruin; in the battered front of a quaint gateway; in the note of a distant bell, or the 'coo' of an amorous or complaining dove; the subdued quiet of the street, the old-fashioned gardens, the sweet air, the calm river, the all-pervading restfulness of men and things. These be its

charms, and so they vary with the passing mood of the pilgrims: let the brand-new tourist pass on his clattering way.

If this be your mental attitude, then England holds for you no more congenial haunt. It is a straggling town of one street, long and narrow, with curious little lanes branching off on either side into still quadrangles or leafy solitudes, where you may muse throughout a summer day and be a better man for it. Or you may mount the ruined city wall and linger among the remains of early Christian times, undisturbed save by the solemn music of the chimes; for it is a city of many churches. Chapels, too, it has; but the modern spirit rests upon them, and they chime not except on the Sabbath. There, half-way up the main street is Mercery Lane, leading and pointing like a crooked arm right up to the door of the cathedral. Take off your hat, my friend. Dan Chaucer has been here before you with his attendant train of pilgrims. You have but to shut the eye in order to conjure up vivid visions of the old England which the courtly and passion-steeped *trouvreur* has pictured for us with such magnificent art in the *Canterbury Tales*. It requires no effort of the imagination, as you stand in this quaint alley with the sad and beautiful wrecks of time about you, to reconstruct the gorgeous procession of our English Froissart. There is the Wife of Bath, merry, impudent, droll, and *dégagée*—very *dégagée*; and the Knight and the Miller and the Clerk—all of them breathing types of the dead middle ages, the fine old time of 'ruggin' and rivin'.' Across the open space, over the way, a leap of the imagination carries you back to the landing of St Augustine and his band of Christian monks. They have come all the way from Rome in order to convert the Angles: men and maidens, blue-eyed and golden-haired, surcharged with the fierce-flowing blood of a Scaldic race as yet but half-civilised. It is high noon, and the time of day is clashed and hammered from the cathedral tower; and in the pauses of the solemn din you hear the intermittent tread of the incense-bearing monks and their exultant shout of 'Alleluia!'

The scene is worthy the recalling: it is that of the introduction of Christianity into Britain, at that time the abode of brave but cruel barbarians. You will scarcely realise the strange beliefs and practices of that far-removed time, standing as you do in the bright summer sunshine of Canterbury with mild and modern accessories about you. If you have touch of Orkney, you shall recall, as you take in the charms of the premier cathedral in the world, the immemorial fabric of St Magnus, looking with stony glare into the 'still vexed' ocean. Not that there is any resemblance, any suggestion of similarity, between the two structures. The one stands in the garden of England, in a rich-hued landscape, whereon the vine ripens and the nightingale's note is heard, where the very blood is warmed by the process of the suns; the other stands by the brim of the sea, the centre of a little world of barren slopes, where the shrill scream of the scart and the gannet and the kittiwake replaces the mellow strain of the beautiful bird of night. Yet they are not unlike in those features, in those suggestions, which are inspired

by the contemplation of kindred beauties, of ineffable charms which are inherent in such venerable relics of man's genius and of man's piety—the higher attributes of men here below.

MISS BARKLE'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER III.—THE WIDOW.

'My sister, Mrs Penbury!'

Miss Barkle stood for a moment with the hand she had offered still outstretched. The widow started violently, stared, and swept past her with an almost imperceptible bow. John Brawn looked after his sister in amazement; whilst Miss Barkle took one step towards him with extended arms, and, with a low cry, fell fainting at his feet before he could save her. Mrs Penbury, turning as she reached the stairs, faced the group in the hall, pale but collected.

'That is the name I could not remember,' she said to her brother in a calm steady voice—'Miss Barkle.' She cast a glance at the prostrate figure, bowed slightly to Annie Carston, and continued her retreat up-stairs, as John Brawn, in astounded silence, raised the senseless lady in his arms.

He carried her into the dining-room, and leaving her with Annie and the servants, followed his sister. She had informed him of what she described bitterly as a most extraordinary, an utterly unaccountable bequest by her husband to a woman she had never heard of before the will was read, and whose name she had forgotten, or affected to forget. Now, the advertisement which had so excited Midport curiosity recurred to him, and he saw what he had done. He had unwittingly brought his sister in contact with the one woman on earth she would wish to avoid. Undoubtedly, it was most distressing for them both, but still the meeting itself was hardly sufficient to account for the effect it had produced on Miss Barkle. That seemed to require explanation, but the present was not the time to ask for it.

He found Mrs Penbury outwardly composed, but in a state of suppressed excitement, such as he felt was only to be expected. She turned questioning to him as he entered, but did not speak.

'If you had only told me the name of the woman George left the money to, you should not have undergone this, Nora,' he said.

'Where is she now?' asked his sister quietly.

'Down-stairs, in a dead faint. Miss Carston and the maids are with her.'

'You might go down and see how she is, John; I must see her before she leaves.'

'Not to-day, Nora: spare her just now; she has been awfully upset,' he urged.

Mrs Penbury looked at him for an instant before she spoke; when she did, her voice rang through the room in tones that boded ill to the unhappy Miss Barkle if an interview took place between them then.

'Spare her!—Then, is this nothing to me?' Her lips moved silently as she motioned to him imperiously to go; and he left the room bent on getting Miss Barkle out of the house as quickly as possible.

She had recovered, but sat in a dazed dreamy condition, as though she heard and saw nothing around her.

John Brawn went forward and took her hand. 'I have sent for a cab to take you home, Miss Barkle, as soon as you are able to go.'

His voice roused her; and as she looked up at him, it crossed his mind that if he could learn particulars of this wretched legacy business from her, it might satisfy his sister. It would never do to bring the two face to face again to-day—neither was equal to it. So he sat down, and cautiously approaching the subject, drew from her all she had intended to lay before him after her visit to Lambton and Warder. It was a long rambling story as she told it; but he waited patiently until she finished speaking and gave way to tears.

'Then, after the date you mention—sixteen years ago now—you never saw my late brother-in-law?' he asked.

'Never. I never saw him again after I—I refused him,' sobbed the unfortunate lady.

'Nor heard from him?'

'I didn't even know whether he was alive.'

John Brawn paused for a moment; the matter was repugnant to him; but he wished to get it over once for all, now he had entered upon it. 'Well, I won't trouble you any further,' he said, rising. 'I'll come over, or write as soon as there may be anything to tell you.'

He accompanied them to the door, detaining Annie, as Miss Barkle passed out. 'Try and come over to us this evening,' he whispered.

Miss Carston nodded, and followed her friend, who had relapsed into her former state of passive apathy, and seemed incapable of understanding the simplest remark.

Her mind was busy with the one thought—that John Brawn was separated from her for ever. The process of reasoning by which she arrived at this conclusion was simple: Mrs Penbury was his sister; Mrs Penbury was her enemy; ergo, Mrs Penbury created a hopeless breach between them. This conviction had come upon her with all its force when he had introduced her to the widow, and she had instinctively turned to him, when she fainted.

Annie Carston drew her own inferences from what had passed, and in doing so did not go far wrong; but Miss Barkle required all her attention at present, for she was shaken and unnerved. They reached home at length, for they had not waited for the cab; and Annie persuaded her to lie down, whilst she darkened the room, and sat with her to prevent her being disturbed. How the Midport people would talk when they heard of this new development of the story! Annie wondered what bearing it would have on her friend's prospects: the widow was a handsome woman of about eight-and-twenty, tall and dark, with a masculine firmness of expression indicative of her strength of will; a great contrast to the meek Selina Barkle; and Annie hoped, after what she had witnessed, that it would not lie with Mrs Penbury to give up or withhold the legacy. She knew as little about law as the majority of her sex at the age of nineteen, and the repeated discussions she had listened to lately had left her under the impression that if the widow refused to surrender that ten

thousand pounds, Miss Barkle had no remedy. But that did not seem to be right somehow; she would ask John Brawen about it.

What a curious confusion the affairs of her few intimates were in. To begin with the eldest: there was Captain Mulbane deeply enamoured of Miss Barkle, who didn't care for him; Miss Barkle warmly attached to John Brawen, who didn't care for her; Mr Brawen in love with Annie Carston, who *did* care for him very much. 'Now, if only I liked Captain Mulbane instead of Jack,' she thought, 'the tangle would be complete; but I'd rather have it as it is.'

She rose and went to the bedside. Miss Barkle was dozing, but her hands were hot, and she had a feverish look. Annie left the room softly and went out into the garden. There was no cause for anxiety yet; but if she was not all right by the evening, she would call in the doctor. She had not had much experience of invalids, and did not like the responsibility of being alone with her friend in her present plight. She was leaning over the little gate, idly watching the cattle on the common across the road, when she became aware of the vicinity of a man drawing near with a stealthy circumspect gait, as though he feared being seen. It was Captain Mulbane, who had been hovering about the cottage all day. Observing that Annie was alone, he took courage and came forward.

'How do you do, Captain Mulbane?' she said. 'Why, has anything gone wrong?'

Her question was amply justified by the stout gentleman's extraordinary grimaces at the cottage and herself alternately.

'Has he gone mad?' she thought in consternation.—'What is it, Captain Mulbane?' she continued aloud, drawing back from the gate a little.

The gallant officer's visage was rapidly assuming a deep purple tint, which gave additional variety to its contortions as he bent over the gate whispering hoarsely: 'I won't tell a soul a word about it, Miss Annie—not a soul, not a word.' He drew back, and his features expanded in a grin that was positively refreshing in its intelligence after his previous facial antics. But what did the man mean?

'Won't you come in?' she said. 'I'm afraid I don't quite understand you.'

'O no, Miss Annie; I couldn't think of coming in yet,' and the captain recoiled hastily, as though he distrusted his own power to decline the invitation.

'How is—is *she*, to-day?' he asked with a sigh, edging up to the gate again.

'Not very well. Something has upset her; but'—

'I knew it; I felt it! I was sure she would catch cold, Miss Annie,' and he almost wept as he spoke, 'sitting there with her feet all wet, you know, and it was my fault too.'

What, in the name of mystery, was this new complication? Captain Mulbane evidently held himself accountable for something which had resulted in wet feet for Miss Barkle, and was causing him genuine distress.

'If you will wait a minute, I'll come out with you,' she said, and ran into the house for her hat; whilst the captain, hidden by the laurels, wistfully scanned each window in turn for a glimpse of his

lady-love. He had been unable to restrain his longing to see Miss Barkle and assure her of his intention to be silent regarding their meeting on the sands; but his heart failed him, and he waited about, trusting that fortune might bring him in her path. Seeing Annie Carston alone at the gate, and never doubting but that she knew the secret, he had deemed no preliminary explanations necessary when he confided to her his resolve 'not to tell a soul,' supposing she would not fail to inform her friend.

The blind of the drawing-room window was suddenly drawn up as he watched, and fearful of discovery, the captain turned and fled. He was out of sight when Annie Carston reappeared two minutes later; and after looking all round the garden for him, she felt that the only conclusion any one could come to was, that the old gentleman was indeed off his head. 'Sunstroke, I daresay,' mused Annie as she started in the direction of Lansdale House; 'but I hope he'll be all right before he calls again.'

She met John Brawen at the gate, and they went in together to the library. 'I expect my sister will be down directly,' he said, as he closed the door. 'I'm going to introduce you to her as my intended wife, if you've no objection.'

That she had none was manifest by her mode of acknowledging the matter-of-fact statement, which seemed perfectly satisfactory to 'Jack.' What followed would not interest us, and we may pass over their conversation, touching only on those points which relate to our story.

'What do you think Lina Barkle told me the other day, Jack?' said Annie.

'Don't know, I'm sure.—What?'

'She was quite certain you were going to propose to her before long,' and Miss Carston tried to repress a giggle.

'Where on earth did she get that idea?—Are you sure she didn't mean Mulbane?'

'Of course I am, stupid boy. But had I not better break the truth to her now?'

'I can't comprehend what put the notion into her head,' said John Brawen, who was by no means pleased at Miss Barkle's fancy. 'But you'd best tell her you're engaged to me, or that I am to you, however you like to put it.'

'The poor thing was awfully cut up by what happened this morning.—Do you think your sister will give her the money, Jack?'

'It doesn't rest with her, Annie. She might keep her out of it for six months; but she hasn't a leg to stand on if she carries the case into court.'

'It would make a tremendous difference to Lina,' said Annie thoughtfully.

'You see, child,' said Mr Brawen, 'it's a terrible blow to a woman to find, as Nora has, after her husband's death that another has held such a place in his thoughts all those years. One can't expect her to regard Miss Barkle with very warm feelings, you know.'

'It wasn't her fault,' was the womanly answer.

'No blame attaches to any one, unless to poor George, in making such a bequest after he had actually married.'

'What had Lina better do now, Jack?'

'She can't do anything. Thank Heaven, Nora's concerns aren't in my hands!' said John Brawen

devoutly. Perhaps, had he known that his timely absence from Midport had saved him the unpleasantness of being asked by Miss Barkle to champion her cause against the unknown widow, he would have been still more grateful. He had gone to his sister after the two had left that morning, and had told her everything he had ascertained. Nora Penbury was not a vindictive woman; but, as her brother said, it had been a terrible blow to find that some unknown love had held a place in her husband's heart throughout their short wedded life of three years. With even, unbroken harmony that life had run, without a discordant note in its brief but happy span; and the legacy had given the widow a shock which deadened the keenness of her sorrow. Now at the end, Fate, dealing its shafts with both hands, as is its wont, must bring her face to face with the woman herself ere her widowhood was ten days old. Blameless she believed Miss Barkle to be, for, amongst her husband's letters, she had found nothing for suspicion to feed upon. Still, nothing could shake the glaring truth, so rudely brought home to her; and she could not persuade herself to let this long silent rival receive such a mark of her own husband's love unchallenged. She had lost no time in taking steps to prevent the executors proving the will; and though the delay might inconvenience herself, she would not remove the legal obstacle she had raised before she could help it.

The solicitors had concealed from Miss Barkle that Mrs Penbury had actually objected to their taking out probate of the will, trusting in their ability to convince her of the futility of the step.

John Braven and Annie were still engrossed with one another when Mrs Penbury joined them. She had heard something of the young lady, and received her with a gentle kindness, so different from the callous manner she had worn before, that Annie began to hope the difficulty might not prove so serious after all.

John Braven left them together after a few minutes; and Mrs Penbury devoted herself to learning all she could regarding her brother's fiancée: how she had known him since she was fifteen years old; how her father died six months after his second marriage, leaving her to the care of a step-mother, who made life at home intolerable; and how Miss Barkle had taken her in and— But here Annie checked herself, feeling she trod upon delicate ground.

'Go on,' said the widow. 'You were saying how Miss Barkle had given you a home. Have you been with her long?'

'I have almost lived there since my father died; but it was only a few days ago that I went to the cottage altogether.'

'Is she a wealthy woman?'

'No; has a bare living, I should think. But she is wonderfully good to me, as she is to everybody,' said Annie warmly.

Mrs Penbury sat silent for a while. When she spoke again, her companion was startled by the change from gentleness to firmness in her tone. 'You know how I stand towards your friend,' she said.

'Jack told me all about it to-day,' said Annie, feeling uncomfortable, and wondering what was coming next.

'I believe the solicitors found her through an advertisement?'

'Yes. She couldn't think what it meant when she saw it that morning.'

'What did she do about the news when she heard it?'

'She was going to ask Jack to do everything for her, but he was away when she came back from London.'

There was an air of authority about the widow that seemed to compel Annie to answer whether she wished to or not; and now, thankfully finding there were no more questions to reply to, she began to think over the answers she had made, dreading lest anything she had said might injure her friend.

Whether Mrs Penbury had more to ask we cannot say, for John Braven's return caused the subject to be dismissed. His sister dropped the magisterial manner she had so suddenly assumed, and by increased kindness appeared desirous of removing any impression it had made on the young lady.

We have said that she believed Miss Barkle innocent of having held any correspondence with Mr Penbury; but though this was the case, she could not resist the chance of probing for fresh evidence to prove it. She had certainly learned little from Annie Carston, but that little supported what she had heard through her brother.

Miss Barkle's indisposition compelled Annie to return to the cottage early, and she accordingly left soon after her talk with Mrs Penbury, escorted by John Braven. On the way they arranged that the duty of announcing their engagement should be left to Annie's discretion, for Miss Barkle had been in so nervous a condition since the morning that it might be inadvisable to inform her of it just yet. The news would not do much to cheer her, after the hopes she had cherished regarding Mr Braven.

Their well-meant plans, however, were foiled by the person for whose benefit they had been made. John and Annie were busy saying good-night at the gate—and it is remarkable how long it takes two young people so circumstanced to accomplish that simple ceremony—when Miss Barkle, who had awakened from a long sleep more composed, came upon them unobserved. She took in the position at a glance, and accepted the revelation with fortitude, turning away unseen. She had been prepared to see him irrevocably torn from her; that was inevitable. But surely he might have waited a little while, only a little while, before seeking consolation in the arms of another. It was heartless and cruel to do so the very day he saw the impediment his sister's presence raised; it was mean-spirited, despicable; and if Annie Carston cared to have the love of a man so easily led away, she might. She would forget him; he was not worthy of another thought. Thus she tried to reason within herself; but she was not convinced. John Braven was not the man to do such a thing under impulse; it was utterly opposed to his nature, and it was impossible to believe it of him. Then there was but one alternative, and Miss Barkle's heart swelled as it told her that it was the true one; Captain Mulbane had been right yesterday, and those almost daily visits had not been made to see her. She had been deluding herself with an

unfounded dream. How blindly she had pursued her fancy to the bitter end! Poor Miss Barkle. Vanity is a pleasant guide for a time, but how rarely it leads us to the goal it seemed to promise!

If only she had left those foolish words unsaid that evening. She flushed hotly as she thought how her friend must have laughed in her sleeve. She had been sadly mistaken, and would own it at once. Better now, whilst Annie's great happiness was at its zenith, than later; she would not think much about the weaknesses of others to-day.

'Let me congratulate you,' she said coming to the door to meet the young lady, with a successful effort to speak sincerely. 'Oh, I saw you at the gate,' she went on with a laugh at Annie's look of guilty surprise. 'I know all about it, so you needn't say another word.'

With a feeling of gratitude for the accident that had made Miss Barkle a witness of the parting with her lover, Annie received her caresses; it had saved her the unpalatable task of enlightening her friend.

'Was Captain Mulbane here to-day?' she asked, after her engagement had been talked over. 'I don't suppose he was, though,' she continued, recalling his refusal to come in. 'He was perfectly mad in the way he went on—knew something he would not tell a soul, he said; and was sure you would be ill to-day because of your wet feet. Have you any idea what he meant, Lina?'

Miss Barkle shuddered visibly at the recollection. 'He caught me wading yesterday, Annie,' she said, 'and sat down beside me; and, O Annie, I thought he would *never* go away.'

Some few questions were necessary to elucidate this incomprehensible statement; but the eccentricity of the captain's conduct was eventually explained. 'And, O Annie,' said Miss Barkle again, 'I *do* hope he will hold his tongue.'

RELATING TO CRYPTS.

THERE has been a crypt below Bamborough Church for many centuries; but, curiously, in the last century it was used only as a burial vault, and closed. In that capacity it was of course but seldom visited; and at last the external approach to it in the churchyard was covered up with the whirling drifting sands, and then the place was forgotten. Within the memory of many of the present inhabitants of the breezy, bosky, wide-spread village, it was found again. The flooring of the chancel was removed, and a flight of stone steps observed. On descending them, it was ascertained they led to a long narrow chamber, dimly lighted at the east end by a small window, on the south side of which a doorway gave access to a second chamber of the same length as the first, but of twice the width. This larger chamber, or chapel, has a groined roof of two bays, and two deeply splayed window-openings at the east end. It has also traces of an altar and a piscina, and in the centre of the groining is a staple, from which evidently a lamp once depended. It has also a doorway on the south side opening into the churchyard, which, at the time of the discovery

and examination mentioned, was blocked up with sand and hidden from sight.

The earliest crypts were hewn out of rocks, or built of masonry below the soil, to receive, and conceal from profane eyes, the remains of martyrs. Subsequently, chapels, and eventually churches, were raised over them; still later, crypts were formed below new churches for the special conservation of relics and the devotions of those who visited them. The most ancient are little more than square vaulted chambers with but the sparest architectural ornamentation. Later examples are veritable subterranean churches with grand aisles, formed by low and massive arcades of columns. Most of them are provided with two ways of approach, or exit, that pilgrims might descend in procession, or otherwise, conveniently, and proceed onwards and outwards without turning back and causing confusion. One of these approaches nearly always consists of a set of stone steps descending from the choir or one of the transepts; and the other nearly always opens out into the exterior surroundings of the edifice below which the crypt is situated. There are of course occasional variations from this plan, especially on the Continent, where crypts were more frequent in former ages than they were in this country. Sometimes, for instance, there are two approaches from the interior, and in one familiar instance (at Dijon) there is a circular crypt. The usual construction, however, provides for a stream of persons descending from the interior of the fabric, viewing the relics in the martyrdom, and then ascending to the level of the surface of the ground upon which the superincumbent edifice is erected.

Into this little dim crypt below the chancel of Bamborough Church, therefore, we may picture to ourselves the olden inhabitants of the district—many a good man and true, many a fair dame and dainty damsel, besides long lines of pilgrims—groping their way down the stone steps, after some preparatory service in the church. We may imagine, also, their intensified sense of the potentiality of the blessings of life and light and air, when, at the conclusion of their devotions, they emerged through the outer doorway into the churchyard, whence the great ocean, the stupendous castle on the high rocks close by, and the wide adjacent country, were reassuringly apparent.

There is a curious crypt, too, in Hexham Abbey Church. This is of Saxon workmanship. It has three entrances: one for the priest, the others for the descent and ascent of worshippers. On descending the steps leading to it from the interior of this superb edifice, the Saxon worshipper found himself in an antechapel, from which he could pass into a larger chapel containing the relics and an altar. The larger chapel measures thirteen feet three inches from east to west, and seven feet nine inches from north to south. Three niches with funnel-shaped headings mark the places where three lamps were placed to light it. In like manner there is a similar niche in the outer chapel for the same purpose. The door-heads are all semicircular, including that leading to and from the antechamber at the foot of the steps used by the priest. An arresting feature in this hoary cell is the occurrence of several Roman stones in the masonry, which have evidently been

used up by the Saxon builders, as being suitable for their purpose and near at hand. A portion of a Roman altar serves as a lintel over one of the doorways, and has been tooled into a semi-circular form; and a square tablet with a dedicatory inscription upon it, and several fragments of ribbed ornament, may be seen built up in the walls. Richard of Hexham describes this church as having been built by Wilfred in the seventh century, in three stories, supported by columns, and mentions that innumerable multitudes might stand around the body of the church and yet remain unseen by those within; and that Acca, the friend of the Venerable Bede, collected the remains of saints from all parts of Europe and placed them in shrines between the pillars; and made it so costly with sculpture and painting, and the services so rich with singing, vestments, and vessels, that it was finer than any building on this side of the Alps. The crypt, we may thus conclude, has heard the reverberations of the sacred music of Acca in the choir above, and from that distant time through many centuries has been hallowed with the resolves of countless penitents, and the aspirations and supplications of myriads of souls.

Below Repton Church, in Derbyshire, there is another Saxon crypt. It is about seventeen feet square, and has a vaulted roof, and four columns with wreathed shafts and plain square caps and round bases. This crypt was also built with three entrances, whereof two were in the church above, and one on the north side of the exterior. A king's daughter was abbess of Repton in 874, we are told, when the Danes wintered there. It is supposed they did not leave the church scathless; but the crypt may have been unknown to them, and thus escaped destruction; or the royal abbess may have prevailed with them to leave it untouched.

Many of our cathedrals possess crypts, though not all. Below the central tower of Ripon Cathedral, deep in the earth, is a massy stone cell, called St Wilfred's Needle, approached by a narrow passage forty-five feet in length. This is also extremely ancient. The crypt below York Cathedral is of late Norman workmanship and of very large extent. It is beneath the choir, and is approached from both sides of it. There is a deep draw-well in it and a lavatory. The largest crypt at Durham has ten massive columns, forming twenty noble bays, very reverberative and solemn. This is beneath the dormitory. There is a second crypt under the refectory, and a third under the prior's chapel. Glasgow Cathedral has a fine crypt. But perhaps the finest example of all is that under Canterbury Cathedral. This superb structure, called the Undercraft, was allotted to the Walloons by Queen Elizabeth, who made use of it to industriously carry on the art of silk-weaving. The Westminster crypt is also a very noble specimen of the ancient masons' craft.

Sometimes crypts are below chapter-houses; this is the case at Wells, where there is a fine specimen with a groined roof. The chapter-house proper did not attain its full height till so many years had elapsed that quite a new style of building was in vogue, lighter and more graceful in every way, with yearnings towards the delighting tracery-work that was afterwards everywhere

adopted, albeit the masons in the crypt had contented themselves with the old dog-tooth ornamentation. There is a crypt under the chapter-house at Ripon, too, besides St Wilfred's Needle under the tower. It is called the Bonehouse, from the fact that the walls and recesses are lined with skulls, &c., arranged with the same curious neatness as the bones of the ten thousand virgins in the church of St Ursula in Cologne.

The *New World of Words*, published in the reign of William and Mary, gives us the following information under the head of *Cryptæ*: 'The graves of the martyrs were more especially so called, where the primitive Christians used to meet for the performing of divine service; whence *crypta* came also to signify a church under ground, like that of St Faith's under St Paul's.'

NUMBER 263.

A TRUE STORY.

'BE off with you and your tract!' It was a prisoner who spoke these words with an angry gesture, and the voice that gave them utterance rang with a peculiar harshness.

I was only a young man in those days, fresh from the university, and sadly wanting, I fear, in the tact which experience gives in later years to men who follow the sacred calling of the priesthood. My old friend, Mr —, who was chaplain to — convict prison, had been attacked by fever; and being a devout and earnest man, full of energy, and with his whole heart in his work, and unwilling that his duties should remain unfulfilled, had asked me to take his place in the prison until he was again able himself to visit it. That is how I came in the first instance to minister to the wants and necessities of the criminal classes. So serious did my friend's illness prove itself to be, so uncertain his recovery, and so long the period of his convalescence, that I was left for close upon a year in the performance of the prison work. You may imagine that during that period I met some strange characters, saw some strange sights, and heard some strange stories.

What a funny world it was—a world within a world, and peopled by the dregs and scourgings of humanity. What ferocious instinct, brutal hate, and savage fearlessness were there; what mean distrust; what petty jealousy; what wizened battered faces; what wrecked and loathsome bodies. What moral rottenness pervaded and leavened the bulk of these unfortunates. It was curious, too, to note the rigour with which certain points of prison etiquette were observed, and the manner in which a species of classification was arrived at by the prisoners themselves.

It would be no difficult matter, indeed, to write a paper interesting enough in detail concerning the inner life of a large prison from the convicts' point of view. To the spotless passer-by who has never transgressed the nation's laws, and whose acquaintance with the prison is limited to a view of its gate as he passes it by, it may

seem that there is little difference indeed between most of the jail-birds who congregate within; but if this is his opinion, it is by no means shared by his less fortunate fellows. There are in every prison at least three classes of society, constituted, be it remembered, by the prisoners themselves, and rigorously recognised. The third or lowest class consists of common drunkards, ordinary vagrants, wife-beaters, and such-like; and these are the despised and rejected ones who come in for abuse and vilification, and are considered unworthy to consort with their 'better' brethren. The second class consists of such gentry as sneak-thieves, petty-larcenists, and cattle-thieves, who consider the wife-beater and the drunkard too low to associate with; but who are themselves in turn beneath the contempt of the first-class swells, who are bank burglars, adroit pickpockets, and life-sentenced murderers; always provided, in the case of the last mentioned, that they are not wife-poisoners, a set of men who even in prison are not tolerated, although why a distinction should be made in the case of any deliberate murderer seems incomprehensible. There is always also the 'bad man' of the prison, a curious appellation, surely, where all are supposed to be bad. It is about the 'bad man' of the prison I am writing this sketch. I found his name in the prison register after this fashion: 'MURTON, JOSEPH, No. 263, Wing D, Tier 4;' and opposite the entry in the book was the word 'Incorrigible' in large red-ink letters. There had been other men similarly indexed, as I could see by the red affixes to their names; but all of them had passed out to other prisons or to the busy world again. Joseph Murton, strange to say, was the only incorrigible (according to the books) in the institution.

Why he was bad, no person knew. The keepers feared him, the governor hated him; he was continually in hot-water, and as often in as out of the dark cell. He had been flogged more than once for insubordination, and, as far as could be judged, was a prison Ishmael. And yet there were some soft spots in his heart—the hospital orderlies knew that; for once or twice, when he had been ill and thrown into contact with sufferers sicker than himself, his gentleness and patience knew no bounds. The choicest morsels of his rough food were always laid aside for them; his voice as he read aloud to them was actually musical; and through the long night vigils he was the watcher who sat and whispered soothing words, or moistened lips that had grown hard and dry with suffering. His cell was a model of neatness: not a mark could be detected on its snowy walls; no bed was ever so neatly folded as his, no tins so brightly scoured. In person he was scrupulously clean, and seemed to take a pride in the respectability of his appearance. In the workshop—he was a broom-maker—his work was generally performed more neatly and more quickly than by any of his gang. On one occasion, when a keeper had been terribly wounded and well nigh killed by a mob of mutinous prisoners, Murton had stood boldly up in defence of the officer, and had been severely wounded himself for his pains. In spite of many such good qualities, his uncertain temper, despondent moods, and blind unreasoning ferocity, kept him in perpetual trouble, and at the time

I write of he was certainly the 'bad man' of the prison. Now, it was a fit of sullen perverse obstinacy; now, a flat refusal to perform his workroom task; again, a refusal to obey some simple rule at other times cheerfully obeyed; and still again, a savage attack upon a fellow-prisoner or keeper. He was a strange creature Joseph Murton, with a strange history, as you shall hear.

I was informed one morning by the librarian, also a prisoner, that a man was to be flogged that day for an assault upon one of the officers. I have already confessed that I was young, and a curious desire to witness such a scene, although clearly no part of my duty, came over me. To acquaint the governor of my desire was but a matter of form; and ten minutes before the big bell tolled twelve, I was in the courtyard, where the triangles used for whippings were already raised. Five minutes later, the prisoners were marched in to the goose-step, and shuffling along with furtive glances, took their places, forming three sides of a square. I was told afterwards that their presence there was not only for example's sake, but in order that there might be no feeling in their minds as to excess of punishment. The keepers, in full force and heavily armed, were of course present; and as the clock struck, the governor and surgeon appeared. Two of the keepers, both old soldiers and adepts in the use of the 'cat,' stepped up to the triangles with their torturing little instruments; and next moment, stripped to the waist, but with a coat hanging loosely over his shoulders, came the victim, Joseph Murton. Where was his boasted strength, ill temper, mad ferocity? He walked as gently as a child, and a half-smile flickered on his lips as he held his hands out to be bound. I am not going to describe that morning's work, as I still remember it; it was the only flogging I ever saw, and I wish I had never seen it, for even now it makes me shudder to recall it. A hundred lashes was the sentence; and a hundred lashes means a million tortures to the flesh, and agony to the soul of any man. But Joseph Murton took his flogging without a murmur or a groan, although his face grew deadly white and his lips were bitten till they bled. He laughed; yes, he actually laughed out loud when he was untied, and put on his coat himself, although hardly able to move, so bruised and lacerated was his back; but as he passed the keeper who had reported him and caused his stripes, there came an angry gleam into his eyes and a quiver into his nostrils that spoke no good; and it was well on all sides that he was hurried away before further mischief was done, for the devil in the man was roused and knew no cringing. He was sent to the hospital to have his wounds healed, and it was there I first made his acquaintance.

I made a point of visiting all the Protestant prisoners regularly in their cells, and as Murton had described himself as an Episcopalian at his admission, I had repeatedly tried to hold some conversation with him; but all in vain. In spite of the friendliest advances on my part, he preserved a sullen silence, and would invariably turn his back on me if I approached his cell. On one occasion, when he had evidently heard my voice in his neighbourhood and expected a visit, I found

a neat paper notice hanging on his bars with the following inscription: 'Cell No. 263—4th September 18—.—Book pedlars, insurance agents, clergymen, and other nuisances, not needed to-day.'

There was something about this man, however, that instinctively drew one to him, for I felt sure that, in spite of all appearances, there was good in him. The day after he had been flogged, I saw him in the hospital. It was a Sunday; and I had held a brief service with the sufferers, and at the close presented each with a tract, according to my usual custom. It was this, when I came to him, that called forth the angry words I have quoted at the commencement of this story. It took many a long day to soften that hard heart; but at last I won his confidence. Little by little I came to know more of the man, and found, beneath the rough and rude exterior, deep feeling and a broken heart, that accounted for the recklessness otherwise hard to understand. In fact, despair was gnawing at his heart, and the daylight of his life had been quenched for ever. He got to trust me sufficiently by-and-by to tell me his story; and here it is:

I don't see much use, parson, in troubling you with my story; it isn't a long one, and there's nothing interesting in it for any one to hear, God knows. I know I'm a young man; and I don't doubt but you fancy I should be doing better than wasting my time in a prison; but the fact is, parson, I don't care what becomes of me now, for I've lost all heart for everything I ever cared for.—What am I in here for? Attempted murder, they say. I've put in four years for it now, and I owe the Queen six yet.—What was it all about? I can't tell you that myself; I couldn't explain it to the judge, and the jury wouldn't have understood it either. I was always a wildish chap, parson, though I had never harmed a living soul, that I know of.—Occupation? Well, I used to be a printer.—Drink? Yes, I used to drink, and pretty hard to; but I gave that up. I gave up every bad habit I knew I had, for the sake of a girl I loved. No matter who she was or where she came from. If she were here before us now, you would see how blue her eyes were and how sweet her smile; and she would bring back hope and sunshine to me. That girl was a beacon-light to me, and for her sake I turned my back on all my old companions and foolish ways. She was never weary of encouraging me, and the hours flew by when we were together as if they had wings. I loved her better than I loved my own life—better than I loved God. We were to be married soon, and I worked merrily all day, and whistled as I set up the types; soon we would have a cottage of our own; soon she would be my own for ever; soon life would be a long and happy dream. How distinctly I remember all these things now, and how often I hear her voice still!

The time wore on, and at last came our wedding morning, and when the words were spoken that made us one, there was no man on earth who was happier than I. We lived together for a month, and every day seemed far too short. They speak of things being too good to last, don't they? I suppose it was that way with us. She ran down the river one day in a steamer for a breath of fresh

air, and I promised to meet her on her return. She kissed me good-bye so gaily when I left her, and told me that the hours would seem long till we were together again.—There isn't much more to tell now, parson. I was working that afternoon, when the foreman gave me a headline to set up for the evening edition of the paper; it read: 'Fearful Catastrophe;' and as I glanced at it, I saw it was an account of the collision of her steamer with another on the river that forenoon. O God! the anxiety of that moment, the sickening doubt and dread! I rushed to the river, hatless, coatless, just as I left the workroom, and I shouted her name as I ran. The river-front was crowded with people, and I could hardly make my way amongst them; then I was turned back several times by the police, and it seemed as if I would never get near enough to learn the news.

At last I got near the water, and saw that they were bringing bodies to the land in boats close to where I was. 'Have you got my Nelly?' I cried as each load passed me; and the dead faces would be uncovered for a moment, in the hope that they would be recognised. But evening came, and there was no one like her in all the long procession that had passed me, and by-and-by night came, and it became too dark to search any longer or to see. Suddenly the thought flashed across me that Nelly might be at home. Of course that was where she was. She would be waiting for me, and wondering at my absence, perhaps afraid for me. How foolish not to have thought of that before! How fast I ran back. But the little windows were all dark when I got there; and when I opened the door and called her name, there came no answer! I went back to the river after that, and sat there all that night, cold and hungry, and full of despair; and the night-winds must have heard me crying for my Nelly whilst the blinding tears ran down my face.

Early the next morning they began again dragging for the bodies; and by-and-by they found her. Not a bruise or mark or cruel cut upon her, but her face so still and white, her eyes so tightly shut, and her little hands so cold! I remember looking at her as she lay there cold and wet, and I could not think that she was really dead. Would the blue eyes never look at me again and the dear lips never speak? Were the little hands never to lie in mine, nor the willing feet to patter beside me? I *could* not believe it. I went and whispered in her ear and kissed her, and waited to see her smile at me.—Then all the world became dark. I remember trying to throw myself into the water, that I might die too; and I remember fighting like a madman with a policeman who tried to prevent me. I beat him till the blood was streaming from him, and I saw him fall at my feet as if dead; but I remember nothing more. I woke up in a hospital, where they told me I had had brain fever. I don't know how long I lay there; but I recollect being next in a prisoner's dock and hearing a white-faced constable telling the judge how I had beaten and stabbed him without provocation. I looked in vain for words to answer with. What could I say? No judge on earth could understand what I felt; indeed, I hardly knew myself. The verdict was 'guilty,' and the sentence ten years; and that is how I came to be in prison. They think me mad in here; they call me dangerous. But what have I to live for now?

In the midnight darkness, through the workshop noise, in the loneliness of my cell, I see her face, white and cold, and I cry out to her, and long for death to take me beside her. I don't know even where they took her or where her grave is; and if I were out in the world again to-morrow, I wouldn't know where to look for her.—Life isn't worth living now, parson. I know all about your tracts and gospels, but they don't bring me back Nelly. I sometimes think that she isn't so far away after all, for I seem to hear her voice and feel her near me. If she ever sees me, she knows how I miss her, and how black the world has been since I lost her.

That's my story, sir. Next time you see me tied up and flogged, you'll think that Nelly isn't far away, and that her little arms are round me, though no one knows it but myself.

TRUE FAME.

'AND this is fame!' is reported to have exclaimed a well-known politician, when he heard that a letter addressed to him had been returned to the sender, through the Dead Letter Office, owing to the address being rather illegible. He evidently thought that everybody would be familiar with his name, address, and social standing. Life's grooves are indeed narrow; and a man has to achieve a great deal, and keep his name before the public many years, before he is known to 'the general.' Sir Henry Taylor, the gifted author of *Philip van Artevelde*, has placed it on record that 'the world knows nothing of its greatest men;' and the assertion is particularly applicable to the case of contemporary men, because there is too great a tendency to decry the living at the expense of the dead.

The ignorance of judges in this respect is proverbial. Everybody has heard of the legal luminary who said, 'Archer! Archer! who is this Fred Archer?' Considering that some judges have no knowledge of the most elementary subjects (Lord Campbell, who knew nothing of cricket, almost went into a fit when a short, stout witness told him that he was 'long leg'), it is certainly expecting too much to suppose that they should be familiar with the name of a famous jockey or of a living author. In the case of judges, no doubt a good deal of this 'ignorance' is feigned; but in a large majority of people it is perfectly genuine, and this circumstance must have caused a great many persons to soliloquise on the hollowness of fame.

A 'society' woman, at whose table Longfellow was dining, asked him, 'Oh, Mr Longfellow, have you ever published a book?' This was after two-thirds of his lifework was done. Hawthorne says that in his later years he met many people who knew him well as the ex-surveyor of the port of Salem, but who never knew that he had written anything, and had not even heard that there was such a book as *The Scarlet Letter*. Even the genial Autocrat is not appreciated by everybody in his own town. One day an American gentleman went into a barber's shop as Dr Holmes was going out. 'Do you know who that was that just went out?' asked the barber. Being curious to see what account of Dr Holmes the barber would give, the visitor shook his head.—'Why,' said the barber,

'that's old Dr Holmes.'—'And who is Dr Holmes?' 'Oh, he's been a doctor here a great many years. I believe he ain't practisin' any more, but he's thought a good deal of!'

A crushing remark was once made by a would-be flatterer to Mr W. D. Howells, the American novelist. Shortly after the publication of *The Lady of the Aroostook*, *A Foregone Conclusion*, and *Venetian Life*, a lady asked that gentleman for his autograph, whereupon he wrote some impromptu verses in her album. She read them over, and then gave an encouraging smile. 'Oh, Mr Howells,' she exclaimed, 'I should think you might do something for the papers and magazines; I've seen much worse things than that in print!'

When even Dickens and Thackeray met with experiences somewhat similar to this, the smaller fry can scarcely help to escape. Men well known in other walks of life are scarcely less fortunate than the novelist. Take, for instance, the story told by a clergyman, as being part of a conversation held by him with an Englishman to whom he pointed out General Grant's residence in New York. The Englishman asking, 'What name?' and seeming to obtain no further light, the clergyman repeated it to him, and said: 'Of course you have heard of General Grant? He was our President for eight years, ending in 1877.'

'Ah!' remarked the Englishman, still with no evidence of recalling a fact previously known.

'Then, too,' proceeded the clergyman, 'he was a great general, and was in command of a million of men at the close of our war. You remember our late war, of course?'

'Well, no,' was the answer. 'Beg pardon, but I have just arrived in this country, and was so long at sea that I have not heard the latest news. I was at sea sixteen days, really!'

This gentleman was scarcely abreast with the times, and his ignorance reminds one of Mark Twain's famous question to a railway-carriage bore: 'Adam? What's his other name?'

It is really surprising how few eminent Americans are known to the average 'general reader' in England. In America, the names of many of our prominent men must be familiar, in consequence of the frequency and the familiarity with which their actions are discussed in the columns of most of the great newspapers. One is surprised indeed to see English affairs dealt with as if England were only some two or three hundred miles from New York.

Greatness is paid homage to by some people in very peculiar ways. Everybody must remember the story told in connection with Victor Hugo. The great poet was startled one morning by the intrusion of three Englishmen. 'Victor Hugo,' said one, consulting a pocket-book. The poet bowed, thinking that he should be asked for his autograph next. After the visitors had stared for a few seconds, the pocket-book was again consulted. 'Eleven o'clock: the lions!' said the spokesman. Then the party bowed, and walked out of the room.

Truly, the penalties of fame are many, as Emerson doubtless came to the conclusion on at least one memorable occasion. The philosopher was on the way to Philadelphia several years ago, when he fell in with a chatty and agreeable gentleman named Sackett, who told Emerson that he resided in San Francisco. This was all he

said about himself; but from his conversation Emerson judged that his acquaintance was indeed a gentleman of standing and intelligence, and ultimately agreed to dine with Mr Sackett upon their arrival at San Francisco. The next morning Emerson was astounded to find in the local papers the following 'personal' paragraph: 'Professor Ralph Waldo Emerson, the eminent philosopher, scholar, and poet, is in our city as the guest of Mr H. T. Sackett, the well-known proprietor of the Bust Street Dime Museum. Matinées every half-hour: admission, only ten cents. The Double-headed Calf and the Dog-faced Boy this week!' Any one with even a superficial knowledge of Emerson's character will readily understand his feelings at being coupled, as it were, with the monstrosities mentioned.

Scott had several experiences of the penalties of greatness, notably in the case of a female admirer who sent him the manuscript of a tragedy, requesting him to revise it. Imagine Scott's feelings on his discovering that he had to pay five pounds for the postage on this precious packet; and his dismay at receiving, several days later, another copy of the play from the same lady, who, being afraid that the original copy of her tragedy might be lost in transit, had taken the precaution of sending a duplicate, for which Scott had to pay other five pounds.

After pondering over this circumstance, one begins to understand Tennyson's reason for leaving half of his letters unopened. Being 'lionised,' receiving manuscripts from 'budding bards,' and requests for autographs from gushing admirers, certainly form no inconsiderable portion of the 'martyrdom of fame.' Even the notoriety of the comparatively humble village quidnunc is not without many penalties. Soon after he becomes rather too important to be classed among the comprehensive '&c.' with which the reporter of the local paper winds up the list of those present at the laying of foundation stones, annual missionary meetings, and the like, he begins to experience some of the minor penalties arising from local 'fame.' He is expected to contribute to all sorts of objects, from the purchasing of a pavilion for the local Cricket Club to the repairing of the organ in one of the chapels; and if he be a tradesman, he is frequently obliged to give more than he can afford, in order to avoid losing custom, and perhaps to prevent the name of Jones—his rival in business—appearing higher in the list of subscriptions than his own. This is one of the penalties of local notoriety, which is more keenly felt than many suppose.

If the pleasure arising from fame could be accurately gauged, it would be found that unconventional acts of kindness, and simple though sincere compliments, give more pleasure to their recipients than the loudest blare of trumpets or the most eloquent panegyrics. The observation of a well-known writer on receiving a present of a dozen bottles of brandy from an anonymous admirer of his genius is well known. 'This,' he said, 'is true fame.'

Mr W. D. Howells has recently received a flattering proof of the interest taken in his novels, which will more than recompense him for the back-handed compliment of the lady we have already mentioned. When his story, 'Indian Summer,' was being published in *Harper's Magazine*, the

editor received a letter from a lady, who wrote that she was dying, and that her physicians told her she would be dead before the conclusion of Mr Howell's story was published. She was very much interested in it, and did not want to die until she knew how it was going to end, and she begged the editor to let her read the advance sheets, so that she might die happy.

The highest honour that Uhland the Prussian poet received was a very humble gift. The Prussian king, Frederick-William IV., offered him the Order Pour le Mérite, with flattering expressions of the royal regard; but Uhland, who was essentially a poet of the people, declined to accept it. While explaining to his wife the reason which moved him to refuse the distinction, a working-class girl from the neighbourhood entered, and presenting Uhland with a bunch of violets, said: 'This is an offering from my mother!'—'Your mother, child!' replied the poet; 'I thought she died last autumn.'—'That is true, Herr Uhland,' said the girl; 'and I begged you at the time to make a little verse for her grave, and you sent me a beautiful poem. These are the first violets which have bloomed on mother's grave; I have plucked them, and I like to think that she sends them to you with her greetings.' The poet's eyes moistened as he took the posy, and putting it in his button-hole, he said to his wife: 'There, dear woman! is not that an Order more valuable than any king can give?'

Of late years several literary men have been fortunate. Professor Huxley found a cheque for four thousand pounds in one of his morning letters—the bequest of a Bolton admirer. Charles Reade was remembered in the wills of more than one admirer. These generous recognitions of genius are, however, trifling in comparison with the offer of an American millionaire to Martin Tupper, of *Proverbial Philosophy* fame. 'I am one of the richest men in New York,' he said to the author, 'and I know authors must be poor. I like your books, and have told my bankers' [naming them] 'to honour any cheques on me you may like to draw;' and when the offer was declined, the millionaire's house, his yacht, and his carriage were placed at Mr Tupper's disposal. Gifts such as these and unconventional compliments go a long way towards constituting real fame.

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

THE Old, so Wisdom saith, is better than the New.

Friends—like old Wine, old Books, old Days—

With age do ripen into mellow hue;

And Time, for what he takes, full oft repays

True hearts a hundredfold.

So, as the years rush by, old Friend,

May all bright memories of the past revive!

And when the hour is come to say 'Good-night,'

May Peace and Hope be with us to the end,

Up to the fullness of unfading Light!

When by the mystery of Death shall live

Things New and Old.

B. G. JOHNS.

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THE GOLF CRAZE.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD HAND.

'If you have a moderate appetite for sand, take your *tee* if you like, but not the tiniest slice of anything with it, remember,' said the soft humorous voice beside me, as I addressed the ball for the first time in the season, with more apparent dexterity, I confess, than inward confidence. It was my second year at golf. I had got over the initial difficulty, it is true; I 'missed the globe' no longer!—Ah, good old friend of those days!—Is it truth, indeed, that Tennyson sings of the yew's fibres netting 'the dreamless head?' Have you no flashes of remembrance of faultless approach or miraculous niblick-shot? For you, too, are under the earth—like the ball you used to send straight home all the way off that marvellous putter of yours—and, alas, for a longer period.

He was one of those men whose eyes have an edge, so to say. They kindled with interest while you spoke, and took in the situation perfectly before you had fully described it. His face was healthily russet, and even in extreme age he looked strong and straight. My intimacy with him dated only from the previous year. He had long worked hard as a medical man in a populous district in the south of England, and his means were considerable in consequence. As the years advanced, however, he longed for that strong sear of the northern portion of our island, which seems to pull a man together in a manner which no artificial pick-me-up, persevered in to the utmost, may pretend to do—outside its advertisements, at all events. Talk on the subject succeeded talk, for a year or two, and nothing meantime came of it; till, on his sixtieth birthday, he told his married son and his unmarried daughter—he had been a widower for ten years—he had finally disposed of his business; that his shrewd investing had largely augmented his savings, and that the coming spring would, please God, see him in some snug retreat in the town of his boyhood, his love and early manhood.

A snug enough place, too, it came to be. One had to enter a wood to reach his house, which stood on the bald crown of an eminence. The strong scent of the sea surrounded and permeated the place. A level lawn in front, with its blackbirds running quickly over it, was a picture of peace. The sea could not be seen at all from the ground flat; but when you had climbed the wide staircase—none of your giddy spirals, but a strong old-fashioned square stair with substantial landings—and had passed into the airy drawing-room, what a view broke upon you! Through the clear air you could view the sea, a couple of miles off, as though it were just at hand, creeping up upon the yellow breast of the shore, where it was delicately fingering a frill of snow—its daily gift. The links lay between you and the sea; and between the links and the sea were sandy knolls, where the blue-green grass grew six—here and there eight—feet high. There lay the dimpled little bit of ground, with its hillocks, its mimic forests of furze, its yawning bunkers, and its mazy burn, where thousands had played the game of all games the most like our larger life, with earnestness, and yet brotherly kindness. Dear sport that it is—made up of continuous striking, without cruelty!

Here, then, lived Dr —, who could never be identified with those loungers who work at nothing and play at everything, for he was diligent and regular in all the details of his life—however dearly he may have loved his round at golf. Early morning found him outside, and off along the upland road on foot or on horseback, to return with appetite to his letters and breakfast. I wish I could paint his own room for you—his 'den,' as he called it; but that is beyond my scope, in this connection at anyrate. I may at least tell you that there lay on the broad serviceable oak table the current number of the *Athenæum*—more frequently in his hands than the *Field*—and a good modern book or two; but in truth, a richly carved old bookcase contained his chief treasures in the shape of well-chosen and well-thumbed classics of the olden time, and, generally speaking, of the

graver sort. Emerson, however, was the Doctor's especial favourite, modern though he be; and while the sweet-tempered Concord mystic never mentions many of the subjects of which my friend loved to speak, I take it that the extraordinary ability the latter displayed in aphoristic utterance had been unconsciously developed by familiarity with the style of the great American. As regards the matter of his discourse, it always appeared to me to be strictly his own.

It is not my intention to speak of his manner of talk in general, although I have often felt sorry that his conversations on higher matters were not caught back out of the invisibility of the air, and fixed in a darker fluid by some accurate reporter. Others have shared this regret with me. Alas! Johnson has his Boswell, Goethe his Eckermann, Coleridge his own kinsman, and Rabbi Duncan his Knight; but this man's talk enriched the atmosphere only, in ways we may not trace; he shot many arrows into the air, but they are not to be found unless we search in the hearts of a few of his friends. But now comes a curious admission. Let him not shrivel down into a lesser man because of it! If you are a golfer, you will not. Nothing in the world would he allow to come between him and his round of the links. One round a day, but one round always, excepting on Sundays. Never was day dark or stormy enough to keep him back; and if he had been favoured, as Mr John Blackwood was, with a letter from George Eliot, in which occurred words like, 'You cannot play golf in the rain,' he would have startled that know-all lady with several aphorisms which would have done no shame, in sense or in construction, to *Romola* itself. He was humane enough, withal, to give his caddie an oilskin suit: he himself wore nothing above his thick tweeds, and never allowed for a moment that he had been one whit the worse in his life for any ducking he had received. He played as near perfection as an elderly amateur may well be expected to do. He had that easy unconscious swing begotten only in youth. The analysis of the subject had never troubled him; he played as children play, and yet he was no 'idiot' ('The ideal golfer is an idiot.'—*Saturday Review*, July 2, 1887), dear old fellow that he was. Wherever you might place him in the wide world, you might depend upon his giving a good account of himself.

He had lived for five years in his seaside home when I was introduced to him. His low-set sweet voice often haunts me; and whenever I find myself on short green grass, with fragrant thymy knolls around me, there I see the authentic background for a loved figure which comes no more.—But let us go on with the round. He had taken in hand to teach a man of great willingness but small ability, and this was the first lesson of the second year. He never played more than his daily round, as has been said. With a fine fortitude, he abstained from even taking his occasional cleek shot alongside my erratic game, contenting himself with giving advice in that wonderfully neat short way of his. His counsel, I hope, has been worked long since into flesh and blood movement—Grip, swing, loft, and putt; but many of his odd little effortless speeches stick well to me in the shape of words, and these I wish to give some idea of. The regular golfing jokes that have

served successive generations, are they not written in the books of Clark, Simpson, and others? It was not these that this man retailed. They multiplied according to the varying exigences of the game, and I never heard him repeat himself. It is said that the occasion makes the man; surely, then, it may well be credited with the minor creative power of making the joke. It did that at anyrate, say what you will. His humour was sometimes so delicate as to defy repetition in any but the precise words which had been used. The story somehow would not tell at times, if the exact inflection of the voice failed in the reproduction. As it is, I can but give the broader fragments of his talk. If I had not heard such multitudes of smart sentences from these lips, I should have considered them carefully coined specially for use beforehand; but to know your man, put such a conclusion at once out of sight.

The ball stood on its tee bright and shining one mid-day in May. The first hole is a short one. Others regarded it, indeed, as a good cleek shot—no more; why shouldn't I? The cleek fell furiously on the ball (a bad one, no doubt, although duly charged for), and, whatever the exact cause may have been, the gutta(?) leapt forward in two parts—neither of which lay dead, it is needless to say. 'Ah,' my adviser said instantly, 'golf is a game of which it may be said that opening the ball ought not to be synonymous with beginning play.'

Here and there pleasing him with my work—for he was generous in criticism ('Never let your spirits run down,' he would say, 'or your score will run up—they are always at seasaw with each other')—I would sometimes drive wildly, and would just catch the murmur of his voice as he said, as it were to himself, 'It is quite undeniable that golf-playing is an art, but *drawing* is altogether out of place there;' or, 'It is as poor an indication of a man's play as of the state of his boots that he goes in for toeing and heeling.'

'Don't you think, Doctor, that, like the poet, the golfer is born—not made?' I asked once, after consecutive fooling?—'Well, probably so—to some extent. I myself venture to believe that when you find the veritable accoucheur, he will tell you plainly that exactly as many men are born with a *short* spoon as a *silver* spoon in their mouths.'

I remember him saying to an unduly loquacious caddie, while he tapped with the handle of his driver the spot he wished to tee on, 'Young man, do your duty just *there*; and remember I regard you principally as a *tee-caddie* on two legs instead of four; but you will also hold my clubs and—your tongue!'

I had, and have still, a decided opinion on the subject of putting, and it is this: that you had better be well up in your play; that is to say, if your ball runs straight, it has the chance of getting home—travelling on the fast side though it be—which, if you play short, is altogether impossible. Carrying out this idea now and then rather energetically resulted in an occasional *gobble*, which at once called forth the remark, 'Do not attempt too much of a gobble!—Let your moderation be known to all men, whatever *course* you are at, whether it be — or Macrihanish.'

Anon, luck would give a ball that went sweetly off the bone and looked infinitely well in mid-air,

a bad lie. Ere we came up to it, the Doctor would praise the shot, but, on sighting the ball, he would quietly remark, 'Ah, there you are! No ball has yet been invented which may be said to be too good for *hanging*—if the ground lies that way.'

What can a man, who is not mighty on the links, do with a bad hanging ball? Fizzle, of course, and lose his temper too, which would call forth: 'Good for you, you have no opponent to-day; but you need not be your own, for all that. It is no paradox to say that you indicate that you are *green* if you look *blue* over a single bad shot; and even if you will allow your nose to divide the colours, they never look well together.'

Laughingly, I would say: 'It is a moral training of no mean order, this same game of golf—is it not?'

A humorous twinkle flashed across his eyes as he said: 'Certainly; and yet there are odd contradictions in it. Good temper is essential. There is a deal that is *straight* about the game—club handles, driving, putting, &c. On the other hand, knowing that honesty is the best policy, a long driver, nevertheless, will never choose an *upright* club; and you know how we all like to *steal*, when we can. Indeed, it is not only morality that is in danger, but the whole intricate system of values. For instance, if you know how to play your approaches, it is good golf patois to say that your iron is as good as gold to you—execrable nonsense in the eyes of one at least of the two men who have equal quantities of one or other of the metals to dispose of. Again, we believe in correction. Every club is the better, we all say, of a good sound *whipping*; and yet, like a very demon, we constantly exhort our partner to give us a *good lie*.'

This last sally put me in mind of a conundrum I had heard at the club-house the previous forenoon, and as I have never seen it in print, I repeat it for the benefit of the reader, as I did for the hearer. 'Why was Ananias like a good golfer?'—'Because he lay stone *dead* after a bad *lie*.'—'That is good,' the Doctor said—and bad!'

I remember on one occasion we had made up to a passionate young man who was playing a 'single' with a phlegmatic old gentleman who was known to the Doctor. The elderly golfer stood *dormy* at seven up with seven to play. Having holed out, the winner intimated the fact like a sphinx; whereupon the little fellow with the passion, the gaiters, and the red coat, broke into a volley of oaths. Dr — said in a firm and earnest tone: 'Your *bye*, sir, will begin after the next hole is lost by you; save up your strength, I advise you. There is no need of interlacing your play with *by* —, *by* — all the way. Besides, swearing doesn't help you a bit.'

I had been playing a little wildly at one hole, and had overshot the green a good way. To my own amazement, as will sometimes happen, my next shot lay—not dead, but home! 'Bravo!' cried my companion. My elation, however, was suddenly cooled by his calmly observing: 'If you do go *floundering* into the rough, and then send your ball home, off a fifty yards' iron shot, you needn't be surprised if your opponent hails your triumph as a *flake*.'

His readiness was extraordinary. Sometimes, indeed, he would speak at some length, rolling the words out slowly, as though he were reciting Milton. Again—although he never spoke swiftly—he would confine himself to a single short sentence, the inflection being always laden with point. My ball lay cupped, for instance, on one occasion, and I remember he instantly said: 'The *cup* is not a *loving-cup* in golf, and your *spoon* is simply nowhere in such a case.'

I recall, too, a neat remark which was made when my kind old friend was instructing me during the first year of my practice. I had topped a teed shot, when those words, gravely uttered, and catching nothing, as it were, from the twinkle in his eye, fell upon my ears: 'In *addressing* the ball be careful not to give it a *top-dressing*; leave that for your lawn.' At another time my play would merit the remark: 'Do not begin to *screw* before luncheon-time, and neither then nor at any other time let the past tense of the verb be applicable to you.' He was not a teetotaler; but he had, I think, a more bitter contempt for hard drinkers than for any other set of men. I remember once when the green was pretty full, and a handicap medal was being played for, that, at the close of the first round, he cautioned a young fellow who was slightly known to him in terms something like these: 'If you require a handicap of a *half-one* you will not find it to your advantage to drink to its health and prosperity in its *namesake* every few holes. You will drink rather to its confusion, sir!'

The best of players for the most part unconsciously *press* now and then. I never saw Dr —, however, other than most deliberate in his own game. It was nothing extraordinary that I should, in these days at least, put more effort than was wise into my swing; none the less there came to me these words: 'Keep *game* in your *press* for luncheon, if you like, but don't for any sake *press* in your game; keep everything in its place!'

When he went with me to choose my clubs, he looked on smilingly as I swung them to and fro. I saw his thought in his eyes before he had given it to his lips: 'One feels himself such a rare hand in the shop—does he not?' And then, as I, like a beginner, made a short leet of the supplest of the drivers, he said more coldly, as though his thought deepened towards the close of the sentence, light as the words seemed: 'Don't take these just yet; if your club has too much *spring* in it, you will find "the *winter*" of your "discontent"—when it snaps!'

It has been my intention only to speak of this fond old enthusiast in connection with the royal and ancient game. At home there was the same facility in his play upon words; even in our more serious conversations, which were punctuated by sips from the social (but single) tumbler, or whiffs from the soothing weed, the inveterate habit betrayed itself of re-stating things—that is, placing his words in one order and then in another, with sometimes startling ingenuity. It was an exercise, indeed, that was never engaged in to no purpose; never so that the changes ministered to mere *non-sense*; they always brought an added sense, rather, and in-

terest. It is not too much to say that as a rule they fulfilled Hood's exacting conditions, short of which the common pun becomes a contemptible creature, which ought to find itself in the ranks of that large visible and invisible assembly, 'the unemployed.'

There's a double chuck at a double chin,
And, of course, there's a double pleasure therein,
If the parties were brought to telling :
And however our Dennises take offence,
A double meaning shows double sense ;
And if proverbs tell truth,
A double tooth
Is Wisdom's adopted dwelling !

In fact, the habit was a craze with Dr —, as was his daily round of the green. Time had not staled his infinite variety in word-play. My memory, however, has run down. He was at least himself ; and his odd little speeches, whether on the links or indoors, had certainly never entered the atmosphere through other lips. He never thought anything he said was worth deliberately putting down—although in *very* early youth it is true he published a pamphlet on Anesthesia—and it may be you, my reader, agree with him in this. Ah, well ! as I recall the tones, the gestures, and think of the kind soul himself as I knew him, the conclusion comes to me that these remembrances must be to the writer very different from what they appear to you. The bloom of the personality is upon them all, in my vision, and they hang free and full. To you—and I blame you not—they are dry, it may be, and stiff in arrangement—redolent of the box they are packed in, rather than the honeyed sunshine in which they swung to and fro—and so, 'Here endeth the second lesson.'

The lettering on his simple epitaph is losing its sharpness. He died in extreme old age. Day by day, when reaching the big links was beyond his power, he played a short game with his putter over a small green behind his house ; and I am told—for I was then at a distance, and had seen my last of him, indeed—when he could no longer go out of doors at all, that the noble game of billiards was discarded and dethroned, and that his green table was fondled by the old man's fancy into a mimic golf-course, which by-and-by in its turn became too tedious for him. Now he lies at rest, and the primroses and violets bloom as of old, but, alas ! not for him.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXIII.—UNDER THE PALM-TREES.

A LONE governess, even though she be a Girton girl, vanishes readily into space from the stage of society. It's wonderful how very little she's missed. She comes and goes and disappears into vacancy, almost as the cook and the housemaid do in our modern domestic phantasmagoria ; and after a few months, everybody ceases even to inquire what has become of her. Our round horizon knows her no more. If ever at rare intervals she happens to flit for a moment across our zenith again, it is but as a *revenant* from some distant sphere. She has played her part in life, so far as we are concerned, when she has 'finished

the education' of our growing girls, as we cheerfully phrase it—what a happy idea that anybody's education could ever be finished !—and we let her drop out altogether from our scheme of things accordingly, or feel her, when she invades our orbit once more, as inconvenient as all other *revenants* proverbially find themselves. Hence, it was no great wonder indeed that Elsie Challoner should subside quietly into the peaceful routine of her new existence at the Villa Rossa at San Remo, with 'no questions asked,' as the advertisements frankly and ingenuously word it. She had a few girl-friends in England—old Girton companions—who tracked her still on her path through the cosmos, and to these she wrote unreservedly as to her present whereabouts. She didn't enter into details, of course, about the particular way she came to leave her last temporary home at the Meyseys' at Whitestrands : no one is bound to speak out everything ; but she said in plain and simple language she had accepted a new and she hoped more permanent engagement on the Riviera. That was all. She concealed nothing and added nothing. Her mild deception was purely negative. She had no wish to hide the fact of her being alive from anybody on earth but Hugh and Winifred ; and even from them she desired to hide it by passive rather than by active concealment.

But it is an error of youth to underestimate in the long-run the interosculcation of society in our modern Babylon. You may lurk and languish and lie obscure for a while ; but you do not permanently evade anybody : you may suffer eclipse, but you cannot be extinguished. While we are young and foolish, we often think to ourselves, on some change in our environment, that Jones or Brown has now dropped entirely out of our private little universe—that we may safely count upon never again happening upon him or hearing of him anyhow or anywhere. We tell Smith something we know or suspect about Miss Robinson, under the profound but, alas, too innocent conviction that they two revolve in totally different planes of life, and can never conceivably collide against one another. We leave Mauritius or Eagle City, Nebraska, and imagine we are quit for good and all of the insignificant Mauritians or the free-born, free-mannered, and free-spoken citizens of that far western mining camp. Error, error, sheer juvenile error ! As comets come back in time from the abysses of space, so everybody always turns up everywhere. Jones and Brown run up against us incontinently on the King's Road at Brighton ; or occupy the next table to our own at Delmonico's ; or clap us on the shoulder as we sit with a blanket wrapped round our shivering forms, intent upon the too wintry sunrise on the summit of the Rigi. Miss Robinson's plane bisects Smith's horizon at right angles in a *dahabeejah* on the Upper Nile, or discovers our treachery at an hotel at Orotava in the Canary Islands. Our Mauritian sugar-planter calls us over the coals for our pernicious views on differential duties and the French bounty system, among the stormy channels of the Outer Hebrides ; and Colonel Bill Manningham, of the *Eagle City National Banner*, intrudes upon the quiet of our suburban villa at remote Surbiton to inquire, with Western American picturesqueness and exuberance of vocabulary, what the Hades we meant by

our casual description of Nebraskan society as a den of thieves, in the last number of the *St Petersburg Monitor*? O no; in the pre-Columbian days of Boadicea, and Romulus and Remus, and the Twenty-first Dynasty, it might perhaps have been possible to mention a fact at Nineveh or Peking with tolerable security against its being repeated forthwith in the palaces of Mexico or the huts of Honolulu; but in our existing world of railways and telegraphs and penny postage, and the great ubiquitous special correspondent, when Morse and Wheatstone have wreaked their worst, and whosoever enters Jerusalem by the Jaffa Gate sees a red-lettered notice-board staring him in the face, 'This way to Cook's Excursion Office'—the attempt to conceal or hush up anything has become simply and purely a ridiculous fallacy. When we go to Timbuctoo, we expect to meet with some of our wife's relations in confidential quarters; and we are not surprised when the aged chief who entertains us in Parisian full dress at an eight o'clock dinner in the Fiji Islands relates to us some pleasing Oxford anecdotes of the missionary bishop whom in unregenerate days he assisted to eat, and under whom we ourselves read Aristotle and Tacitus as undergraduates at dear sleepy old Oriel. More than ever nowadays is the proverb true, 'Quod tacitum velis nemini dixeris.'

It was ordained, therefore, in the nature of things, that sooner or later Hugh Massinger must find out Elsie Challoner was really living. No star shoots ever beyond the limits of our galaxy. But the discovery might be postponed for an indefinite period; and besides, so far as Elsie herself was concerned, her only wish was to keep the fact secret from Hugh in person, not from the rest of the world at large; for she knew everybody else in her little sphere believed her merely to have left the Meyseys' in a most particular and unexplained hurry. Now, Hugh for his part, even if any vague rumour of her having been sighted here or there in some distant nook of the Riviera by So-and-so or What's-his-name might happen at any time to reach his ear, would certainly set it down in his own heart as one more proof of the signal success of his own clever and cunningly designed deception. As a matter of fact, more than one person did accidentally, in the course of conversation, during the next few years mention to Hugh that somebody had said Miss Challoner had been seen at Marseilles or Cannes or Genoa or somewhere; and Hugh in every case did really look upon it only as another instance of Warren Relf's blind acceptance of his bland little fictions. The more people thought Elsie was alive, the more did Hugh Massinger in his own heart pride himself inwardly on the cleverness and far-sightedness of the plot he had laid and carried out that awful evening at the *Fisherman's Rest* at Whitestrand in Suffolk.

Thus it happened that Elsie was not far wrong, for the present at least, in her calculation of chances as to Hugh and Winifred.

The very day Elsie reached San Remo, news of Mr Meysey's death came to her in the papers. It was a sudden shock, and the temptation to write to Winifred then was very strong; but Elsie resisted it. She had to resist it—to crush down her sympathy for sympathy's sake. She couldn't bear to break poor Winifred's heart

at such a moment by letting her know to the full all Hugh's baseness. It was hard indeed that Winifred should think her unfeeling, should call her ungrateful, should suppose her forgetful; but she bore even that—for Winifred's sake—without murmuring. Some day, perhaps, Winifred would know; but she hoped not. For Winifred's sake, she hoped Winifred would never find out what manner of man she proposed to marry.

And for Hugh's too. For with feminine consistency and steadfastness of feeling, Elsie even now could not learn to hate him. Nay, rather, though she recognised how vile and despicable a thing he was, how poor in spirit, how unworthy of her love, she loved him still—she could not help loving him. For Hugh's sake, she wished it all kept secret for ever from Winifred, even though she herself must be the victim and the scapegoat. Winifred would think harshly of *her* in any case: why let her think harshly of Hugh also?

And so, in the little Villa Rossa at San Remo, among that calm reposeful scenery of olive groves and lemon orchards, Elsie's poor wounded heart began gradually to film over a little with external healing. She had the blessed deadening influence of daily routine to keep her from brooding: those six pleasant, delicate, sensitive, sympathetic consumptive girls to teach and look after and walk out with perpetually. They were bright young girls, as often happens with their type; extremely like Winifred herself in manner—too like, Elsie sometimes thought in her own heart with a sigh of presentiment. And Elsie's heart was still young, too. They clambered together, like girls as they were, among the steep hills that stretch behind the town; they explored that pretty coquettish country; they wandered along the beautiful olive-clad shore; they made delightful excursions to the quaint old villages on the mountain sides—Taggia and Ceriana and San Romolo and Perinaldo—mouldering gray houses perched upon pinnacles of mouldering gray rock, and pierced by arcades of Moorish gloom and medieval solemnity. All alike helped Elsie to beat down the memory of her grief, or to hold it at bay in her poor tortured bosom. That she would ever be happy again was more than in her most sanguine moments she dared to expect; but she was not without hope that she might in time grow at least insensible.

One morning in December, at the Villa Rossa, about the hour for early breakfast, Elsie heard a light knock at her door. It was not the cook with the *café-au-lait* and roll and tiny pat of butter on the neat small tray for the first breakfast: Elsie knew that much by the lightness of the knock. 'Come in,' she said; and the door opened and Edie entered. She held a letter in her right hand, and a very grave look sat upon her usually merry face. 'Somebody dead?' Elsie thought with a start. But no; the letter was not black-bordered. Edie opened it and drew from it slowly a small piece of paper, an advertisement from the *Times*. Then Elsie's breath came and went hard. She knew now what the letter portended. Not a death: not a death—but a marriage!

'Give it me, dear,' she cried aloud to Edie. 'Let me see it at once. I can bear it—I can bear it.'

Eddie handed the cutting to her, with a kiss on her forehead, and sat with her arm round Elsie's waist as the poor dazed girl, half erect in the bed, sat up and read that final seal of Hugh's cruel betrayal: 'On Dec. 17th, at Whitestrand parish Church, Suffolk, by the Rev. Percy W. Bickersteth, M.A., cousin of the bride, assisted by the Rev. J. Walpole, vicar, HUGH EDWARD DE CARTERET MASSINGER, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-law, to WINIFRED MARY, only daughter of the late Thomas Wyville Meysey of Whitestrand Hall, J.P.'

Elsie gazed at the cutting long and sadly; then she murmured at last in a pained voice: 'And he thought I was dead! He thought he had killed me!'

Elsie's fiery indignation could restrain itself no longer. 'He's a wicked man,' she cried: 'a wicked, bad, horrible creature; and I don't care what you say, Elsie; I hope he'll be punished as he well deserves for his cruelty and wickedness to you, darling.'

'I hope not—I pray not,' Elsie answered solemnly. And as she said it, she meant it. She prayed for it profoundly.

After a while, she set down the paper on the table by her bedside, and laying her head on Eddie's shoulder, burst into tears—a torrent of relief for her burdened feelings. Eddie soothed her and wept with her, tenderly. For half an hour Elsie cried in silence; then she rose at last, dried her eyes, burnt the little slip of paper from the *Times* resolutely, and said to Eddie: 'Now it's all over.'

'All over?' Eddie echoed in an inquiring voice.

'Yes, darling, all over,' Elsie answered very firmly. 'I shall never, never cry any more at all about him. He's Winifred's now, and I hope he'll be good to her.—But, oh, Eddie, I *did* once love him so!'

And the winter wore away slowly at San Remo. Elsie had crushed down her love firmly in her heart now—crushed it down and stifled it to some real purpose. She knew Hugh for just what he was: she recognised his coldness, his cruelty, his little care for her; and she saw no sign—as how should she see it?—of the deadly remorse that gnawed from time to time at his tortured bosom. The winter wore away, and Elsie was glad of it. Time was making her regret less poignant.

Early in February, Eddie came up to her room one afternoon, when the six consumptive pupils were at work in the schoolroom below with the old Italian music-master, under Mrs Relf's direction, and seating herself, girl-fashion, on the bed, began to talk about her brother Warren.

Elsie seldom talked of Warren to Elsie: she had even ostentatiously avoided the subject hitherto, for reasons of her own which will be instantly obvious to the meanest intelligence. But now, by a sort of accident of design, she mentioned casually something about how he had always taken them, most years, for so many nice trips in his yawl to the lovely places on the coast about Bordighera and Mentone, and even Monte Carlo.

'Then he sometimes comes to the Riviera with you, does he?' Elsie asked listlessly. She loved Eddie and dear old Mrs Relf, and she was grateful to Warren for his chivalrous kindness; but she could hardly pretend to feel profoundly interested

in him. There had never been more than one man in the world for her, and that man was now Winifred's husband.

'He always comes,' Eddie answered, with a significant stress on the word *always*. 'Indeed, this is the very first year he's ever missed coming since we first wintered here. He likes to be near us while we're on the coast. It gives him a chance of varying his subjects. He says himself, he's always inclined to judge of genius by its power of breaking out in a fresh place—not always repeating its own successes. In summer he sketches round the mouth of the Thames and the North Sea, but in winter he always alters the venue to the Mediterranean. Variety's good for a painter, he thinks: though, to be sure, that doesn't really matter very much to *him*, because nobody ever by any chance buys his pictures.'

'Can't he sell them, then?' Elsie asked more curiously.

'My dear, Warren's a born artist, not a picture-dealer; therefore, of course, he never sells anything. If he were a mere dauber, now, there might be some chance for him. Being a real painter, he paints, naturally enough, but he makes no money.'

'But the real painter always succeeds in the end, doesn't he?'

'In the end, yes; I don't doubt that: within a century or two. But what's the good of succeeding, pray, a hundred years after you're dead and buried? The bankers won't discount a posthumous celebrity for you. I should like to succeed while I was alive to enjoy it. I'd rather have a modest competence in the nineteenth century than the principal niche in the Temple of Fame in the middle of the twentieth. Besides, Warren doesn't want to succeed at all, dear boy—at least, not much. I wish to goodness he did. He only wants to paint really great pictures.'

'That's the same thing isn't it?—or very nearly.'

'Not a bit of it. Quite the contrary in some cases. Warren's one of them. He'll never succeed while he lives, poor child, unless his amiable sister succeeds in making him. And that's just what I mean to do in time, too, dear.—I mean to make Warren earn enough to keep himself—and a wife and family.'

Elsie looked down at the carpet uneasily. It wanted darning. 'Why didn't he come this winter as usual?' she asked in haste, to turn the current of the conversation.

'Why? Well, why? What a question to ask!—Just because *you* were here, Elsie.'

Elsie examined the holes in the Persian pattern on the floor by her side with minuter care and precision than ever. 'That was very kind of him,' she said after a pause, defining one of them with the point of her shoe accurately.

'Too kind,' Eddie echoed—'too kind, and too sensitive.'

'I think not,' Elsie murmured low. She was blushing visibly, and the carpet was engrossing all her attention.

'And I think *yes*,' Eddie answered in a decisive tone. 'And when I think yes, other people ought as a matter of course to agree with me. There's such a thing as being too generous, too delicate, too considerate, too thoughtful for others. You've no right to swamp your own individuality. And

I say, Warren ought to have brought the yawl round to San Remo long ago, to give us all a little diversion, and not gone skulking like a pickpocket about Nice and Golfe Jouan, and Toulon and St Tropez, for a couple of months together at a stretch, without so much as ever even running over here to see his own mother and sister in their winter-quarters. It's not respectful to his own relations.'

Elsie started. 'Do you mean to say,' she cried, 'he's been as near as Nice without coming to see you?'

Edie nodded. 'Ever since Christmas.'

'No! Not really?'

'Yes, my child. Really, or I wouldn't say so. It's a practice of mine to tell the truth and shame a certain individual. Warren couldn't stop away from us any longer; so he took the yawl round by Gibraltar after—the 17th of December, you know.'—Elsie smiled sadly.—'And he's been knocking about along the coast round here ever since, afraid to come on—for fear of hurting your feelings, Elsie.'

Elsie rose and clasped her hands tight. 'It was very kind of him,' she said. 'He's a dear good fellow.—I think I could bear to meet him now. And in any case, I think he ought at least to come over and see you and your mother. It would be very selfish of me, very wrong of me to keep you all out of so much pleasure.—Ask him to come, Edie.—Tell him—it would not hurt me very much to see him.'

Edie's eyes flashed mischievous fire. 'That's a pretty sort of message to send any one,' she cried, with some slight amusement. 'We usually put it in a politer form. May I vary it a little and tell him, Elsie, it will give you great pleasure to see him?'

'If you like,' Elsie answered, quite simply and candidly. He was a nice fellow, and he was Edie's brother. She must grow accustomed to meeting him somehow. No man was anything at all to her now.—And perhaps by this time he had quite forgotten his foolish fancy.

The celebrated centreboard yawl *Mud-Turtle*, of the port of London, Relf, master, seventeen tons registered burden, was at that moment lying up snugly by a wooden pier in the quaint little French harbour of St Tropez, just beyond the blue peaks of the frontier mountains. When Potts next morning early brought a letter on board, addressed to the skipper, with an Italian stamp duly stuck in the corner, Warren Relf opened it hastily with doubtful expectations. Its contents made his honest brown cheek burn bright red. 'My dear old Warren,' the communication ran shortly, 'you may bring the yawl round here to San Remo as soon as you like. She says you may come; and what's more, She authorises me to inform you in the politest terms that it will give her very great pleasure indeed to see you. So you can easily imagine the pride and delight with which I am ever, Your affectionate and successful sister,

EDIE.'

'Edie's a brick!' Warren said to himself with a bound of his heart; 'and it's really awfully kind of—Elsie.'

Before ten o'clock that same morning, the celebrated centreboard yawl *Mud-Turtle*, manned by her owner and his constant companion, was under

way with a favouring wind, and scudding like a seabird, with all canvas on, round the spit of Bordighera, on her voyage to the tiny harbour of San Remo.

(To be continued.)

TWO CITIES OF THE FAR WEST.

VANCOUVER AND VICTORIA.

THE great railway that now spans the broad expanse of Canada from ocean to ocean has opened to us large tracts of hitherto little-known country on the Pacific seaboard. Until lately, British Columbia and the North-west territories beyond Winnipeg suggested to our thoughts a remote and mysterious land, a Great Unknown, a British Siberia, visited but by a few bold adventurers. The new railway has changed this state of affairs. The inquiring tourist may now take his ticket at Montreal, skim across the prairies and over the Rocky Mountains in the cushioned comfort of a Pullman car, and in a few days emerge unruffled on the western coast-line, and tranquilly gaze on the blue water of the Pacific Ocean.

The prospects of a terminal port in this new country naturally appear brilliant. To collect the rich merchandise of the Orient, the various products of the Pacific coast and islands, and the developing commerce of Western Canada, and to pour them, so to speak, through the funnel of such a port into Eastern markets by the great railway—such a destiny gives rise to dreams of a future mighty metropolis, a Liverpool of the Pacific, a commercial Eldorado of the West.

Two cities—all embryo towns in those parts are 'cities'—are now bitterly contending for this honour: Vancouver, on the mainland, at the terminus of the railway; and Victoria, the present capital of British Columbia, on Vancouver Island, opposite. And which will gain the victory in the struggle eventually, it is at present hard to say. Each brings forward excellent arguments in its own favour, and scornfully reviles the pretensions of its rival. To the unbiased observer, Vancouver has undoubtedly strong reasons in its favour. It stands on a magnificent site, worthy of a great city, lying between two splendid harbours. The inner one is entirely land-locked, approached by a narrow but quite sufficient entrance, and protected by hills all round. It runs, a broad inlet of the sea, up to Port Moody, some ten miles above Vancouver on the railway line. The anchorage, now called Coal Harbour, is good and capacious, and close to the terminus of the railway. The town stands on a gently rising hill, and, outside, is washed by the waters of English Bay, which offers an anchorage to vessels of all sizes. A branch-line brings this harbour also into connection with the railway. A narrow sheet of water, shallow and suitable only for boats, runs from this bay into the heart of the future town.

At present, Vancouver is very young, and presents the appearance accordingly of a very young town. The surface of the hill which is to be its site is cleared from the dense pine forest that covered it, and is black with the charred remains of tree-stumps. New buildings, chiefly of wood, are rapidly growing up here and there; and down

by the water's edge of the inner harbour a very respectable nucleus of the future 'great city' is already formed. The streets, ambitiously broad and imposing, are marked out, and in parts already well made, wooden side-walks skirting their edges. In American style, they cut each other at right angles at regular intervals, forming squares, whereon 'blocks' are to rise. The houses have so far naturally failed to keep pace with these ambitious proceedings, and rise in scattered irregularity, sometimes in sociable groups, sometimes in rather ludicrous solitude—desolate occupants of otherwise empty blocks. Amid these spick-and-span erections, rears up an occasional tree-stump, huge and melancholy, an aged parent of the forest mourning his children, whom he fails to recognise in their new guise, as, neatly sliced up into planks by the sawmill near, they rise around the charred patriarch in the shape of 'desirable residences,' brilliant with paint and the ornate decorations of the modern architect's evolution. Some of these tree-stumps are enormous: twenty or thirty feet in girth.

At present, Vancouver contains few places of either business or recreation. Two varieties of commerce, however, exist in profusion: ginsalaces or 'saloons,' and 'real estate agencies.' How the former manage to flourish in such abundance it is not easy to say, for there must be at least one to every hundred of the population; and allowing for women, children, and teetotalers—the last, it is to be feared, rare—the number of customers to each must be small. The 'real estate agencies' offer land for sale in lots, and, bearing in mind the great future predicted for the town, it is hardly necessary to say that their prices are extravagantly high. Like the saloons, it is hard to surmise who are the victims of their blandishments. Possibly they maintain a business between themselves, and thus mutually support each other. No doubt, however, good bargains have been made in land by astute men of business buying in good time and 'holding on,' for the price of land has risen enormously. It is now so high as to be beyond a joke, and threatens temporary commercial paralysis. It must come down again, to allow settlers to commence business; and, the city once established, it will then naturally rise again. Large portions of Vancouver belong to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, who are accused of favouring that city with a view to getting rid of their land advantageously.

In four or five hours a steamer from Vancouver reaches Victoria, the chief port of Vancouver Island. The trip across in fine weather is an interesting one. The passage is threaded through a number of very beautiful islands, rocky and wooded, that stud the calm waters of the straits; and beyond them, on the mainland, snow-clad mountains rise above the fir forests in distant magnificence. Arrived off Victoria, a comparison of that harbour with Vancouver is certainly unfavourable to the former. It is small and shallow, allowing only vessels of light draught to enter, although there is an outer anchorage and wharf suited to the requirements of larger steamers. The Victorians, however, intend dredging and improving their harbour, which will increase their chances of future success. Victoria itself is a city of already established importance,

and is the seat of the provincial government. It has a population of about fifteen thousand, including some four thousand Chinese, and covers two or three square miles, if the straggling suburbs be taken into account. The streets, arranged in the usual manner of parallels enclosing blocks, are not particularly fine in appearance. There are few buildings of notable architectural beauty, the majority of the houses being of wood, and not more than one story in height. There are plenty of good shops, however; telephones spread their web of wires, and the electric light illumines the town by night. There are good hotels, to one of which is attached the Victoria Theatre, a pretty and well-appointed little house, frequently visited by good travelling companies from the States. Several daily newspapers are published, which are enterprising enough in the supply of news, but essentially American in style, and lacking in dignity of tone.

Society in Victoria is neither English, Canadian, nor American, but perhaps a mixture, or rather stratification, of the three. The 'upper circles' are decidedly English in character, a quality that they are proud to maintain. A large number of these, the more prominent citizens, have their houses in 'James' Bay,' a paradoxical term of geography applied generally to a promontory lying between the harbour and the outer coastline. Here are a number of handsome houses, standing in gardens, which are in summer brilliant with flowers. Here also is Beacon Hill, a park-like piece of land, forming a favourite summer resort. Looking seaward from this hill, the view on a clear day is magnificent, the snow-capped Olympian range rising into the clouds, on the American coast, in stately splendour.

The middle and lower classes of society are more Canadian and American in character. Indeed, those here termed the 'lower' classes would probably resent that title, for they are distinguished by a great independence of manner, assuming 'one man to be as good as another.' In the shops, the obsequious politeness of the English tradesman is unknown; buyer and seller treat as equals, with offhand matter-of-fact dryness. The street loafer is hail-fellow-well-met with men of all degrees who may chance to address him. This independence extends to the boys in the streets; a request to one of these young gentlemen to hold a horse or carry a bag with a view to ultimate payment would probably be rejected with scorn, though as a gratuitous favour it might be done.

American colloquialisms are common: a house is not 'in,' but 'on,' a street; shops are called 'stores' (a chemist's being a 'drug-store,' a haberdasher's a 'dry-goods store'); sweetmeats are 'candies'; biscuits, 'crackers'; and perambulators (shade of Johnson!), 'push-buggies.'

In business matters, Victoria seems curiously apathetic and lacking in enterprise; unlike many modern Western cities, so remarkable for their energy and rapidity of growth. But the competition with Vancouver has lately awakened Victorians to the importance of maintaining their commercial interests, and less lethargy is likely to be now displayed. The apathy in commercial affairs extends in some degree to political and religious matters, neither of which is in the wholesome and harmonious condition necessary to social prosperity.

The hopes of Victoria are largely founded on the fine harbour of Esquimalt, four miles distant, now the headquarters of our Pacific naval squadron. This harbour, just inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is easy of access by day and night; an advantage not to be claimed by Vancouver, which must be reached through island-studded channels, strong tideways, and frequent fogs. Esquimalt harbour is land-locked, safe, and roomy, and, being directly connected with the coal-mines of Nanaimo by a railway, which is now being carried on into Victoria, its advantages to steamers are obvious. It is the high ambition of Victoria to connect this railway with the Canadian Pacific on the mainland, and so make a terminal port of Esquimalt. Could this be accomplished, the pretensions of Vancouver would be shattered. But the engineering difficulties in the way threaten great expense, and it is to be feared that this scheme will not be carried out, at any rate for some time to come. Another advantage offered by Esquimalt is its fine dry dock, lately finished, and opened by Her Majesty's ship *Cormorant* in July last.

These harbour, coaling, and dock accommodations would be strong inducements to any line of steamers that might contemplate the China-Canadian or Australo-Canadian routes, provided the delays and difficulties of transshipment to the mainland could be got over. The country all round Victoria, and especially the harbour of Esquimalt, is very beautiful. In summer, its many rocky inlets from the sea and wooded banks conceal mossy spots suggestive of fairyland, and the calm blue water offers irresistible temptations to those who love boating and fishing. Among the pine-woods, flowers and ferns abound in a profusion gladdening to the lover of nature, whether on science or on pleasure bent.

The climate of these parts is peculiar in the extremes of heat and cold it sometimes exhibits; and it has been described, with more force than absolute truth, by Père Accolti, an early Jesuit missionary, as 'huit mois d'hiver et quatre d'enfers.' It is, however, not so bad as this; the winter is damp and unpleasant, but the summer months are delightful. Altogether, the climate in general resembles that of the south-west of England, though a good deal colder in winter.

MISS BARKLE'S LEGACY.

CONCLUSION.—LOST AND WON.

Two months had elapsed since the events detailed in our last chapter, and no change in Miss Barkle's circumstances was yet apparent to Midport society. She was still residing at the cottage, and Annie Carston was with her. There was nothing to show that the increased income she anticipated existed anywhere but in her own imagination, for she lived as quietly and unostentatiously as she did before that wonderful advertisement appeared. It had leaked out, as such things always do, that Mrs Penbury was the widow of the man who was said to have left Miss Barkle money; but question as they would, not a shred of information could the gossips get from any of the four people who might be expected to know the ins and outs of the matter. John Brawn said bluntly he knew nothing about it; and

Annie Carston took her cue from him. Miss Barkle displayed symptoms of hysteria if the subject was mentioned; and the clergyman's wife, who had rashly attempted to sound Mrs Penbury under cover of a visit of condolence, was seen fleeing from Lansdale House back to the rectory in a fit of nervous apprehension, which she did not get over for days. It was extremely provoking and unsatisfactory; so, for want of new particulars, people began to grow sceptical, and to shake their heads doubtfully when Miss Barkle's legacy was touched upon.

Perhaps there was some ground for curiosity. The residents at Lansdale House and the cottage seemed to be on the best of terms. That John Brawn was engaged to Annie Carston was well known long ago, and the fact had given rise to many a sly laugh at Miss Barkle's expense. It was quite in the order of things that they should be much together either at one house or the other, but their engagement did not account for the frequency of Mrs Penbury's visits to the cottage. That was the stumbling-block which no one could explain away, and which forced the old ladies of Midport to insist that there was no money question at all to solve. Had the widow gone nowhere, it would of course have excited no remark; but her selection of Miss Barkle as her only friend under such circumstances could not escape notice. A few enthusiasts had made a point of calling at the cottage when Mrs Penbury was known to be there, but this manoeuvre had so far resulted in conspicuous failure. The announcement of a visitor was almost instantly followed by the widow's departure, and a seemingly cordial 'Good-bye' was all that any one had ever heard pass between the two ladies.

Society is apt to avoid people and things it 'doesn't quite understand,' especially when its investigations are discouraged; so it gradually came about that our heroine saw her friends insensibly drifting away, back to the old distance at which she had known them before. Having been set up as the centre of interest for a time, she felt their defection sorely, realising that it was only eagerness to see the golden nimbus she wore that brought them so closely round her. Now that attraction was fading from their sight, and she stood upon her own merits, she was left alone again; almost alone, but one friend at least remained staunch to her, and she valued him accordingly. Captain Mulbane was the friend. He knew no more about the condition of her affairs than any one else, and had flatly refused to exert what influence he possessed to discover anything about them. 'And if the lady *did* honour me with her confidence on such private matters, Mr M'Gorgle, I should keep it to myself—to myself, sir!' Thus the captain had answered a chum, to the astonishment of a circle of friends at the club; and as this indicates a complete change of tactics on the part of that gentleman, we hasten to explain it to the reader. Captain Mulbane had turned over a new leaf, and renounced his habit of collecting and retailing scraps of local news for the edification of his acquaintances. He had received a letter from Annie Carston the day after he saw her at the gate of the cottage, in which she begged him to maintain silence regarding that little incident on the beach, painting in high colours Miss Barkle's dread of its becoming

known. It had shamed him to feel that his reputation was such as to make any one think it necessary to write to him thus; and being a man of impulse, he made his resolution on the spot. When, therefore, the inquiring M'Gorgle, egged on by more cautious friends, asked him 'to find out what was really on the cards' at the cottage, the captain arose and crushed him with the high-toned strength of his newly acquired principle.

No doubt his feeling for Miss Barkle did much towards his reformation; but whatever the motive may have been, he practised the virtue of silence faithfully, until Midport ceased to regard him as its chief purveyor of useless knowledge. John Brawen's engagement had given him profound satisfaction: it cleared the way for him to approach Miss Barkle; and he had never wavered in his determination to ask for her hand as soon as he saw a prospect of doing so with success. Her manner when she told him 'time would show' that day on the beach made him doubt the advisability of renewing his advances just now. If she had really been fond of Brawen, it was hardly likely so soon after his betrothal to somebody else that she would be disposed to look favourably upon another suitor. He had proceeded so far with commendable judgment for one whose experience in love was so small. Their first encounter after that memorable day on the beach had been a little timid on both sides; but Miss Barkle soon discovered that he had kept his promise not to mention it, and they felt that their secret created something of a mutual confidence, which to the captain was gratifying in the extreme. The rumours about her money had given him a little uneasiness, but in no way affected his attitude towards her; and his frequent visits were characterised by all the old pleasant intimacy, with a faint suggestion of deeper purpose behind. In truth, Captain Mulbane felt guilty in her presence; he had been choked off on the very verge of a proposal, and the course of events since had impelled him for his own sake to keep back words which he knew she had a right to expect from him, whether she was prepared to accept him or not. He must bide his time if he meant to give himself a fair chance. He could afford to wait, now that his only possible rival was out of the field, and—this was really an afterthought—something might turn up meantime about that mysterious money affair of hers.

For her part, Miss Barkle was not a little puzzled by his behaviour. She had quite forgotten the chance remark with which she had fired his jealousy; but his bearing as he uttered that tremulous 'Lina,' and the catastrophe that followed, were fresh in her recollection. He had always been attentive to her, and was even more so now; whilst she, true to her resolve, had treated him in her sweetest manner. She could not understand why he had never taken up the thread of that half-made offer. Two months had passed and he had not spoken, and no blandishments seemed to encourage him. She felt there was something which deterred him, but could not divine what it could be. That he suspected the feelings she had entertained for John Brawen, never entered her thoughts, and she sadly wondered if her love was destined to kill that of any man who succeeded in awakening it.

Before going further with the story of Miss Barkle's love affair, it is necessary to take the reader back six weeks and explain how the reconciliation of Mrs Penbury with that lady was brought about. Annie Carston had been the moving spirit in effecting it; and by the exercise of considerable patience and tact, she at length attained her object. Much of the widow's bitterness was due to the apparent haste with which the legatee had attempted to gain possession of the money, laying undue stress on the personal visit she had paid to Messrs Lambton and Warder. She had pointed this out one evening to Annie, deducing therefrom that Miss Barkle must by nature be a heartless grasping woman.

'I'm sure you wouldn't call her grasping, if you knew her,' said Annie; 'and as for being heartless, she was awfully fond of Jack.'

Mrs Penbury smiled. Miss Barkle's affection for her brother might certainly be counted a small point in her favour, since it had not been returned; but Miss Carston's arguments were hardly convincing to her mind.

'It's a pity you went up to town that time, Lina,' said Annie to her friend the same evening; 'that seems to have hurt Mrs Penbury as much as anything else.'

'I don't see how it could offend her,' said Miss Barkle wearily. Her troubles had weighed upon her heavily of late, and she was casting about for means to rid herself of them at any cost.

'She thinks you were in a hurry to get the money, and didn't consider how she was placed.'

'I didn't know there was a Mrs Penbury till the lawyer told me.'

'Of course I know that; but you see she is unreasonable about the whole thing,' said Annie, rather unfairly.

'I'm sure I would gladly be friends with her, if it's only for your sake,' replied Miss Barkle. She honestly desired to be on good terms with the widow because she was John Brawen's sister, if for no other reason, and had latterly been considering whether the adoption of heroic measures might not restore the peace of mind she had lost.

Her gratification at hearing of Mr Penbury's bequest had been due more largely than she herself suspected to the influence it might have had on John Brawen, and she began to realise this after his engagement to Annie Carston was declared. Her improved prospects, now there was no hope of sharing them with him, looked far less pleasing to her than they had done at the time there was apparently ground for her expectations. She drew a parallel between Mrs Penbury's case and her own: the widow had believed herself to be the one woman in her husband's world; and she, Miss Barkle, had innocently crushed that belief in the saddest hour of a woman's life. Miss Barkle had fondly nursed the thought that she was all in all to John Brawen; and Annie Carston, also guiltless, had robbed her of her love. Now, the last flicker of hope had died away, and she felt the legacy, so hateful to his sister, must be to some extent distasteful to him. She would therefore relinquish her claim to it; it had lost its value to her: to renounce it would prevent the total alienation of John Brawen from herself, and she

could plod along quietly at the cottage, as she had done for so many years. That her plan was quixotic, is the best that can be said for it, but we must bear in mind that Miss Barkle conceived it at a time when she felt she had nothing left on earth to live for. Mrs Penbury should acquit her of over-anxiety to obtain her husband's money; she had at least not deserved that imputation.

So Miss Barkle set to work and indited two letters—one to John Brawen, extremely business-like and short; and the other to Mrs Penbury, meek almost to servility. To Brawen she simply notified her wish to waive any claim she held against the late Mr Penbury's estate, requesting him to make it known in the proper quarter. We need not go deeply into the contents of the other letter; we have more to do with the result it produced.

'Miss Barkle has written to me to say she doesn't want the money,' said Mrs Penbury to Annie one evening soon after their last conversation.

Miss Carston stared with surprise. 'Not want the money, when it would double her income at least!' She had never said a word about this to her.—'What does she say?' asked Annie.

'Says she has had experiences lately which have led her to appreciate the feelings with which I must regard her,' said Mrs Penbury, reading from the letter; 'and begs that I will allow the lawyers to ignore her claim entirely, as she has asked Mr Brawen to have it withdrawn.'

'I wonder what she means?' said Annie, a faint suspicion that she had something to do with it crossing her mind. 'But will you let her give it up?'

'I don't believe for a moment the woman's in earnest,' said the widow in a hard voice.

'Perhaps, if you took her at her word, and then made friends with her, you would see if she really meant to resign it.' She was going to add, 'And then give it back afterwards,' but thought she might leave that to Mrs Penbury's sense of justice.

The widow sat silent for a few minutes, drumming with the letter on her lips, and finally decided to act upon Annie's proposition. She would assume that Miss Barkle actually meant to abandon her rights. It would be very convenient for herself if she did so, for she could then withdraw opposition to the probate of her husband's will. Of course, Miss Barkle should have her money eventually; but it was one thing to have it remorselessly kept back and paid away, and another to make a voluntary gift of it, as she could do if she took Miss Barkle at her word. We always feel a certain kindness for any one to whom we have done a favour; and Mrs Penbury felt that if the ten thousand pounds were placed at her disposal, her feelings towards the legatee would undergo a change.

'I'll take it for granted that she means it,' she said presently; 'and I like the way in which she has made me the arbitrator.'

The tone in which she spoke was reassuring to Annie, who thought that she might now push the business a little further with advantage. 'Will you go and see her, Mrs Penbury?'

'N-no. I think I'll write first and call afterwards.'

That would do. Annie had a presentiment that if the two could be brought together there would be no further difficulty, so she bade the widow good-night and left with a light heart. Her next step must be to prepare Miss Barkle for Mrs Penbury's visit, and this was a simple matter.

'Mrs Penbury told me what you had done about the money, this evening, Lina,' she began.

Miss Barkle made a slight gesture, as if to intimate that she wished to drop the subject, and remained silently gazing out of the window. Annie went to her, and putting her arm round her, began again; but her friend once more raised a cautioning hand, and this time spoke herself with an impassive calmness that surprised her: 'It could not buy the fulfilment of my wish, Annie: let us forget that the whole business ever occurred.' There was no suspicion of reproach, no sign of regret for the sacrifice she had made, to be detected in her tone; she had chosen her course, and was apparently satisfied with it.

'What did Mrs Penbury say, Annie?' she asked after a short silence.

'She is going to write, and means to come over and see you soon, Lina.'

Miss Barkle smiled gently. 'Then, if it only rests with me whether we are to be friends or not, there will be nothing in the way,' she said.

Annie said no more; she instinctively felt that this was not the time to tell Miss Barkle that Mrs Penbury's behaviour had given her the impression that the money would be restored, and was by no means sure the widow would wish her to betray what might be called a half-confidence.

Mrs Penbury made her call after having written to Miss Barkle. Both ladies met with the wish and intention of 'being friends;' and the acquaintance begun under such auspices laid the foundation of one of those warm attachments sometimes formed between two most opposite natures.

It is hardly necessary to say that the arrangement regarding the legacy was made known to no one; and the darkness in which Midport was left, led, as already mentioned, to the whole story being discredited. Miss Barkle never referred to it again; but she pondered a good deal on it in secret, often making up her mind to pour the tale into Captain Mulbane's sympathetic ear, and as often changing it, when she thought how uncertain he was of keeping silence. Publicity was not desirable; her action would not be understood, and she could not explain it, for she was able to form a very just idea of the opinion her neighbours would adopt—and freely express—about a woman who made such a sacrifice from such motives as hers.

John Brawen's visits to the cottage to see Annie Carston were becoming marked by a certain reserve in his manner towards Miss Barkle, hardly surprising when we remember that he knew the light in which she had until recently regarded him. On her side, the lady, bearing in mind what she had foregone to retain his friendship, was disappointed and pained. She could not tell him what had prompted her action, and he was hardly likely to guess. Confidence was naturally at an end, and before long Miss Barkle became sensible that the old feeling had given place to one of indifference.

Captain Mulbane, meantime, was waiting until he thought the hour to speak had come. Hope sustained the love-sick man, for Miss Barkle had been very tender to him of late, and he was beginning to feel certain of success. He determined upon committing himself to the deed at length, unable to retain his passion longer. If she didn't accept him now, she never would, and William Mulbane might as well know his fate at once. He made this resolution one evening after dinner—somehow, most of our great resolves are made about that time—and having slept upon it, awoke the next morning firm in his purpose. He was astonished at his own coolness, for he had been contemplating the move earnestly for some days, and too much consideration has sometimes an unsettling effect. The captain was not a careful man in his dress, as a rule; but this morning he arrayed himself with elaborate care, and paid his whiskers more attention than they had been accustomed to for years. Then he did a very rash thing: he strolled into the club to look at the papers before setting out on his mission, and the general magnificence of his get-up excited remark. He had been cool enough until now; but the sly chaff of his friends—some of whom had their suspicions—was too much for him, and he fled out into the street again, feeling that he was a marked man; that every passer-by intuitively knew he was on his way to the cottage to propose to Miss Barkle. The captain grew hot and cold, reckless and timid by turns, a dozen times, before he reached the gate, and when he did, he rang the bell without having even considered the form in which he should put the momentous question. He was given ten minutes' breathing-time in the drawing-room to collect his thoughts and arrange his ideas, but he did not make use of it; he had but one idea in the world at the moment, and that was too much for him. He looked at the pictures and books about the room, and it struck him that it was much like waiting till the dentist was at leisure. If he could only think of some suitable form of words to begin with, he would feel easier. But strive as he would, nothing would suggest itself; and it was in a state of nervousness bordering on imbecility that he heard Miss Barkle's footsteps.

She entered, dressed to go out; and reading the purport of his visit at a glance, seated herself calmly, and waited, whilst he dashed blindly at the object he had in view.

'I came to see you, Miss Barkle,' he began, and stopped. The fact was self-evident; the lady felt that no reply was necessary, so she inclined her head slightly and remained silent. 'To— to speak to you, Miss Barkle, very particularly.' (It was awful; he had no idea it would be so difficult as this.)

'What is it, Captain Mulbane?' said she, so coolly that his heart sank down into his boots.

Ah, now she had brought him face to face with it, but without such help as she had given him last time. Happy thought! He would remind her of 'last time,' by way of preparing her for what he had to say. He wriggled to the extreme edge of his chair and made another plunge. 'Perhaps you remember one evening when I found you—on the beach, Miss Barkle?'

It was not an event the lady was likely to

forget, but why on earth should he come here to speak to her 'particularly' and bring up that? It had no bearing on the business in hand; she was not going to help him; he had been long enough thinking about it, and she gathered up her skirts, as if to rise. 'I remember,' she said, 'but can't conceive why you should refer to it.'

He had offended her! The captain completely lost his head, and threw himself on the sofa at her side, oblivious to everything but her frown. 'Barkle—Miss Lina, I mean—I came to ask—I was going to say—O-oh, Lina!' Words failed him, and he seized her hand, struggling to master his emotion. She let him retain that one, so he put away his handkerchief and possessed himself of the other. It was all over; Miss Barkle turned up her veil. Let us leave them together.

There was a double wedding at Midport a few months later, and amongst the presents received by Mrs William Mulbane was a notification to the effect that, at the request of Mrs George Penbury, Messrs Coutts & Co. had transferred the sum of ten thousand pounds to her name.

Both the Brawens and Mulbanes left Midport; but the story of Miss Barkle's Legacy is told there still with zest by numerous people who really knew all the particulars of the case, but have never yet agreed about them.

WIT IN QUOTATION.

FEW forms of wit are more amusing to most persons than that which consists of the witty use of quotations. A quotation may be apt, yet not witty; but it is impossible for a witty quotation not to be apt. Some persons, like the leader-writers on the *Daily Telegraph*, seem to have swallowed but not wholly assimilated two or three dictionaries of quotations, so full are they of 'extracts from the best authors;' and although their mass of allusions and quotations are frequently apt and to the point, they yet fall short of being witty. No writer ever succeeded in making use of so many witty quotations as Barham, of *Ingoldsby Legends* fame. Hood perhaps comes next; and many examples can be found in the writings of Sydney Smith, Theodore Hook, Byron, and others. Curran, the brilliant Irish advocate, also made use of many witty quotations.

A stock of good quotations and a knowledge of the instances in which certain uncommon words or phrases have been used, are frequently of much service. Thus, when an advocate was arguing against the use of the word 'minstrel,' and urging that before his client could be called by that term, it must be proved that several persons played together, the judge made him collapse by asking, 'Then what about Sir Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*?'

At a dinner given by an American banker a few years ago, somebody asked Lord Houghton if he would take his duck rare. 'Rare! rare!' said his lordship; 'now, there is another of your Americanisms which make it so difficult to understand you. And, pray, what do you mean by "rare?"' An American President piped out from the other end of the table: 'We mean by "rare," my lord, what Dryden meant when he wrote,

"Roast me quickly an egg, and see that it be *rare*." Every one flatters himself that he understands the English language if only he can express his thoughts with tolerable clearness. But this is a popular error. Lord Houghton should have known that the word '*rare*,' in the sense of underdone, was frequently used in Elizabethan literature; and to this day it is to be heard in many parts of England, from Yorkshire to Devonshire. Credit is due to the American who so quickly and effectually responded to his lordship and at the same time taught him a good English word.

Scott, too, once distinguished himself in a somewhat similar manner. A fellow-scholar of his, on being asked, 'What part of speech is "with?"' answered, 'A substantive.' The rector, after a short pause, thought it worth while to ask, 'Is "with" ever a substantive?' but all were silent until Scott's turn came. He instantly responded by quoting a verse of the Book of Judges: 'And Samson said unto her [Delilah], If they bind me with seven green *withs* that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.' Readers of Lockhart's admirable biography will remember that there are also several other similar stories told of Scott, and all of these are characteristic, ingenious, and illustrative of his fertility of resource.

An interesting phase of wit in quotation is seen when certain well-known phrases are happily used under different circumstances from those with which they are usually associated. Thus, a Professor of the Edinburgh University having asked Christopher North for the hand of his daughter Jane, Christopher fixed a small ticket to Miss Jane's chest, and announced his decision by thus presenting the young lady to the Professor, who read, 'With the author's compliments.'—Witty, also, was the letter addressed to the owner of a pair of clogs which had been left at the office of the *Century Magazine*, New York. 'Dear Madam,' the editor wrote, 'without expressing any opinion as to the literary merit of the accompanying articles, permit us to say that we think them unsuitable for insertion in our magazine.'—Everybody remembers Hood's witty metamorphosis of the National Anthem: 'A pint of beer among four of us.' Still better was the line in an advertisement written by H. J. Byron, at a time when there was much disturbance in Liverpool regarding the booking-fees at theatres: 'Off with the bob: so much for booking 'em.'

Biblical quotations are frequently used wittily. Although many persons naturally think the language of the Bible should not be used for the purpose, no exception can be taken to the retort of the man who, on entering a barber's shop, at once seated himself in the chair, and in response to the expostulations of the customers, quietly retorted: 'We are told, "the last shall be first."'
—Sydney Smith, again, in reply to Landseer's invitation to him to sit for his portrait, exclaimed, in allusion to the well-known animal painter's ability, 'Is thy servant a *dog* that he should do this thing?'—Several witty scriptural quotations are credited to Bishop Blomfield. Once when he had been present at the consecration of a church where the choral parts of the service had been a failure, he was asked what he thought of the music. 'Well,' he replied, 'at least it was according to Biblical precedent: "the singers went before,

the minstrels followed after.'"
—On another occasion, a friend was interceding with him on behalf of a clergyman who was constantly in debt, and had more than once been insolvent. After praising the talents and eloquence of the impecunious parson, the friend wound up by saying: 'In fact, my lord, he is quite a St Paul.'—'Yes,' said the bishop—"in prisons oft."—Among the witty scriptural quotations attributed to the Presbyterian preacher Mr Paul, is one bearing upon his own name. When about to leave Ayr, he gave a farewell sermon expressly to the ladies, and founded it on the passage, 'All wept sore, and fell upon Paul's neck and kissed him.'—Biblical quotations are only too apt to be used irreverently; and a foreigner who had read some of our standard jest-books might, on reading the English version of the Bible for the first time, urge against it the same argument that the old lady used against *Hamlet*—"that there were too many quotations in it."

To a comparatively small number of people, quotations, however witty, afford no food for laughter because they have little or no knowledge of literature. This fact of course makes the laugh all the more hearty for those who have. One does not need an extensive knowledge of literature, however, to understand and appreciate the quotation made by C. S. Calverley when he, Mr James Payn, and one or two other gentlemen were climbing Scafell from Westwater. The party went up the mountain much too fast for Mr Payn, who toiled after them in vain. 'The labour we delight in *physics* Payn,' said Calverley. Nor is a knowledge of the classics necessary to understand the phrase made use of by Charles Lamb's sister upon seeing the farewell performance of the well-known comic actor, J. S. Munden, and this may be cited in conclusion. 'Well,' she said after the curtain had dropped—"Well, *sic transit gloria Munden*."

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

PARIS, like London and other large cities, has found the need of a better water-supply than that which was originally provided for its population. A bold suggestion for solving the problem has been submitted to the city authorities by a Swiss engineer; he proposes that the French capital should draw an inexhaustible supply of pure water from the Lake of Neuchâtel, in Switzerland, at a cost of about twenty millions sterling. The length of the proposed aqueduct, which would include a tunnel twenty-two miles long under the Jura Mountains, is three hundred and twelve miles; and as the lake is sixteen hundred and twenty feet above the mean level of the Paris streets, there would be no chance of failure from want of sufficient gradient. Indeed, it is proposed to deliver the water at a height above that level of four hundred feet, which, with the flow of more than four thousand gallons per second, would give sufficient power to supply all the workshops in the city with motive-force and all the streets with electric light.

A curious bird's-nest has, it is said, been found in one of those Swiss cities where watch-factories abound; it is that of a wagtail, and is composed

almost entirely of steel springs such as are used in the watch-trade.

In the early days of the electric telegraph, great difficulty was experienced in some countries in protecting the wires from the cupidity or superstition of the natives of the districts through which they were carried. Such a thing occurred, according to the *Electrical Review*, in Chili, a difficulty which was solved by a clever stratagem. There happened to be at the time a number of captive Indians in the Chilean camp. These were called together by the general in command of the troops, under whose auspices the telegraph was being established, and he explained to them, that if they touched the wires, their hands would be held fast, and they would be unable to get away. The Indians did not believe this; but the officer, to prove to them that he spoke the truth, requested them to take hold of some wires, connected with a concealed induction coil. This had the usual effect of so cramping the muscles of their fingers that they could not get away, although the general commanded them to let go. The action of the battery was then stopped, and the men were released, with the strict injunction not to tell their countrymen on any account of this secret regarding telegraph wires. Of course this had the desired result; and every Indian was afterwards told in strict confidence about the dreadful result of meddling with the wires.

The *Scientific American* lately contained an illustrated description of an Electric Club which has recently been opened in New York. As its name implies, the Club is fitted with all kinds of electrical contrivances. In the cellar is a powerful steam-engine, to give the necessary motive-power to two dynamos. Associated with these are storage-batteries and apparatus for the general control of the electric currents throughout the building. The entire edifice is lighted by electricity, and the current is utilised in many other ways. For instance, in one room is a stove consisting of a platinum wire, which is carried in zigzag form across a surface of asbestos. When the current passes through this wire it is raised to a white-heat, and communicates that heat to the unflammable asbestos. A boot-blackening machine is another novelty which is worked by a small electric motor. There is an electric safe for the storage of valuables, and an electric door-opener, which the initiated can control by the pressure of a stud in the floor. Although the Club is a social one, it is believed that it will do much to further electrical research, containing as it will a lecture-room furnished with the most recent apparatus and a first-class library.

The truth of the old saying that 'there is nothing like leather,' has been questioned in a very practical manner by an inventor at Nuremberg, who has produced a shoe sole in which leather is conspicuous by its absence. This sole is composed of a network of wire, overlaid with an india-rubber-like substance the composition of which is secret. These soles have, it is said, been well tested in the German army, and have been found to be twice as durable as those of leather, while they are only half the price of the older-fashioned material.

The modern plan of consuming to ashes such refuse as might otherwise become a nuisance dangerous to health is now finding favour in many

cities and towns. At Southampton, the Refuse Destructor, as the furnace is called, is made to do a double duty, for the waste heat from the machine is caused to heat a boiler, the steam from which supplies an engine which in its turn actuates an electric-light dynamo. Other corporations will doubtless profit by this useful example.

Mr Klein recently read a paper before the Middlesex Natural History and Science Society which contained an interesting account of the wholesale destruction of flour by an insect pest imported into this country from the Mediterranean. The flour was stored to the amount of more than one thousand tons in some large warehouses in the east of London. To the dismay of the owners, a large quantity of the valuable food was found to have undergone a change which gave it the appearance of dirty wool, and rendered it quite unfit even for pigs. This change was traced to the larvæ of a certain butterfly, and all attempts to stamp out the plague signally failed. The grubs could be seen in thousands on every sack, and the damage done amounted to hundreds of pounds. At length nature provided the remedy which human skill could not discover. Another change occurred: the tops of the sacks became black as soot with a number of minute flies, whose mission it was to lay their eggs in the bodies of the flour-eating caterpillars and to bring their depredations to an end. We may mention that specimens of the pest in its various stages, together with the exterminating flies, which latter appear to be a new species, are now shown at the Natural History department of the British Museum, Kensington.

The various terrible fires in theatres which have too often shocked the world during the last few years have given rise to many preventive measures, which, however, stop short of the one radical change which should become compulsory; we mean, the lighting of theatres and places of public amusement generally by electricity. The Spanish authorities have already passed a law compelling all theatres in Madrid to adopt the electric light within six months. The engines, dynamos, &c. are to be isolated completely from the main building, and oil-lamps are to be used where supplementary lights are required. Managers of theatres will surely find it to their interest to substitute the new lamps for old ones, for it is well known that the recent disasters in theatres have scared away many of their patrons. The use of a safe method of lighting would speedily restore the lost confidence.

Rats have from time to time been credited with having been the cause of conflagrations, owing to an alleged fondness which they have for lucifer matches. According to *Fire and Water*, a gentleman at Boston, United States, determined to ascertain by experiment whether there was any truth in this allegation. He shut up several rats in a cage, feeding them well, and placing matches within their reach. The first night several matches were ignited by the rats, and not a day passed while the experiment was going on but the same thing happened. The ignition was caused by the rats gnawing the phosphorus ends of the matches, which evidently had some attraction for them. It is now so usual to make use of matches which contain no phosphorus, that the discovery is not so valuable as it would have

been some years back. Still, the observation is a very interesting one.

The late War Office scandal concerning the bayonets and cutlasses which had been supplied to the troops, and which were compared in quality to hoop-iron, is not likely to be repeated, for the authorities have laid down stringent regulations as to the tests to be applied to those weapons before they are issued to the soldiers. These tests consist of, first, a vertical pressure of forty pounds on the hilt of the cutlass, which the weapon must bear without bending; second, an increased pressure until the hilt approaches the point within a few inches; and third, a bending of the blade round a curved surface until hilt and point still more nearly touch one another. The weapons are also to be subjected to blows on a block of wood to test their general soundness.

It has long been a vexed question among artillerymen whether solid steel plate or iron faced with steel is the better material to resist the impact of modern projectiles. To settle this question, the government determined upon a series of careful experiments, which are now being carried on at Portsmouth at the expense of the state. A number of different manufacturers have been invited to supply armour-plates for trial, and these plates are being fired at at very short ranges with chilled iron and forged steel projectiles. So far as the experiments have at present gone, the advantage seems to lie with the use of the compound plates.

A curious corner of old London will, it is said, fall under the auctioneer's hammer during the coming summer; this is Barnard's Inn, the entry of which is a narrow passage turning out of Holborn. The Hall of this inn is the smallest of such erections, measuring only thirty-six feet in length. Its most remarkable feature is the little cupola or louvre of lead which crowns its roof. In olden times, the practice of lighting a fire on a hearth in the centre of a room necessitated an arrangement of the kind for the escape of the smoke. There are very few of these cupolas now remaining. Charles Dickens, who had a most extensive knowledge of London byways, knew Barnard's Inn, and described it as 'the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for Tom-cats.' The Inn dates from the year 1450, and is hard by that row of ancient overhanging houses which form such a curious contrast to the modern shops of High Holborn.

The government authorities in Ceylon are doing a very good work in restoring the huge tanks or reservoirs by the help of which fertility is ensured over large tracts of that country by the same means as it is in India. In northern Ceylon, one of these restored tanks has recently been opened amid great festivities. This is the Kallawewa tank, which is the largest in the island. It was constructed in the fifth century, but has for a long time been useless in consequence of a great breach in its main wall, one hundred feet broad, which was caused either by a heavy flood or by the act of some long-forgotten invader. The restoration of this tank, which covers an area of seven square miles, has occupied four years. It is connected with a canal fifty-four miles in length, which on its way to the tank supplies a number of detached villages. The breach mentioned above has now

been repaired, and the sluices and other works connected with the tank have been put in order. The boon which this restoration means to the poor agriculturists of the country cannot be over-estimated.

The advantage of underground systems of wires and pipes for the distribution of electricity, water, gas, &c., was well illustrated at New York during the late terrible snowstorm or 'blizzard' which visited that city. Overhead, the telegraph and telephone wires were either broken or rendered dangerous, and impossible to use on account of their entanglement with the electric-light cables, which in that city are also commonly suspended above the streets. But underground in the subways the storm was of course not felt. The gas was duly delivered as usual, and the Steam Supply Company provided for their clients their accustomed amount of heat.

In Boston, a different form of heat-distribution has been provided. Thirteen thousand feet of piping have been laid under the streets of that city for a public supply of hot water under great pressure. These pipes are covered with a non-conducting preparation, so that they may retain as much of their initial heat as possible, which heat, by the way, is far above the usual boiling-point. By means of reducing valves, the initial pressure of three hundred pounds on the square inch can be reduced to a more convenient pressure at the issuing point, where the water will be allowed to expand into steam, and can be used for heating and other purposes. The hot water not used goes back to headquarters by a return main.

On the Midland Railway, a train is now in regular service between Derby and Manchester lighted by electricity on a new system. The method adopted is that of Mr Timmiss of Westminster, and it has now been in efficient operation for some weeks. Under each carriage are placed store-cells, or secondary batteries, which are charged by a dynamo machine at Derby whenever necessary. These batteries supply an electric current to 'Swan' incandescent lamps, two of which are placed in each compartment of the train. The electric current is under the control of the guard, who, by means of a switch, can put the lamps in action or extinguish them as may be required. But the novelty of the system consists in the method by which each carriage is independent of its neighbours; that is to say, if by any means a carriage should become detached, its lamps will be automatically lighted up, and will remain lighted until the cells are exhausted. The cost of lighting a train of average length is said to be equal to the consumption of half a pound of coal per mile.

It will be remembered that a short time ago, in view of increasing the carrying capacity of the Suez Canal, it was determined both to widen and deepen that international water-way, and also, if possible, to enable ships to continue their journey through it by night. A scheme has now been formulated to carry the lighting of the canal into operation. The system which has been selected, after consideration of electricity, oil, and gas as light-producers, is that of compressed oil-gas on buoys and fixed standards. The buoys lighted by Pintsch's oil-gas have been well tested now in various parts of the world, and can be made of sufficient capacity to hold a supply of gas for two

months' consecutive burning. A further provision is found in the lighting of the ships themselves; and before the vessel is allowed to pass through the canal at night, the officials in charge must be satisfied that it contains the necessary lighting power. This is to consist of a powerful head-light, capable of throwing an electric beam for thirteen hundred yards. Each ship must also have another electric lamp suspended over its deck, which will give an all-round light fully two hundred yards in diameter. A very perfect system of signalling by means of lights of different colours and different positions is also comprised in the scheme. This system of lighting the canal may be looked upon as provisional until such time as it may be absolutely necessary to carry out the widening and deepening of the channel.

Some curious meteorological phenomena have recently been observed in Mexico, which are attributed to the laying of a line of railway there. A great deal of damage has occurred on the Mexico Central Railroad, due to the bursting of waterspouts on the track. The engineers have also noted that as fast as the line advances the rain seems to follow. These curious results are supposed to be due to some attractive force induced by the use of the large mass of metal employed in making the road, the waterspouts seeming to be attracted by both the rails and the telegraph wires. The matter is receiving the attention of scientific men in the country.

Something of a novelty in the way of guide-books has recently been published by Longley (39 Warwick Lane, London). The price of each is one penny. These guide-books are illustrated, and are constructed in a comprehensive and exact manner, the facts being concisely given and with evident accuracy. The books embrace almost all the chief places of resort in England, Scotland, and Ireland, while some of them apply to places on the Continent.

STEAM-CANOE BUILT OF DELTA METAL.

In a recent number of the *Journal* we drew attention to the many advantages accruing from the employment of a comparatively new alloy known as Delta Metal. Our remarks have just received a practical illustration in the construction of a novel craft built for exceptional purposes. The *Nyassa* steam-canoe, constructed for the Universities' African Mission Society, for service on the lake bearing that name, is composed entirely of Delta Metal, a material equal in strength to steel, and practically incorrodible. In tropical waters saturated with decomposing vegetable matter, iron or steel would rapidly corrode, even if continually painted by skilled labour—a difficulty in remote regions—hence the adoption of Delta Metal. The attacks of white ants render wood impracticable for boat-building.

The *Nyassa* has been built in three sections, as she will have to be transported on men's backs from the coast to Lake Nyassa—a considerable distance. The little craft has been built as a 'Mersey canoe,' being required for sailing as well as for steaming on a lake noted for its boisterous weather. The engine can be taken out of the boat and replaced within a few hours, and the change from steamer to sailing-vessel effected by unskilled labourers.

The *Nyassa* has two masts, the mainmast having a copper lightning-conductor. The boiler-furnace has been specially designed for consumption of wood and similar fuel found in tropical countries. Air-tight bulkheads are provided. The vessel is twenty-one feet long, with a beam of seven feet and a depth of three feet, and draws only sixteen inches with engine and boiler on board. At recent tests made in the open sea, the *Nyassa* proved to have good sailing-powers with engine and boiler on board, and in every way fully justified the expectations of her designers and builders.

THE DAUGHTER.

My little daughter grows apace;
Her dolls are now quite out of date;
It seems that I must take their place,
We have become such friends of late,
We might be ministers of state,
Discussing projects of great peril,
Such strange new questionings dilate
The beauty of my little girl.

How tall she grows! What subtle grace
Doth every movement animate;
With garments gathered for the race
She stands, a goddess slim and straight.
Young Artemis, when *she* was eight
Among the myrtle-bloom and laurel—
I doubt if she could more than mate
The beauty of my little girl.

The baby passes from her face,
Leaving the lines more delicate,
Till in her features I can trace
Her mother's smile, serene, sedate.
'Tis something at the hands of fate,
To watch the onward years unfurl
Each line which goes to consecrate
The beauty of my little girl.

ENVOY.

Lord! hear me, as in prayer I wait.
Thou givest all; guard Thou my pearl;
And, when Thou countest at the Gate
Thy jewels, count my little girl.

J. B. S.

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1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

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'THE STRANGER'S COLD.'

A TRADITION OF ST KILDA.

PERHAPS the most remarkable fact with which recent intercourse with the dwellers in the remote island of St Kilda has made us familiar is the existence of an illness which so far has baffled all attempts at explanation. Every visitor has remarked that there is a local tradition that a species of influenza known as 'stranger's cold' follows the arrival of a vessel from the mainland. Martin, the Herodotus of the Western Isles of Scotland, in his account of St Kilda (second edition, 'very much corrected;' London, 1716), says: 'The inhabitants are about two hundred in number, and are well proportioned; they speak the Irish language only; their habit is much like that us'd in the adjacent isles, but coarser. They are not subject to many diseases; they contract a cough as often as any strangers land and stay for any time among them, and it continues for some eight or ten days; they say the very infants on the breast are infected by it.'

The next historian of importance of St Kilda was the Rev. Aulay Macaulay, minister of Ardnarmurchan, and great-grandfather of Lord Macaulay. It is an odd circumstance that it is his mention of the 'stranger's cough' in his History of St Kilda which has, through the medium of Dr Johnson, secured him a niche in the temple of fame. Dr Johnson's reasons for liking the book are explained by Sir George Trevelyan in his *Life* of his uncle: 'Mr Macaulay had recorded the belief prevalent in St Kilda, that as soon as the factor landed on the island, all the inhabitants had an attack, which from the account appears to have partaken of the nature both of influenza and bronchitis. This touched the superstitious vein in Johnson, who praised him for his "magnanimity" in venturing to chronicle so questionable a phenomenon; the more so because—said the Doctor—"Macaulay set out with a prejudice against prejudice, and wanted to be a smart modern thinker." To a reader of our day, the

History of St Kilda appears to be innocent of any trace of such pretension, unless it be that the author speaks slightly of second-sight, a subject for which Johnson always had a strong hankering.'

Despite this measure of praise for Macaulay's book, Dr Johnson did not, at least openly, accept his account of the stranger's cold. 'How can there be a physical effect without a physical cause?' he asked. 'The arrival of a shipful of strangers would kill them; for, if one stranger gives them one cold, two strangers must give them two colds, and so in proportion.' To the argument that Martin and Macaulay's statements were confirmed by the fact, that on the annual visit of Macleod of Macleod's steward all the St Kildans caught cold, Dr Johnson chaffingly replied: 'The steward always comes to demand something from them, and so they fall a-coughing.'

Macculloch, our next authority, was as sceptical as Johnson. We adopt Mr Seton's abstract of Macculloch in his useful *St Kilda, Past and Present* (Edinburgh, 1878): "In hopes of hearing the whole island join in one universal chorus of sneezing," he watched with great anxiety; but no sneezing was heard, and none did cry, "God bless him!" He then ironically says that the perfection of faith is to believe against our senses, and that although the event could scarcely be concealed in the limited number of pocket-handkerchiefs which the islanders possessed, nevertheless, nobody doubted that it was an actual fact. "Everybody had witnessed it, from Martin to Macaulay; everybody believed it, from Macaulay to the present day; the whole island—including the minister's wife, then regent of St Kilda—was agreed upon it, and who, then, dared to doubt?"

'The Doctor appears to have expected to witness an immediate visitation. "Everybody looked at every other's nose; but not a drop of dew was distilled, and not a sneeze consented to raise St Kilda's echoes." He proceeds to quiz the would-be philosophers who must find a *cause* for everything. "It is all owing," say some of these wise personages, "to the east wind: *causa pro non causa*;

because this is precisely the wind which prevents any boat from landing on the island." Among other humorous solutions, he suggests the idea of strangers being naturally welcomed by a sneeze instead of a kiss of peace—a trifling modification of the well-known salutation by noses in which certain nations indulge.

All this is very fair funning; but the fact remains that all visitors except the Doctor have had ample opportunities of noting the illness. A day or two after the departure of *H.M.S. Porcupine* in 1860, the entire population was afflicted with 'the trouble.' Mr Morgan arrived ten days after the *Porcupine*, and saw the actual progress of the illness; and, unexpectedly bearing out the most dubious part of Martin's account, he says he saw an infant not more than a fortnight old suffering severely after the visit of the factor's smack in 1876; and after the wreck of the Austrian ship *Peti Dubrovacki*, in January 1877, the same illness appeared. So recently as the visit of the Crofters' Commission, the minister mentioned in his evidence the invariable occurrence of the illness after the visit of a strange ship. Mr Seton says the St Kildans allege that the illness is most severe when the visitors come from Harris, and that they suffer less when the vessel comes from Glasgow or more distant ports. The disease 'usually begins with a cold sensation, pain and stiffness in the muscles of the jaw, aching in the head and bones, and great lassitude and depression—the ordinary symptoms of catarrh in an aggravated form—and is accompanied by a discharge from the nose, a rapid pulse, and a severe cough, which is particularly harassing during the night. The malady first attacks those persons who have come most closely into contact with the strangers, and then extends itself over the whole community.'

It is natural that a disease so remarkable should attract attention. Assuming it to be peculiar to St Kilda, the explanations of its origin are numerous and fanciful. A friend of Dr Johnson's, Mr Christian of Dorking, and, in later years, Mr Frank Buckland, came to the conclusion that the illness was due to the wind blowing at the time of the strangers' arrival, not to the strangers themselves. This was on the erroneous assumption that a landing could only be obtained if the wind was north-east or east. Others found a sufficient cause in the exposure of the islanders when they ran into the sea to help strangers to land. It was open for every man to explain the phenomenon for himself. What was certain was the existence of a disease—sometimes fatal—which was never known in the island except when strangers visited it. Its existence was undoubted, but its cause seemed beyond discovery. We cannot be said to have advanced very far yet in our knowledge of the illness; but some light has been thrown on the subject by turning inquiry away from the Western Islands to distant lands and peoples widely differing in race and customs, and subject to climatic influences of an entirely different kind.

Mr Seton was probably among the first to point out that a similar disease was alleged to have caused the extinction of certain tribes on the Amazon. The disease always appears, it is said, 'when a village is visited by people from the civilised settlements. The disorder has been known to break out when the visitors were entirely free from it, the simple contact of civilised men in

some mysterious way being sufficient to create it.' (Bates: *The Naturalist on the River Amazon*.) Again, in the chronicle of the Duke of Edinburgh's cruise in *H.M.S. Galatea* in 1867-68, it is noted: 'Tristan d'Acunha is a remarkably healthy island; but it is a singular fact that any vessel touching there from St Helena invariably brings with it a disease resembling influenza.'

This is curiously illustrated by some remarks of Miss Gordon Cumming in her *Cruise in a French Man-of-War*. Speaking of Tauna, in the South Pacific, she says, such of the medicine-men of Tauna as were opposed to missionaries 'stirred up the islanders generally to believe that the dysentery, coughs, and influenza which had recently for the first time appeared in the group were all produced by the white men; and, strangely enough, their assertion seemed confirmed by the fact that the tribe among whom the missionaries were living escaped these illnesses.'

Owing to the belief that the white men brought disease, the missionaries were afterwards driven from Tauna: dysentery appeared in the neighbouring isle of Fotuna, and led to the massacre of the Samoan teachers who had been left there by Mr Williams. It also ravaged Eromanga, carrying off one-third of the population, who believed that the scourge had been introduced by some hatchets which they had received as barter from a sandal-wood ship, and accordingly they threw them all away. On several other islands the teachers were either murdered or compelled to flee for their lives, solely on this account. 'What makes this more remarkable is, that these illnesses often followed the visit of a ship which itself had a perfectly clean bill of health; and in many cases the missionaries and other good authorities recorded that they had no reason to believe that any white man had been to blame for the introduction of new diseases.'

Again, the people of Nivē or Savage Island, the centre of the triangle formed by Tonga, Samoa, and the Hervey Islands, when first visited by Dr Turner were found to have an invariable habit of killing all strangers, not only white men, but also 'men whose canoes chanced to drift from Tonga to Samoa, or even their own countrymen who had left the island and returned. All such were invariably killed, chiefly from a dread lest they should introduce foreign diseases. So great was this fear, that even when they did venture to begin trading, they would not use anything obtained from ships till it had been hung in quarantine in the bush for weeks.' Finally, Miss Cumming states generally that influenza was unknown all over Polynesia until the white man's advent.

In the *British Medical Journal* of September 4, 1886, Mr R. Augustine Chudleigh describes a similar disease among the Maoris which is known as *murri-murri*. He refers particularly to the 'case of the island of Wharekauri, one of the Chatham group, about four hundred and eighty miles east of New Zealand, nearly at the antipodes of St Kilda, where, under the name of *murri-murri*, an identical disorder, with a similar alleged origin, is now frequent. In its main features, *murri-murri* is indistinguishable from a severe influenza cold. Its invasion may occupy four hours; the patient remains "intensely miserable" for about four days, when the disorder gradually

dies away. No period of incubation precedes, and no permanent ill effects are observed to follow. One attack does not preclude the recurrence, and European residents, as well as Maori and Muriari natives, are liable to the disorder. In order to be infected, a person need not know that a ship has come; indeed, the mere appearance of *murri-murri* is proof to the inhabitants—even at distant parts of the island, which is thirty miles long—that a ship is in port, inasmuch that, on no other evidence, people have actually ridden off to Waitangi to fetch their letters. There is a hill whence one can see across the island into Waitangi Bay; and people are wont to climb this hill and scan the bay for a ship on no other evidence than the recurrence of *murri-murri*. It is very curious that the name of that hill is Mount Dieffenbach, and that the ship which would have been described thence would almost certainly have been the *St Kilda*, which for many years did the trade of the islands. There may have been connection between *St Kilda* and *Wharekauri*.

As regards the conclusion of the foregoing paragraph, it is only necessary to say that the occurrence of the name '*St Kilda*' is one of those remarkable coincidences across which we stumble from time to time, but that is all. There is certainly no 'connection between *St Kilda* and *Wharekauri*,' nor would it explain either 'the stranger's cold' or *murri-murri* if there were.

And so 'the stranger's cold' remains to this day a curious mystery, not peculiar to *St Kilda*, as the old writers fancied, but to be found wherever an isolated population is visited at infrequent intervals by persons of what may be called a later civilisation.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.—THE BALANCE QUIVERS.

MARCH, April, May passed away: anemones and asphodels came and went; narcissus and globe-flower bloomed and withered; and Warren Relf, cruising about in the *Mud-Turtle* round the peacock-blue bays and indentations of the Genoese Riviera, had spent many cloudless days in quiet happiness at the pretty little villa among the clambering olive terraces on the slopes at San Remo. Elsie had learnt at least to tolerate his presence now: she no longer blushed a vivid crimson when she saw him coming up the zigzag roadway; she wasn't much more awkward before him, in fact, than with other creatures of his sex in general; nay, more, as a mere friend she rather liked and enjoyed his society than otherwise. Not to have liked Warren Relf, indeed, would have been quite unpardonable. The Relfs had all shown her so much kindness, and Warren himself had been so chivalrously courteous, that even a heart of stone might surely have melted somewhat towards the manly young painter. And Elsie's heart, in spite of Hugh's unkindness, was by no means stony. She found Warren, in his rough sailor clothes, always gentle, always unobtrusive, always thoughtful, always considerate; and as Edie's brother, she got on with him quite as comfortably in the longrun as could be expected of anybody under such trying circumstances.

At first, to be sure, she couldn't be induced to board the deck of the busy little *Mud-Turtle*. But as May came round with its warm Italian sunshine, Edie so absolutely insisted on her taking a trip with them along that enchanted coast towards Monaco and Villefranche, beneath the ramping crags of the Tête du Chien, that Elsie at last gave way in silence, and accompanied them round the bays and headlands and roadsteads of the Riviera on more than one delightful outing. Edie was beginning, by her simple domestic faith in her brother's profound artistic powers, to inspire Elsie, too, with a new sort of interest in Warren's future. It began to dawn upon her slowly, in a dim chaotic fashion, that Warren had really a most unusual love for the byways of nature, and a singular faculty for reading and interpreting with loving skill her hidden hieroglyphics. 'My dear,' Edie said to her once, as they sat on deck and watched Warren labouring with ceaseless care at the minute growth of a spreading stain on a bare wall of seaward rock, 'he *shall* succeed—he *must* succeed! I mean to make him. He shall be hung. A man who can turn out work like that must secure in the end his recognition.'

'I don't want recognition,' Warren answered slowly, putting a few more lingering microscopic touches to the wee curved frondlets of the creeping lichen. 'I do it because I like to do it. The work itself is its own reward. If only I could earn enough to save you and the dear old Mater from having to toil and moil like a pair of galley-slaves, Edie, I should be amply satisfied, and more than satisfied.—I confess I should like to do that, of course. In art, as elsewhere, the labourer is worthy of his hire, no doubt: he would prefer to earn his own bread and butter. It's hard to work and work, and work and work, and get scarcely any sale after all for one's pictures.'

'It'll come in time,' Edie answered, nodding sagaciously. 'People will find out they're compelled at last to recognise your genius. And that's the best success of all, in the longrun—the success that comes without one's ever seeking it. The men who aim at succeeding, succeed for a day. The men who work at their art for their art's sake and leave success to mind its own business, are the men who finally live for ever.'

'It doesn't do them much good, though, I'm afraid,' Warren answered, with a sigh, hardly looking up from his fragments of orange-brown vegetation. 'They seldom live to see their final triumph.'

For praise is his who builds for his own age;
But he that builds for time, must look to time for wage!

As he said it, he glanced aside nervously at Elsie. What a slip of the tongue! Without remembering for a moment whom he was quoting, he had quoted with thoughtless ease a familiar couplet from the *Echoes from Callimachus*.

Elsie's face showed no passing sign of recognition, however. Perhaps she had never read the lines he was thinking of; perhaps, if she had, she had quite forgotten them. At anyrate, she only murmured reflectively to Edie: 'I think, with you, Mr Relf *must* succeed in the end.'

But how soon, it would be difficult to say. He'll have to educate his public, to begin with, up to his own level. When I first saw his work, I could see very little to praise in it. Now, every day, I see more and more. It's like all good work; it gains upon you as you study it closely.'

Warren turned round to her with a face like a girl's. 'Thank you,' he said gently, and said no more. But she could see that her praise had moved him to the core. For two or three minutes he left off painting; he only fumbled with a dry brush at the outline of the lichens, and pretended to be making invisible improvements in the petty details of his delicate foreground. She observed that his hand was trembling too much to continue work. After a short pause he laid down his palette and colours. 'I shall leave off now,' he said, 'till the sun gets lower; it's too hot just at present to paint properly.'

Elsie pitied the poor young man from the bottom of her heart. She was really afraid he was falling in love with her. And if only he knew how hopeless that would be! She had a heart once; and Hugh had broken it.

That evening, in the sacred recess of Elsie's room, Edie and Elsie talked things over together in girlish confidence. The summer was coming on apace now. What was Elsie to do when the Relfs returned, as they must return, to England?

She could never go back. That was a fixed point, round which as pivot the rest of the question revolved vaguely. She could never expose herself to the bare chance of meeting Hugh and—and Mrs Massinger. She didn't say so, of course; no need to say it; she was far too profoundly wounded for that. But Edie and she both took it for granted in perfect silence. They understood one another, and wanted no language to communicate their feelings.

Suddenly, Edie had a bright idea: why not go to St Martin de Lantosque?

'Where's St Martin de Lantosque?' Elsie asked languidly. Her own future was not a subject that aroused in her mind any profound or enthusiastic interest.

'St Martin de Lantosque, my dear,' Edie answered with her brisker, more matter-of-fact manner, 'is a sort of patent safety-valve or overflow cistern for the surplus material of the Nice season. As soon as the summer grows unendurably hot on the Promenade des Anglais, the population of the *pensions* and hotels on the sea-front manifest a mutually repulsive influence—like the particles of a gas, according to that prodigiously learned book you teach the girls elementary physics out of. The heat, in fact, acts expansively; it drives them forcibly apart in all directions—some to England, some to St Petersburg, some to America, and some to the Italian lakes or the Bernese Oberland. Well, that's what becomes of most of them: they melt away into different atmospheres. But a few visitors—the people with families who make Nice their real home, not the mere sun-worshippers who want to loll on the chairs on the Quai Masséna or in the Jardin Public, retire for the summer only just as far as St Martin de Lantosque. It's

a jolly little place, right up among the mountains, thirty miles or so behind Nice, as beautiful as a butterfly, and as cool as a cucumber, and supplied with all the necessities of life from afternoon tea to a consular chaplain. It's surrounded by the eternal snows, if you like them eternal; and well situated for penny ices, if you prefer your glaciers in that mitigated condition. And if you went there, you might manage to combine business with pleasure, you see, by giving lessons to the miserable remnants of the Nice season. Lots of the families must have little girls: lots of the little girls must be pining for instruction: lots of the mammas must be eager to find suitable companionship; and a Girtton graduate's the very person to supply them all with just what they want in the finest perfection. We'll look the matter up, Elsie. I spy an opening.'

'Will your brother come here next winter, Edie?'

'I know no just cause or impediment why he shouldn't, my dear. He usually does one winter with another. It's a way he has, to follow his family. He takes his pleasure out in the exercise of the domestic affections.—But why do you ask me?'

'Because'—and Elsie hesitated for a moment—'I think—if he does—I oughtn't to stay here.'

'Nonsense, my dear,' Edie answered promptly. It was the best way to treat Elsie. 'You needn't be afraid. I know what you mean. But don't distress yourself: men's hearts will stand a fearful deal of breaking. It doesn't hurt them. They're coarse earthenware to our egg-shell porcelain. He must just pine away with unrequited affection in his own way as long as he likes. Never mind him. It'll do him good. It's yourself and ourselves you've got to think of. He's quite happy as long as he's allowed to paint his own unsaleable pictures in peace and quietness.'

'I wish he could sell them,' Elsie went on reflectively. 'I really do. It's a shame a man who can paint so beautifully and so poetically as he does should have to wait so long and patiently for his recognition. He strikes too high a note; that's what's the matter. And yet I wouldn't like to see him try any lower one. I didn't understand him at first, myself; and I'm sure I find as much in nature as most people.—But you want to have looked at things for some time together, through his pair of spectacles, before you can catch them exactly as he does. The eye that sees is half the vision.'

'My dear,' Edie answered in her cheery way, 'we'll make him succeed. We'll push him and pull him. He'll never do it if he's left to his own devices, I'm sure. He's too utterly wrapped up in his work itself to think much of the reception the mere vulgar picture-buying world accords it. The chink of the guinea never distracts his ear from higher music. But I'm a practical person, thank heaven—a woman of affairs—and I mean to advertise him. They ought to hang him, and he shall be hung. I'm going to see to it. I shall get Mr Hatherley to crack him up—Mr Hatherley has such a lot of influence, you know, with the newspapers. Let's roll the log with cheerful persistence. We shall float him yet; you see if we don't. He shall be Warren Relf,

R.A., with a tail to his name, before you and I have done launching him.'

'I hope so,' Elsie murmured with a quiet sigh.

If Warren Relf could have heard that conversation, he might have plucked up heart of grace indeed for the future. When a woman begins to feel a living interest in a man's career, there's hope for him yet in that woman's affections. Though, to be sure, Elsie herself would have been shocked to believe it. She cherished her sorrow still in her heart of hearts as her dearest chattel, her most sacred possession. She brought incense and tears to it daily with pious awe. Woman-like, she loved to take it out of its shrine and cry over it each night in her own room alone, as a religious exercise. She was faithful to the Hugh that had never been, though the Hugh that really was had proved so utterly base and unworthy of her. For that first Hugh's sake, she would never love any other man. She could only feel for Warren Relf the merest sisterly interest and grateful friendship.

However, we must be practical, come what may; we must eat and drink though our hearts ache. So it was arranged at last that Elsie should retire for the summer to the cool shades of St Martin de Lantosque; while the Relfs returned to their tiny house at 128 Bletchingley Road, London, W. A few pupils were even secured by hook and by crook for the off-season, and a home provided for Elsie with an American family, in search of culture in the cheapest market, who had hired a villa in the patent safety-valve, to avoid the ever unpleasant necessity for returning to the land of their birth, across the stormy millpond, for the hot summer. The day before the Relfs took their departure from San Remo, Elsie had a few words alone with Warren in the pretty garden of the Villa Rossa. There was one thing she wanted to ask him particularly—a special favour, yet a very delicate one. 'Shall you be down about the coast of Suffolk much this year?' she asked timidly. And Warren gathered at once what she meant. 'Yes,' he answered in almost as hesitating a voice as her own, looking down at the prickly-pears and green lizards by his feet, and keeping his eyes studiously from meeting hers; 'I shall be cruising round, no doubt, at Yarmouth and Whitestrand and Lowestoft and Aldeburgh.'

She noticed how ingeniously he had mixed them all up together in a single list, as if none were more interesting to her mind than the other; and she added in an almost inaudible voice: 'If you go to Whitestrand, I wish very much you would let me know about poor dear Winifred.'

'I will let you know,' he answered, with a bound of his heart, proud even to be intrusted with that doubtful commission. 'I'll make it my business to go there almost at once.—And I may write and tell you how I find her, mayn't I?'

Elsie drew back, a little frightened at his request. 'Eddie could tell me, couldn't she? That would save you the trouble,' she murmured after a pause, not without some faint undercurrent of conscious hypocrisy.

His face fell. He was disappointed that he might not write to her himself on so neutral a

matter. 'As you will,' he answered with a down-cast look. 'Eddie shall do it, then.'

Elsie's heart was divided within her. She saw her reply had hurt and distressed him. He was *such* a good fellow, and he would be so pleased to write. But if only he knew how hopeless it was! What folly to encourage him, when nothing on earth could ever come of it! She wished she knew what she ought to do under these trying circumstances. Gratitude would urge her to say Yes, of course; but regard for his own happiness would make her say No with crushing promptitude. It was better he should understand at once, without appeal, that it was quite impossible—a dream of the wildest. She glanced at him shyly and caught his eye; she fancied it was just a trifle dimmed. She was *so* sorry for him. 'Very well, Mr Relf,' she murmured, relenting and taking his hand for a moment to say good-bye. 'You can write yourself, if it's not too much trouble.'

Warren's heart gave a great jump. 'Thank you,' he said, wringing her hand, oh, so hard! 'You are very kind.—Good-bye, Miss Challoner.' And he raised his hat and departed all tremulous. He went down that afternoon to the *Mud-Turtle* in the harbour the happiest man alive in the whole of San Remo.

UNPROFESSIONAL TRAMPING.

WE have never been able satisfactorily to account for the fact that in the athletic England of to-day walking for recreation should find so little favour. Very odd excuses for not caring about what is agreed to be, notwithstanding its apparently tame character, the most perfect form of bodily exercise, are given by men who, at two very beautiful and suitable seasons of the year—namely, just before and just after summer—having no opportunities for hunting, shooting, or fishing, and being past football, do little but long for the next cricket or rowing season. 'What's the fun of trudging, when you can ride?'—'Haven't been accustomed to it, and couldn't keep it up.'—'Beastly slow work;' and so on. Vainly has the writer held up attractive pictures, drawn from his walking experiences in many lands, of the splendid physical satisfaction derived therefrom, of the odd-and-end knowledge picked up, of the little episodes and adventures which keep things lively, of the pleasure of treading unbeaten tracks, and of exploring human and natural worlds, which, although they often lie at our very doors, are as often quite *terra incognita*; and above all, of the glorious independence of the pedestrian. At the most, he has extracted half-promises to 'have a shot at it,' and very little more.

My memories of pedestrian expeditions extend over a large and varied tract of country, and are of the most pleasant character; and such as are not vividly impressed on my mind are to be found in the pages of some score of battered, travel-worn, weather-stained sketch-books, the sketch-book being almost as necessary an item of the pedestrian's outfit as a knapsack. I have

walked in Japan and China, in Italy, Sicily, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium—not mere before-lunch walks, be it understood, but good honest tramps, extending in some cases over a week. But one turns naturally first to the mother-country; and what there is to be seen, and even discovered, in the mother-country by men who ever fly abroad at the first opportunity, can only be satisfactorily proved by the pedestrian. A very good rule, I have found, in planning a walking tour is to have some other object in view than the mere accomplishment within a certain time of a certain distance, or even than the fixing of certain points to be attained. Trace the course of an old road, be it a Roman *via*, or a British trackway, or a pilgrim path: tread in the footsteps of a favourite author who has immortalised certain scenes—accompany Charles Dickens in Kent, or Mr Blackmore or Charles Kingsley in Devonshire, or be with Sir Walter Scott or George Eliot or Henry Fielding—do anything, in fact, to give a zest to the journey but merely jot down a lot of towns and villages, and arrange to reach them at certain times regardless of attractions by the road, as is the too common fault of bicyclists at home and tourists abroad, and which may account for the stern, business-like expression on the faces of so many of the former, and of the air of listless boredom or frantic haste exhibited by the latter.

Make one of these ideas but an excuse for taking a certain line of country, and it is remarkable how many additional and unexpected attractions crop up during the journey. Inspiration to carry out these ideas generally comes when least expected. A casual allusion to Thomas à Becket induced the writer to take one of the pleasantest tramps he can recall. It was not along the old road followed by the immortal pilgrims of Chaucer, but along an obscure, little-known track used by the pilgrims from the North and the Midlands, and which, after the lapse of so many years, is still known as 'The Old Pilgrim's.' It enters Kent at Tatsfield above Westerham, proceeds across Chevening Park to Otford, by Kemsing, Snodland, Boxley, and Harrietsham, to the 'little village of Charing,' whence it is traceable by Eastwell Park and Wye into Canterbury. The path, in some places barely discernible, in others a good high-road, follows the line of ancient yew-trees dotted along the hillsides above it, rarely touches towns and villages, and is not only beautiful in itself, but abounds with objects of romantic and historic interest. Its length is about forty-four miles, and it can be comfortably done in two days, making Charing the halting-place.

The perusal of *Great Expectations* brought about an exploration of that little-known corner of Kent, north of Rochester, known as 'No Man's Land,' whence the walk may be extended round the Isle of Sheppey into Faversham; whilst *Pickwick* and *Edwin Drood* suggest Rochester and its neighbourhood.

A conversation about smuggling took me down to Hythe, whence was made a two-days' exploration of that quiet, solitary region of Romney Marsh, all about which are interesting relics of

the days of the Cinque Ports' grandeur in the shape of old towns long deserted by the sea; returning Londonwards by the smugglers' road to Tunbridge by Cranbrook and Gondhurst.

Surrey is a better known region; but there are many men to whom that exquisitely beautiful line of breezy commons, dotted with picturesque old villages, which runs at the foot of the range of hills broken by Reigate, Dorking, and Guildford, is familiar, who do not know that on the Sussex border there is a part of sequestered Surrey, stretching between Oxted and Farnham, which is well worthy of a two days' walk, the half-way point being Ockley on the old Roman Stane Street.

Of Sussex, a beautiful and interesting county, little is known beyond the driving radii of its great watering-places; yet in Sussex there are at least three good walks which repay trouble. West Sussex may be conveniently explored in two days by starting from Haslemere and working down by Midhurst, Petworth, and Pulborough to Storrington; and upon the next day by West Grinstead and Balcombe to East Grinstead. Sufficient of East Sussex may be seen, also in two days, by starting from East Grinstead, proceeding through the heart of the seat of the once famous Sussex iron industry, full of quaint places, which still retain to a surprising extent the customs and traditions of former days, through Fletching and Isfield to East Hoathley, working up the next day by Chiddingley, Warbleton, Heathfield, and Mayfield to Crowborough Cross. Another good Sussex walk is to follow the Roman Stane Street from Chichester into Surrey.

Just as *Great Expectations* and *Pickwick* suggested Kentish walks, as *Lorna Doone* and *Westward Ho* took me to North Devon, so did *Nicholas Nickleby* send me away far north to Barnard Castle, on the borders of Durham and Yorkshire. Equally with Dickens is Sir Walter Scott associated with Barnard Castle; and there are few better centres for pedestrian exploration than the quaint old Durham town on the Tees, around which cling so many memories of Rokeby, of Master Humphrey the Clockmaker, and of Wackford Squeers. The twenty-five-mile walk into Barnard Castle from the city of Durham is during its latter half interesting and beautiful; but the first ten miles run through a country of coal-pits and their grim surroundings. The shorter walk from Darlington along the Tees river is to be preferred. All around Barnard Castle there are interesting goals for the pleasure-tramp. The road by Egglestone Abbey and through Rokeby Park leads us to the village of Greta Bridge, on a branch of the old Watling Street. Thence we pass along a deserted, lonely road, running straight, as it was built by the Roman engineers, into Bowes. Here is Dotheboys Hall, the last and the pleasantest-looking house in the village, access to which must be gained by stratagem, for the Bowes people do not revere the memory of Charles Dickens, and declare that his successful crusade against the Yorkshire schools ruined their town, whereas in reality the railway ruined it, by driving off the road the dozen mailcoaches which used to change horses at the *Unicorn* daily on their way to and from Scotland.

The lover of wild scenery may continue on along the old Roman road, past Spittal, where was enacted the tragedy of the 'Hand of Glory,' up to that lonely monument amidst the remains of the Roman camp on the summit of Stanemore, which anciently marked the boundary of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, and now that of the counties of Yorkshire and Westmorland, and return over the wild solitary moorland, or go on to Brough. The mention of Westmorland tempts me to speak of walking in the Lake district; but as the Lake routes are as well known as the streets of London, 'fresh woods and pastures new' are of more general interest.

A well-filled sketch-book reminds me of two most enjoyable expeditions I made along the course of the Roman Wall from coast to coast; and to the man who does not mind a little rough work, no more pleasant and interesting fields for exploration can be recommended. I have traversed these mighty relics both from west to east and from east to west, and I unhesitatingly recommend the latter course, for the reason that the interest increases as one advances. As, after the first twenty miles from Newcastle, there is but little road-work, but an alternate scrambling up and down rocky hills and crossing fields, and as there is so much of interest, which must on no account be missed, off the actual line of the Wall—Hexham and Brampton towns, Lanercost Priory and Naworth Castle *inter multis aliis*—six days cannot be considered too much in order to explore conscientiously from Newcastle-on-Tyne to Bowness, on the Solway, although the distance is but seventy-five miles.

Having exhausted the Roman Wall, if that is possible, I confidently recommend the tramp to devote eight days to a tour of Northumberland, starting from Hexham, finishing at Morpeth, and taking *en route* Otterburn, High Rochester, the wild fells, Glanton, Wooler, Flodden Field, Ford Castle, Norham Castle, along the Tweed to Berwick; and descending the east coast by Holy Island, Belford, Bamborough Castle, Dunstanborough Castle to Alnwick, thence to Warkworth, along the beautiful river Coquet to Rothbury, and over the fells to Morpeth. The distance is about one hundred and eighty miles; accommodation is cheap and good; and there are not five miles of uninteresting country from beginning to end. Northumberland deserves to be better known by south-countrymen; for, apart from its natural beauty, which is not surpassed elsewhere, it abounds, perhaps to a greater extent than any other English county, with antiquarian, historical, and romantic associations; and, quite as great an inducement, it has a character and appearance of its own.

A batch of foreign sketch-books next attracts my attention. One tramp therein delineated I confidently recommend to readers who may be lucky enough to escape the English winter by following the course of the swallows, and that is a walk along the western Riviera from Frejus, in France, to Genoa, passing in order St Raphael, across the Esterel Mountains, to Cannes; thence by Antibes to Nice; thence by the Corniche Road, high up on the mountain-side, to Monte Carlo; thence by the coast-road to Menton; over the frontier to Ventimiglia, through Bordighera

and San Remo, Porto Maurizio, Oneglia, Andorra, Alasio, Albenga, Savona, Pegli, to Genoa. The railway has robbed the road of almost all its old importance; and, over the Italian border, one can generally indulge in a swim, by simply quitting the road, without the chance of being seen by any one. The distance is about one hundred and sixty miles; and by a judicious arrangement of halting-places, no anxiety on the score of accommodation need be entertained, although if, by stress of weather or other causes, the explorer finds himself at nightfall at one of the many little fishing villages, he may be obliged to put up with very rough entertainment.

Another tramp which I took, fresh from the exploration of Hadrian's Wall, in England, was along the ancient Appian Road, as distinguished from the Via Appia Nova, from Rome to Albano. This is hardly to be recommended except to ardent antiquaries, although to them the very stillness and desolation of this once mighty artery of communication, along which the owners of all the great names in Roman history, and many of New Testament history, must have passed, has its peculiar fascination. Beyond the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the usual goal of the tourist, the road is absolutely deserted, and runs, at first deep in dust, and gradually thick-grown with grass, straight as an arrow-flight between mouldering heaps of what once were ornate tombs, over which, by degrees, the grass creeps, until at the railway bridge it is difficult to say if there is a road at all. But if we part the thick grass with our feet, we shall see the splendid stone blocks, still with the ruts of ancient chariot-wheels upon them, as level and as serviceable as when they were first placed in position by the engineers of Appius Claudius Cæcus, three hundred years before Christ. In winter, the walk may be pleasant; but with the sun shining hot, not a square inch of shade and not a drop of water obtainable for nearly sixteen miles, the expedition resolves itself into a conversion of pleasure into toil.

Many another continental tramp is recalled to me as I turn over the pages of more sketch-books: the beautiful walk from Waterloo into Brussels; a fortnight's exploration of Normandy from Rouen to Mont St Michel; tramps along well-beaten Swiss tracks; and wanderings in Sicily, the cradle of pastoral poetry, and the fountain of many of the most beautiful legends of mythology. Then there is a leap of ten thousand miles away to the Land of the Rising Sun. Practically useless as any remarks concerning tramping in Japan may be to the home pedestrian, time annihilates space so rapidly, that at no distant future it may be as possible for a man to spend his long vacation under the shadow of Fusi-yama as by the coast of Wales.

The allusion to Fusi-yama recalls a very memorable expedition I once made on foot with the object of ascending a mountain which at the time I speak of—fourteen years ago—had not been quite robbed of its veil of mystery. Nowadays, every globe-trotter and as many ladies as have the strength make the ascent of Fusi a religious duty. But in the year 1874 it was a very different matter. Treaty limits existed, beyond which no foreigner was supposed to go unless provided with a special pass. No Japanese woman had ever made the ascent of Fusi, for the

very sufficient reason that it was against the law of long centuries; and I believe—but am open to correction—that before 1874 only one European lady, the wife of Sir Harry Parkes, had ever climbed the 'Peerless Mountain.' Armed with what I deemed a valid pass, I started from Yedo on the hundred-mile pilgrimage. All went well as far as Subashiri, the village at the foot of Fusi; and with weary limbs and a light heart I turned in to sleep at an early hour, having taken the precaution to have my pass verified and stamped by the mayor of the place. In the middle of the night, I was awakened, informed that my pass had been reconsidered, and was found to be irregular, and ordered at once to prepare to start back for treaty limits. This I flatly declined to do; but, after a long altercation, was obliged to agree that I would make a start at daybreak. It was very galling and mortifying thus to be rebuffed by the whim of a jack-in-office; but I was a solitary sojourner in a strange land, and resistance would have proved worse than useless. But I had my revenge. When I got up at dawn, I beheld a file of little policemen drawn up in line outside the teahouse. They were in European uniform, and, contrary to their usual habit when on rural duty, wore European boots—stiff, new, untanned English military Blichers, bought probably at a sale, and distributed regardless of fit. I was in good training, and I started, the policemen after me at a trot. I never stopped, not for breakfast, not for rest, until at a distance of eight miles from Subashiri. There was not one of my escort in sight. In an hour's time the sergeant came limping in, with his boots tied round his neck; but I saw nothing of his men. Then my heart softened, and I treated him to wine; but I have never quite got over the fact of having lived years under the sacred mountain and never to have stood on its summit.

Japan in October is the most perfect pedestrian country, for although the high-roads are, or were, as bad as roads can be, there are such innumerable bypaths and tracks, that one is independent of them; and, with the accompaniments of the most exquisite scenery, varied and many-coloured, capital accommodation almost everywhere, and universal courtesy and civility, is comparable to nothing beyond its shores.

I can say that I have walked in China, but except Hong-kong, my experiences are limited to Shanghai and Hankow, two of the most unattractive, nay, even repulsive fields of exertion to the pedestrian imaginable. In Hong-kong there is some good hill-scambling; but the area is so small that the island can hardly be spoken of as a sphere for the pleasure-tramper.

In conclusion, I cannot think of a surer tonic, of a more effectual 'pick-me-up,' for the man who feels the want of a short change of air, or an escape from the groove of his life, when the bats and flannels are stowed away in their winter homes, and the four-oar is snug in the boathouse, than to put on his oldest clothes, sling a satchel over his shoulders—not buckle a knapsack on them—get an inspiration, and start off for a two-days' walk; and he will find, as many men have found who have sneered at walking as unworthy of the cricketer or the boatist, that what he has adopted as a resource will become a habit, and that he need never feel that longing to be 'up

and doing,' without quite knowing what to do, which so frequently makes strong men yawn and stretch during the athletically idle portion of the year.

MIN:

A RAILROAD STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER I.

IN that wondrous modern combination of Babylon and Babel commonly known as the city of Chicago, a city which, like the phoenix, arose from the smouldering ashes of its former self: in that giant gateway and mammoth metropolis of the ever-growing West are many busy streets lined with noble buildings and lofty business blocks. Not the least among the palatial structures, on one of Chicago's most important thoroughfares, is an imposing pile of red stone, upon whose massive portico of polished Aberdeen granite is chiselled the legend—

C. R. M. & P. R. R.

To the ordinary passer-by these large and almost imperishable letters would indicate that the building is, in some way and for some purpose, connected with a railroad. Chicago people are able to tell at a glance *which* railroad; while men interested in railroads, either from necessity or common curiosity, know that upon those six well-furnished floors behind the red-stone front are the general offices of the Chicago Rocky Mountain and Pacific Railroad. They are truly magnificent headquarters, even for an American railroad. The premises would not disgrace a joint-stock mushroom bank or a bubble insurance corporation: they are eminently befitting an important transportation Company. In proof of this assertion of the road's importance, it is only necessary to quote from its own time-cards and newspaper advertisements: 'Linked at Last! The Great Lakes and the Pacific! A continuous ride of 2500 miles without change of cars! Chicago to San Francisco, over the Great Rocky Mountain Railroad, on solid trains of sleeping, parlour, and dining cars! Steel rails and rock ballast! Air brakes and patent couplings! Quick Time—no delays!' If the travelling public are not quite so enthusiastic in their praises of the C. R. M. & P., it can scarcely be the fault of the officials, who do their best to render the road first-class in all its appointments—on paper.

On the second floor of the big red-stone building are the private offices of the chief officials; and upon the ground glass in one of the doors are two words in gold lettering—'General Superintendent.'

One summer morning, perhaps ten years ago, the room into which that door opens was occupied by four persons—all, of course, railroad men. Seated in a revolving chair at a desk was the Superintendent of the C. R. M. & P., a man not more than thirty-five years old. To the right of the great man sat his secretary; and at his left was his telegraph operator, noting with keen eye and ear the ceaseless clicking of the instrument as it throbbed with the pulsations of nearly three thousand miles of wire. A short distance away, and facing the official, stood a man, hat in hand. In appearance he was not unlike the superin-

tendent, except that he was perhaps two or three years younger, and possessed a pleasanter and more open countenance. The official took from a 'pigeon-hole,' endorsed 'Applications for Positions,' a letter, and read it hastily. He looked once from the letter to the man standing in front of him, scrutinising him closely in that momentary glance. 'Your name is Arthur Macpherson?—Yes. You apply for a position as agent or telegraph operator, and state that you are willing to take charge of a quiet office. Your references are satisfactory. I want a man, right off, to go to our station in Western Nebraska known as 44-mile. It is quiet enough—very quiet. I don't want to deceive you: there is no town or settlement near the place. We call it 44-mile for want of a better name, it being forty-four miles west of the nearest station of any account. The salary will be forty dollars a month, besides the use of a furnished room in the station building.—Are you willing to go, and at once?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Very good. You will please start on the express to-night. Wire me when you take charge. I shall be out on the road in a few weeks, and will look in on you.—Dale, fill out a pass for Mr Macpherson.'

Two minutes later the new agent bade 'Good-morning' to Superintendent Ferris, and went his way to work under that official—a thousand miles from headquarters.

The train known as the Pacific Express, which leaves Chicago every night for the Far West, was steaming across the prairies of Nebraska. Those passengers who started from the city on Lake Michigan's shores had been travelling for two nights and a day, and the gray dawn of the second day was slowly giving way to the sunlight as the long string of heavy coaches rumbled over an iron bridge across the Platte River. Then there was a brief stop at the small settlement on the west bank of the Platte dignified by the name of New Constantinople, and again the express rattled on. Nearly two hours later the train once more slowed up, and the conductor tapped upon the shoulder a man who was dozing on one of the seats in the smoking car. The conductor was a big jolly sort of fellow. '44-mile!—So you're the new agent? Well, it's taken just five weeks to drive the fellow crazy who is leaving. I go through the darned hole every other day on my run. Never seen a blamed cuss round that there 44-mile cabin 'cept the agent, since this here road started up, more'n three years ago. Ratty Sykes, who quits to-morrow, told me, day before yesterday, that barrin' the two trains as go through every morning, he hain't spoke to a soul in five weeks, an' he's 'bout sick of it.—Your name's Macpherson—see that by your pass. Well, I'll tip the time o' day to you as often as anybody, I reckon. Hope you'll stand it pretty well, Mac, my boy.—44-mile!'

The name of the place the conductor shouted from force of habit: he knew full well there were no passengers for that wild spot in the wilderness, so it did not much matter that what he said sounded very like 'For-for-my.' This conductor was one of those enviable men who can take life comfortably and smoothly. Of course, being an American railroad conductor, he

was an important personage; hence his familiarity with Macpherson on short acquaintance was quite excusable—indeed, it showed much good-will, not to say condescension, on the part of the conductor.

When the train came to a stand-still, Arthur Macpherson swung himself off the rear platform of the rear car, while the baggage-master roughly tossed his modest trunk from the baggage car into the long coarse grass at the side of the track.

If you, reader, have never travelled beyond the confines of Great Britain, where great railways always boast of an 'up' and a 'down' line; where city stations are generally well appointed and oftentimes palatial; where country way-stations are often prim and picturesque and generally neat and tidy; where passengers step from the cars to conveniently raised platforms; where the road-bed is neatly enclosed on both sides by hedgerows and fences, and where roads are crossed by bridges, or at least are guarded by gates—if you have never journeyed in the Far West of the great American continent, you will find it difficult to imagine the stern reality of a wild *unfinished* railroad. It's O for Yankee cars!—but alas for Western 'depots!' You can travel in a palace, but buy your ticket and wait for the train in a hut or under the 'blue vault.'

Macpherson had travelled much: he had been a railroad man, on and off, ever since he left school; but this was the first time in his life that he had felt bewildered by a sense of utter loneliness and isolation. Leaving his trunk to take care of itself in the long grass whither the gentle baggage-man had tossed it, he stood with his hands in his pockets in the middle of the single weed-grown track and watched the train as it gradually faded into the distance. There was nothing to intercept his vision, and it was nearly fifteen minutes before the express appeared to be an infinitesimal speck which finally blended with the western horizon. Then he turned slowly about. He faced the south, the east, and the north by turns: there was no difference. It was apparently boundless prairie, a seemingly interminable stretch of coarse grass and sage brush, spanned by the single track of the railroad like a narrow iron ribbon; with not a vestige of a tree, a house, a barn, or a living soul to relieve the intense monotony of the scene. In every direction he could see as far as where, on the distant horizon, the sky blended with the prairie.

So intent was Macpherson upon trying to discover somebody or something which he might consider neighbourly, or so enrapt was he in his own thoughts, that he failed to notice the station itself. He was awakened from his reverie by a harsh voice.

'Ah, there, stranger! Kinder think yo'd struck the wrong place.'

Turning quickly, he beheld a tall lank figure, with unshaven face and long hair, clad in a red flannel shirt, a big slouchy hat, and blue jean pantaloons—the end of the last-named garment being tucked away in heavy top boots sadly in need of blacking. This very crude specimen of a man, still young, was standing in the doorway of a one-story frame shanty about fifteen feet by ten, set half-a-dozen yards to the north of the track. The solitary telegraph wire, which was

carried across the plains on rough posts much shorter than telegraph posts usually are, made a dip near the cabin, to the roof of which it was fastened by a couple of insulators. This fact, and a small white board on which was painted in black letters, 'C. 1008, S. 1450' (the distance in miles from Chicago and Sacramento respectively), satisfied Macpherson that he was undoubtedly at 44-mile station; so he replied: 'No, there's no mistake. I was merely trying to think if I had ever seen a more God-forsaken spot.—I suppose you're the man I've come to relieve?'

'Ararat (call it Ratty) Sykes, agent an' operator, 44-mile, Nebraska!—I'm thet same man, pardner. By thunder, yo're jest right 'bout this consarned hole! I'm told it's the lonesomest place on the road 'twixt Chicagy an' Frisco. Lonesome ain't no word fur it. I ain't seen a blessed soul, not even a tramp, round these yere diggins sence I came here five weeks ago. 'Nuther week 'ud hev sent me clean daft. Fair an' squar', I think a couple uv days more 'ud hev seen me a-jumpin' underneath a freight-train, to raise my sperrits an' a leetle excitement. Dunno how yo're goin' ter stan' it, fur yer look like a city rooster. I know it's mortal mean; but I'm so eternally glad to git away myself, I can't feel half as sorry fur yer as I'd orter. Let's git yore baggage inside.' As they tackled Macpherson's trunk between them, the outgoing agent continued: 'Yer see, I'd orter be used ter this yer sort o' thing. My home's up ther ter Constantinople, which, as yer may know, ain't any great shakes uv a city. Was born on the plains afore iver ther was a railroad—never been east uv Omaha. Got tired o' chasin' cattle, an' learned telegraphin' 'bout a year ago; but ef I can't git a better show at a job than agent at 44-mile, I'm a-goin' back ter cattle-raisin'.—No, ther ain't very much to do here, thet's the worst uv it. A feller has got ter hang over the ticker from 2 A.M. to six P.M., jest *in case* he's wanted. Ther's no reg'lar trains passes here after six in the evenin' 'til the flyer fur the east goes by at two in the mornin'. She passes the Pacific Express (thet's the train yer jest got off) at Constantinople. Them's the only passengers. Ther's four reg'lar freights durin' the day; sometimes they stops fur telegraph orders, mostly they don't. Ther's a switch [siding], as yer see, but it's niver been used sence I've been here.'

By this time they had entered 'the depot,' which Macpherson proceeded to investigate. The 'office' in which Macpherson found himself was a rather shabby room about ten feet square, its only recommendation being that it was well lighted. There was a window to the south, facing the track, and windows looking east and west. Underneath the south window was a rough table, upon which stood a telegraph instrument, which clicked and rattled incessantly. Before the table was a wooden chair of the kitchen furniture species; and seated in that chair, with his hand on the 'ticker,' the operator could, from the windows to his right and left, see any trains which might be approaching.

It should be understood that, the railroad being a single track used by trains going in both directions, much telegraphing was necessary to ensure the safe running of the trains. Indeed, it was merely for telegraphic purposes that the

station at 44-mile was maintained, and nearly all trains stopped for 'orders,' as a precautionary measure, though only on special occasions were trains held on the switch. Most of the 'passing' took place at New Constantinople. There was a large railroad clock over the south window; and back by the wall was a small cook-stove, rather dilapidated, and decidedly greasy.

'Yo'll hev ter cook fur yerself, pard, when yo've got anythin' ter cook. Howiver, they're pretty good up ter 'Stan'ople fur thet. Jest wire yore order ter the operator up ther; an' it'll mostly come by next train. Yer settle with 'em pay-day, which don't travel this way very often. I'm a pretty good cook myself by this time; had lots uv chance ter practyse.'

A very small combination china closet and pantry completed the furniture proper, though hanging on one side of the room was a map of the C. R. M. & P. Railroad; while on the other wall were suspended two or three coloured lanterns and some dirty train-flags. Passing through a doorway, quite innocent of anything like a door, Macpherson tried to gain access to the 'furnished room' which the superintendent had spoken to him about. It was indeed furnished—with an old-fashioned truckle-bed; but, as the bed was about four feet six inches wide and the room only five feet deep, by the time Macpherson's shins struck the bed-side at the first step forward, his curiosity in that direction was speedily satisfied. There was no window to the 'furnished room.'

'The be-ewty of this yere place is, yo've mostly got plenty o' good spring water, right handy fur washin' an' fur drinkin';' and as he spoke, Ratty Sykes led the way to the spring, a short distance up the switch.

The first day passed pretty well for the new agent. After learning his duties in detail, Mac passed the time in conversation with Ratty, which was a godsend to the forlorn Constantinopolitan, while Mac was much amused with the Western's original style. At two A.M. next morning, Ratty Sykes bade Macpherson 'farewell,' and boarded the east-bound train, carrying with him a cash order for Sunday supplies.

The second day waned slowly enough for Macpherson; but on the third morning came a supply of boards, carpenter's tools, paint, an easy-chair, and a new rigout of cooking utensils, to say nothing of a variety of stores in the way of edibles and drinkables.

'I've made up my mind that the best thing for me to do is to live alone; but that is no reason why I should not be as comfortable as circumstances will permit. Anyway, the depot may as well be sweet, clean, and weatherproof.'

So, for the next few days the new agent was busy enough repairing and painting the shanty inside and out. He also used a broom and scrubbing-brush to good purpose, until all trace of the genus Sykes and predecessors was washed or painted out. And when all this was done, and the easy-chair placed in the 'office,' while a few really good books filled a shelf which Mac fixed up, the place did not look 'half-bad,' as he himself expressed it.

Yes, it was a very queer thing for a man like Arthur Macpherson—a man who, although not a scholar or of 'blue blood,' was evidently well educated and refined—to bury himself in an

out-of-the-way telegraph cabin on the plains. He doubtless had reasons, which to himself were satisfactory, and at anyrate the fact remains that he was now agent and operator at 44-mile, where he proposed to stay. He was a conscientious man, this Macpherson, and applied himself to his duties just as faithfully as if he had been in charge of an important junction with a dozen clerks under him; but still he had many hours each day with 'nothing to do.' He got plenty of old newspapers from the trainmen, and he occasionally added a new book to his little library. He read much and thought more, but the time often wore away very slowly.

LIGHTHOUSE LAMPS.

SHELLEY says, 'Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is;' yet fire and light have always been invested with celestial attributes, and lamp festivals have been common to all nations. Various expedients have been used for chasing away darkness—torches, flambeaux, links, lamps, and candles being among the number. Flambeaux and links have disappeared; the torch still lingers among the Lapps, to lighten the gloom of arctic winters; while no small ingenuity has been expended in bringing lamps and candles, suitable for domestic purposes, to their present state of development.

From the earliest times, fire has been used as a signal or as a sign of rejoicing; but at what period it was brought into play, on the low shores of Egypt, as a guide to the sailor, is unknown. From the pitch-pot hung on a pole, or the fire blazing in a chauffer, to the electric arc lamp with its power of twelve thousand candles, is a long step; and this represents the efforts of lighthouse engineers for two thousand years to devise the best light to guide the mariner during the darkness of the night to the haven where he would be. Now, what are some of the steps through which lighthouse illumination has passed to bring it to its present state of perfection? As is well known, the earliest lighthouses showed the uncertain light given by burning billets of wood or coal in an open grate; and such lighthouses existed in Scotland till 1816, in England till 1822, and at the Baltic till 1846. These lights continually varied in appearance, now shooting up in flame, or giving out dense volumes of smoke, according to the ever-changing moods of the weather; and often, in the sailor's greatest need, the flames were blown away from him, the fire often kindling only on the leeward side. The huge bonfires required three men to attend them, and were not only expensive to maintain—some of them consuming four hundred tons of coal yearly—but were liable to be mistaken for lights on shore, wrecks happening in consequence. The first improvement was made when the fire was partially enclosed, a glazed frame being placed in front; but this gave rise to the use of bellows to keep the bonfire ablaze, the attendants being exposed to all the changes of the weather.

Lamps were long used for domestic purposes before they found their way into coast illumination. The best domestic lamps, however, had torch-like wicks made of a skein of cotton; and if they did not give much light, evolved plenty of smoke; it being the duty of a slave in olden days to go round the rooms in the morning to

wipe off soot left on pictures and statues. Oil was used for lighthouse purposes at the end of the sixteenth century; but liquid fuel often gave way to candles of tallow or wax, and this led to their adoption in coast illumination. Smeaton's famous tower on the Eddystone rock was crowned with twenty-four tallow-candles, five of them weighing two pounds. The candles needed snuffing every half-hour; and it was when the keepers of Rudyerd's lighthouse went to do this, that they found the lantern in flames; and in a short time, the tower, which was mainly of timber, met with a fate from which its position seemed exempt—destruction rapid and complete by fire. It was at the same lighthouse that the keepers, after a long spell of bad weather, when no provisions could be landed, were reduced to the necessity of eating the candles. The feeble glimmer of these candle-illuminated lighthouses could only be of use to vessels creeping along the coast, and would ill meet the requirements of modern steam-navigation, when passages need to be made with almost the regularity of train-service on land.

Almost every kind of oil has been used as fuel in lighthouse lamps. Ordinary whale-oil was burned in lamps having wicks made of a hank of cotton, such as were common until the days of paraffin in the poorest fisherman's cottage. Spermi-oil began to be used about the end of last century, and was continued till about forty years ago, when it was supplemented by colza, which had decided advantages over sperm: its intensity was slightly greater; it remained fluid at a temperature when sperm thickened; its flame was steadier, causing fewer breakages of the glasses; and above all, it was only half the cost. Olive oil is still the fuel in many lighthouses; but it does not give good results in burners having concentric (one within the other) wicks. In Indian lights, cocoa-nut oil is used for all orders of lamps with satisfactory results. So far as British lighthouses are concerned, paraffin has supplanted all other oils, as, when burned in the Doty and other lamps, it has very great advantages over colza: its flame has more luminous intensity, the lamps are easily managed, and the cost is only about a sixth that of colza. The saving by its use in the Scottish coast lighthouses is upwards of three thousand pounds yearly.

Many are the modifications which have been gradually introduced in lighthouse burners, from the tin lamp with two or more spouts, each with a skein of cotton, to the large concentric-wick lamps having from three to eight wicks. The flat-wick burner, though an advance on the hank of cotton, did not give good results; and it was not until towards the end of last century, when Teulère and Argand devised the cylindrical wick-burner, which admitted a current of air inside the flame, and secured more perfect combustion, that lamps were made suitable for lighthouses. Accustomed as we now are to lamps on the Argand principle, we can scarcely realise the distinct advance towards perfect combustion which was then made; and the simple accidental placing of the broken neck of a flask over the flame led to Argand's burner being brought nearly to a state of perfection. Teulère combined the cylindrical wick-burner with reflectors of an improved form; and this led to the use of perfectly formed reflectors of silvered copper in lighthouses;

and they still exist in some of the best coast-lights, the only difference being, that with paraffin the initial power has been raised from twelve to twenty-three candles; and as each reflector sends forth a sheaf of rays equal to three hundred and fifty times the unassisted flame, when there are, as in some towers, twenty-four reflectors, the resulting beam is one of great power. The cost of the paraffin for such a lighthouse is only about thirty-six pounds a year, while, if colza were used, it would be six times that amount.

Argand burners about one inch in diameter are well suited for reflectors; but when Fresnel solved the problem of using lenses for light-houses, it was necessary to have a central flame of great power. Taking advantage of Rumford's idea of having a burner composed of concentric wicks, Fresnel and Arago set to work to devise a lamp which would give a pure and intense flame; and they succeeded in constructing a burner having four concentric wicks, the inner being one inch, and the outer about three and a half inches in diameter. In addition to the glass chimney, which is contracted at a certain height above the top of the burner, so as to project a current of air against the flame, there is a metal chimney, into which the upper end of the lamp-glass enters. This increases the draught and whitens the flame, which is equal to two hundred and sixty standard candles with colza oil, the size of the flame being about three and a half inches in breadth by four inches in height. This powerful flame developed great heat; and Carcel's device was resorted to, of causing a flow of oil over the burner, to keep it cool, the surplus running back into the cistern. Without this overflow, the wicks would soon be charred and the burner destroyed. With paraffin as the fuel, the fluid is not allowed to rise beyond a certain height in the wick cases. The introduction of paraffin as an illuminant in lighthouses has led to an increase in the size of the burners, which, on the score of expense, was scarcely admissible when sperm or colza oil was the fuel. The flames developed in the paraffin burners vary in power from twenty-three candles in the single-wick to over nine hundred candles in the seven-wick concentric lamp. Such powerful flames were unknown a few years ago; and the limit to the increase in size depends on the apparatus, which cannot be much enlarged without increasing the size of the towers and lanterns.

Gas was used for lighthouses about seventy years ago; and for harbour lights it has been very largely employed with satisfactory results, either in ordinary jets or in Argand burners. Mr Wigham of Dublin devised gas-burners some years ago, and has persistently advocated their use, combined with apparatus arranged in biform, triform, or quadriform—that is, the central parts of dioptric apparatus placed one above the other; these burners have rings of jets varying from twenty-eight to one hundred and eight in number, the diameter of the rings varying from four to eleven and a half inches; and the power of the flames varies from two hundred and fifty to two thousand three hundred standard candles. In Ireland, eight lighthouses use gas; in England, one; and Scotland has one—Ailsa Craig—in which gas made from paraffin is employed.

A very useful application of gas for beacons

and buoys is the compressed mineral oil-gas of Pintsch, so successfully used at the Clyde, at the entrance to the Thames, the Mersey, Suez Canal, and other places. The gas is made from crude paraffin, and has a high illuminating power (forty-five candles), and it costs from eight to eleven shillings a thousand feet, which is considerably more expensive than coal-gas; but it is more suitable for compression. The gas is compressed into holders at a pressure of one hundred and fifty pounds on the square inch, and taken to charge the buoys. The light on the buoys burns continuously night and day till the gas is exhausted; and its burning is controlled by an automatic regulator, and the flame is protected by a lantern and small dioptric apparatus. The Pintsch system is certain to be further extended, not only for coast illumination, but specially in rivers and estuaries, whereby beacons and buoys will be made as useful by night as they are by day.

The most intense light yet used for light-houses is the electric arc lamp, the current being generated by De Meriten's alternate-current magneto-electric machines, driven by powerful engines; the initial power of the arc with carbons an inch and a half diameter being twelve thousand candles. But as the cost of providing the necessary apparatus and maintaining the light is great, electricity has only been used at a few stations in England and France; and the Isle of May is the only example in Scotland. (The beam of light shown to the mariners from the Isle of May lighthouse is equal to about three million candles, or three hundred times more intense than that of the old oil-light.) The French government contemplate an expenditure of two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, spread over a period of ten years, principally in installing electric lights; and this work has already been begun. For important landfalls made by oversea vessels, the electric light, owing to its expanse, is alone admissible. For all the purposes of the sailor, the intense beams shown from first-order lighthouses are probably sufficient, as even the electric light is quenched during dense fog, and it becomes a question when light must give way to sound. Although it has been proved beyond question that the electric light has the greatest penetrative power in fog, no light which man is likely to devise will be able to pierce very dense fog, as the sun itself then ceases to be visible. Sound-signals are gradually being introduced at salient points of the coast, and the difficulty in extending them is mainly one of finance.

THE CRUISE OF THE *PUNJAUB*.

THE Honourable East India Company's war-steamer *Punjaub* lay idly at her moorings in the port of Aden. Aden is always a hot place, but on this particular afternoon the heat was intense, to a degree surpassing the experience of the most seasoned hands on board. The sun's perpendicular rays not only 'illuminated the depths of the sea,' but actually liquefied the pitch in the seams of the deck in spite of the awning. If it was hot on deck, it was unbearable below, and nearly all the

officers were to be seen lounging about, leaning over the bulwarks and longing for the evening breeze. Those of the European sailors who were not on liberty ashore followed the example of their superiors; while the native marines and the Lascar portion of the crew idly disported themselves in the very airiest of undress costumes. Even the Somali firemen and stokers, usually supposed to be as impervious to heat as so many salamanders, did not seem much inclined for exertion, and smoked their gurgling hubbubbles with an air of resignation rather than enjoyment. Any stranger boarding the *Punjaub* might have thought she was manned fore and aft by lotus-eaters. But a seaman, glancing either at the crew or the vessel, would have come to a different conclusion. The snowy whiteness of the decks, the glittering arms in the racks, the carefully bronzed guns, the manner in which every visible bit of metal was polished to the highest possible pitch of brightness, and the indescribable air of tautness and trimness which pervaded the whole ship, showed her to be not only a man-of-war, but one on board which strict discipline was kept.

The *Punjaub* was one of the cruisers of the Indian navy, kept up by the Company for the suppression of piracy and to check the slave-trade. She was a fine vessel of her class, four hundred and fifty tons burden, teak-built and copper-bottomed, a paddle steamer, two-masted, and rigged as a fore-and-aft schooner. She carried six long eighteens of a side, had a thirty-two-pound stern-chaser, and a nine-pounder swivel on her fore-castle. In addition to her complement of officers, who were all English gentlemen, she had a crew of thirty-six British blue-jackets, forty of the best Lascars to be found in Bombay, and fifty native marines. Suddenly, a midshipman tripped up to the officer of the watch, touched his cap, and reported: 'Captain's gig coming off, sir.' The lieutenant, looking shorewards, saw the gig, gave the necessary orders; the side was piped; and Captain Frank Dallas, commanding the *Punjaub*, came on board, the marine guard presenting arms as he passed the gangway. The captain, a portly bronzed gentleman of about forty, returning the salute of his officers, said briefly: 'Sailing orders for to-morrow, gentlemen,' and made a sign to the first-lieutenant to follow him to his cabin.

'Look here, Brownson,' he said when they were both seated. 'I have just received orders to cruise in the direction of Zanzibar to try and intercept five large Arab dhows laden with slaves, which, from information which has reached the Bombay government and been forwarded here, are about to try and land their cargo at that place. Moreover, I am to keep a lookout for a suspicious barque which sometimes shows Portuguese colours, and at others flies the stars and stripes. She is supposed to have no right to either. It is known that she has made a raid on the territory of our ally the Imaum of Muscat and kidnapped some of his people. In fact, the government have good grounds for believing her to be not only mixed up in the "black-ivory" trade, but to be nothing short of a pirate. She is said to be heavily armed; but

I daresay we shall give a good account of her if we meet. You will oblige me by sending a party on shore at gun-fire to collect such of the liberty-men as may not come on board to-night. You will say nothing, even to the officers, of our destination till we are out of port. We get under way at eleven A.M.'

'Sailing orders!' was the cry joyfully repeated throughout the ship. All hands were delighted. To be sure they did not know where they were going, but they knew they were leaving Aden, and that knowledge alone was sufficient to cause delight. All were on board early next morning, and at the appointed hour the steamer slipped her cable and put to sea. The vessel's destination was then made known, the captain's only object in keeping it secret having been to prevent its being in any way divulged on shore, as the slave-traders had mysterious ways of obtaining information, and kept correspondents and spies in every port.

The steamer was not many days in arriving at her cruising-ground, when the captain ordered the fires to be kept as low as possible without extinction, in order to show so little smoke as to be almost invisible at a distance, while everything was kept in readiness to get up steam at a moment's notice. One evening, just before sunset, the dhows were descried from the top by a lynx-eyed Lascar lookout-man. The captain, trusting to the darkness of the night, took measures to cut them off from the land. These dhows are large three-masted vessels, lateen-rigged, and besides the space allowed for the slaves, who are bundled together in a manner too shocking for description, have ample room for a crew of some eighty men each, and all armed to the teeth. The dhows carried guns; and their Arab crews, when they could not get away, fought as desperately as men will fight under the influence of two of the most powerful incentives to human action—avarice and fanaticism.

When the first glimmer of dawn broke, the *Punjaub* was within half a mile of the slave fleet, and between them and the shore, which was about two miles off. The slavers had seen the steamer but indistinctly; and as the guns and hammock-nettings had been carefully covered with tarpaulins, and she carried no pennant or showed any bunting but the 'jack,' they had taken her for a passenger steamer. They were quite taken by surprise when the Company's ensign, with its rampant lion, ran up to the masthead, the drum beat to quarters, and in an instant they beheld decks cleared for action, the guns manned, and the marines under arms, while Captain Dallas through his trumpet hailed the foremost from the bridge with: 'What dhow is that? Where from, and where bound? Heave to, or I'll sink you!'

The foremost dhow struck her sails, and the Reis or Arab skipper invited the captain to send a boat on board; but he was too wary a hand. His experienced eye had noticed the crowds of men on board her, though they concealed themselves to the best of their ability. Captain Dallas had heard of cold shot being thrown into boats as they ran alongside, and had no intention of having one of his stove in and risking the lives of her crew. He ordered his starboard broadside to be brought to bear, and directing his men to fire at the

rigging, so as not to injure the wretched slaves, he gave the word to fire, and had the satisfaction of seeing the dhow's foremast go by the board. The slavers now threw off their mask, and answered with four long guns, which killed one sailor and wounded three of the Bombay marines.

The other dhows rapidly closed in, with the intention of encircling the *Punjaub*, each opening fire as it came within range. The cruiser, however, now had her steam up; and by skilful handling of his vessel and good gunnery, Captain Dallas managed to inflict sufficient damage on the rigging of each of the slavers as effectually to prevent their getting away until he should be able, instead of risking his boats, to get alongside each in turn, compel it to surrender, and free the slaves. Indeed, he was not a little surprised at their showing fight at all, as it was unusual for craft of that class to do so if they could possibly help it. By separating, most of them at least could have got away in different directions.

The mystery, however, was soon to be solved, for a large barque shot from behind a headland of the coast. Telescopic examination instantly showed that she answered the description of the vessel they were to search for, that she flew the Portuguese flag, carried far too many men for any peaceful trader, and was indeed more heavily armed than the *Punjaub*. She meant fighting, too, for, as she approached, the Portuguese ensign was lowered and the hideous black flag was run up, revealing her true character. Captain Dallas at once left the crippled dhows, knowing they could not repair damages and get away for some time, and moved to meet his new antagonist. The ship's company, sailors, Lascars, and native marines, mustered after their several manners as they neared the foe. The pirates fired a broadside as they approached, but too high, the only great damage done being to the funnel, about a foot and a half of which was shot away. The *Punjaub* returned the fire with more effect, the eighteen-pounders sending their shot crashing through the enemy's bulwarks, the splinters of which made fearful havoc on her crowded decks; while one from the thirty-two-pound chaser, which had been slewed round so as to bring it to bear, tore right through the stern cabin, knocking two of her ports into one.

As the vessels closed, broadside after broadside was exchanged; and Captain Dallas, seeing that her metal was heavy, determined on boarding. The *Punjaub* steered close alongside the barque, and having grappled her, the first-lieutenant, with two-thirds of the seamen and marines, boarded. On reaching her decks they met with determined opposition from about as fierce a set of desperadoes as were ever banded together for purposes of crime. Renegade Portuguese, savage Malays, lithe, cruel-looking Manila men, and Chinese, all alike fought desperately, for they knew that they fought with halters round their necks. But they fought in vain. No men ever yet could stand against British sailors at sea. The Lascars emulated the valour of their shipmates; and as for the men of the Bombay Marine Battalion, they were sepoys—that is as much as to say they behaved as well as their European *compagnons* could. Steady courage and perfect discipline prevailed over mere desperation; and in spite of the wolfish ferocity with which they struggled,

the motley crew of the pirate began to give way before the cruiser's people. Their captain was cut down by Mr Brownson, the first-lieutenant; and his men dropped fast before the volleys of the marines; while the cutlasses and boarding-pikes of the seamen and Lascars did deadly work. Part of the pirate crew ran below, where a couple of their own guns, loaded with grape and pointed down the hatchways, soon compelled them to surrender. The remainder barricaded themselves in the forecabin, but a few volleys reduced them also to submission. Mr Brownson, having overcome the resistance of the pirates, was about to haul down the black flag, when a signal from Captain Dallas warned him not to do so, but to get his prisoners into irons without delay.

One by one they were brought up, shackled, and made to lie down. The reason of the captain's order was soon obvious. The Arab dhows, though disabled for sailing, had got out long sweeps, and were coming to the assistance of the barque. As they did so, the cruiser was cast loose from her late opponent, and yawing, so as to get a chance with her long gun, raked the nearest from stem to stern with grape. Great was the slaughter and greater still the consternation, especially when the slavers saw the black flag fall to the deck of their ally and the British Union-jack hoisted in its place. They shouted 'Amaun! Amaun!' and waved their turbans in token of submission. The steamer cruised alongside each in turn, and allowed the slaver crews to come on board, having first dropped their arms. They were then ironed and placed in rows on the deck under a guard of marines. The barque was searched throughout, and ample evidence of her character found. The fettered pirates were placed in safe confinement; a prize crew, under a lieutenant, was put on board, with orders for her to be got under way to accompany the *Punjaub*; the dead of both vessels were committed to the deep, and the wounded to the care of the surgeon and his assistants. Then came the work of liberating the slaves and transferring them to the hold of the barque—a tedious and disgusting business, and dangerous withal, as many of the poor creatures were frantic from confinement and want of water, in a horrible state of filth, and so infuriated by their sufferings that they knew not friend from foe. All was, however, at last accomplished; and taking the dhows in tow, the *Punjaub* steamed into Zanzibar, where the slaver crews were landed at their own request, the slave-trade not being treated as piracy, although it ought to be. She then put back to Aden, where the dhows were condemned as lawful prizes, and sold by public auction. The same fate awaited the barque on arrival at Bombay, where they next proceeded, the slaves being liberated and sent back to Africa. The pirates were duly tried, condemned, and executed.

Thus was the sea freed from a pest and a heavy blow struck at the Zanzibar slave-trade. Captain Dallas received the thanks of the East India Company, and his gallant ship's company soon had their pockets full of bright rupees from their prize-money. It is now many years since the date of these captures; the Indian navy is a thing of the past, and its services even then were but little heard of in England; but many daring exploits were performed under the Company's

flag, and many old sailors can still well remember adventures very similar to those which occurred during the cruise of the *Punjab* in the bygone days of 'John Company.'

SYMPATHY WITH SHOP-GIRLS.

BY ONE OF THEM.

THE experiences of shop-girls are varied: there are those who simply take ease and never allow business to worry them; such get through a year or two of service without having a care beyond punctuality. The best saleswoman, however, is the one who has been trained to the business from an early age, an apprenticeship of four years being the period considered necessary to learn. The result depends greatly on the girl's capacity and eagerness to rise to a high place, and in the regularity with which she applies herself.

My experience is common, but may encourage those who are unacquainted with the way in which many shop-girls begin. The warehousemen of the prosperous town in Scotland where I began my business life are rising men; they like to conduct their establishments in a thoroughly systematic style. The staff must be large all the year round. In order to keep up the number, three or four junior assistants are put behind the counter every year. Though young, smartness of appearance is greatly studied, and good manners and tact are indispensable. Very small salaries are given by way of encouragement.

With the view of being trained for a saleswoman, I applied in answer to the advertisement for a 'Smart Message Girl.' Few persons know how interesting that announcement is to thirty or forty girls just old enough to work and anxious to get a beginning in a respectable shop. Having the advantage of a kind friend to use her influence, I was the successful applicant. Then began my business life. Two years' drudgery, carrying parcels, delivering circulars, accounts, &c.; out in all kinds of weather; yet very happy. No responsibility, the heart keeps light.

Then came the time for promotion: the choice of three departments—dressmaking, millinery, or the counter. Rather doubtful of my abilities, I timidly said the last-named. By way of preparation for it, or with the intention of seeing the capabilities of the future saleswoman, the firm approved of putting me—as they had done many others—into the cash-desk—to give out change, count the cash, and attend to all the ready-money transactions. A competent book-keeper being kept, I had comparatively little charge. In this position I spent two happy years. My next step was with the prospect of being initiated into the way of speaking to the public over the counter, keeping the stock, and packing parcels—the last being the lively duty allotted to me, along with dusting and waiting on a senior hand. To my idea then, a year spent in this fashion was not edifying. Dusting, packing, bringing things from other departments—which was my sole occupation from morning till night—was monotonous in the extreme. I had no interest in such menial employment. Fortunately, a slight change gave

me the benefit of a rise—a branch department, under the supervision of an experienced hand. I had more congenial work, although not entire charge. Dressing counters—under instructions—and occasionally serving customers, I seemed now on the road to fortune.

To have charge of a large department, where I might earn the confidence of customers in my acquired knowledge, at the same time to gain my employers' respect in so far that they would value my opinion in selecting goods for my own department—such had been the height of my ambition. Truth to tell, I was down-hearted many a day.

From the assistantship I was promoted to a department under my own charge. The responsibility was little compared with that to which I was next advanced, the latter being what is known in this line of business as the 'Ladies' Outfitting.' It was very extensive, and in many ways quite new to me. When I was offered it, I frankly said I had no desire to take it, but would try my best for a month. I got a few assistants. I had also the much envied honour of buying my own stock, &c. I put my whole heart and energies into it; and at the month's end I preferred this to any other department in the warehouse. Having passed through these stages, I reaped the benefit of being kept down at first. Drudgery is often the forerunner of success.

Though now far removed from the scene which I have attempted to describe, it is with pleasure that I recall many incidents, the sunshine of friendship and co-operation being very bright in my memory. Many young ladies at home have little or no sympathy with the 'common shop-girls,' as they often term them. When they do so, they forget that to stand ten hours a day, having to appear pleasant no matter how fidgety the purchaser may be, does not always come naturally to those behind the counter. In many cases they are girls suited to a higher sphere, but, through force of circumstances, have been obliged to go early into the world. Many of these shop-girls have attended private classes for self-improvement, so that they may acquire themselves properly should fortune favour them with a step higher in life. Consideration is a thing they seldom get either from the public or their employers. Allowing that he is a model employer, he is very careful of his own interest, and can afford to be pleasant when business is brisk and all the tedious demands of his lady-customers absorb the attention of his assistants. But there are some months when pleasant actions would be more effectual than words—say, from January till the end of April. Few of the shops in the north of Scotland are sufficiently heated for the cold weather and easterly winds which are keenly felt there. Many of the shop-assistants suffer from the bad effects of chills, which while standing at their posts are unavoidable. A draught is more injurious than open air. A comfortable dressing-room, with a fire lighted in wintry weather, would be a great boon to shop-girls, where they could change wet boots and get themselves warmed properly. No conscientious and sensible young lady would take advantage of her employer's generosity, were he to supply this much needed want. Chairs they have got, but I

fear have seldom the pleasure of sitting on them without the dread of being found fault with.

As a class, I admire and feel for them, and would suggest that some of the lady-customers might not assume such an overbearing and austere air when they visit a draper's shop. The trouble of the saleswoman is only her duty certainly, but a smile and word of thanks is never lost; in some harassing moments, a gentle kindly word would give fresh vigour to the weary shop-girl.

CRAW-FISHING.

ONE of the least generally known, but by no means the least interesting or exciting forms of fishing is that of cray-fishing, or as it is generally called in the country-places where this sport is indulged in, craw-fishing. The fresh-water lobster or crustacean, known to naturalists as *Astacus fluviatilis*, is a delicate little crustacean sometimes offered for sale in the London West End fishmongers' shops; but in spite of its abundance in many places, and its use as a tooth-some morsel, it is little known. The crayfish frequents English brook and streams in limestone localities where beds of clay occur; in such places the watercourses cut deep channels through the fields and meadows, winding about in the most romantic way; and as they are often overhung here and there with hawthorn and bramble, these tiny ravines are really lovely in themselves. Along the bottom runs the brook—deep and silent here, shallow and babbling there, where it rushes and swirls over a stony bed. The banks are pierced in many places with the holes of the water-rat and the crayfish, for the fresh-water lobster retires to these holes in the winter, though in the summer he seeks the shelter of the stones in the bed of the stream. In the autumn, before the brooks are swollen with the rains of winter, and when these crustaceans are in their prime, then is the time for craw-fishing; and those who have enjoyed a good evening's sport, when the autumn moon is rising, and the crisp cool air adds vigour to one's frame, are not likely soon to forget the pleasure of it.

It was just such an evening as this when we started off on our first craw-fishing expedition. We were well loaded, for we had made up our minds for a big haul, as the evening was a good one, and we knew that the 'fish' were on the run, or, in other words, feeding; so we had two dozen nets with us. As these nets are rather peculiar, a description of them may be interesting. A small iron hoop about a foot in diameter is used, and on to this is loosely stretched a small net of rather fine mesh; in the centre is a piece of string for fastening the bait. Four strings are fixed to the iron hoop, and these are joined together about three or four feet above the net; and to this, again, some twelve feet of stout line. As the iron hoop is a heavy one, in order to sink rapidly, a couple of dozen of such nets are a good weight to carry. Our bait consisted of two or three pounds of bullock's liver, which is the killing bait for crawfish, probably because they seldom get it in the natural course of things; as boiled shrimps are the favourite food of some of our fresh-water fishes, and as salmon are partial to feathers and gilt wire because they are something unlike what they ever saw before. A large

basket for our spoil, and our pipes and tobacco, completed the necessary apparatus for the evening's sport, not forgetting, however, a newspaper, the use of which will be seen.

The stretch of brook we intended to fish was a delightfully winding piece about a quarter of a mile in length, with a good stony bottom, such as crawfish love. The sun was just setting as we commenced operations, which consisted in baiting the nets by tying on a small piece of the liver as firmly as possible. When all the nets were baited, they were lowered into the middle of the stream, using a forked stick, cut from a neighbouring hedge, over which to run the string and get the nets well out from the bank. A small piece of the newspaper pegged to the ground marked the end of the string. The nets having been lowered in this way at every likely spot, but not nearer together than twenty or thirty feet, we enjoy a quiet pipe, and wait to let the crawfish have time to get well on the nets, though, when they are strongly on the feed, they may be seen to attack the bait as soon as it touches bottom. It is now almost dark, and were it not for the bits of paper, the nets would be quite impossible to find. As we go to the first one and haul it, we see that it is evidently going to be a good night for sport; for, in spite of two or three splashes in the water, showing that some of the crawfish have slipped off the net, we land nine fine ones; and so on all down the brook, sometimes more, sometimes less, but no empty nets. We are now busy; for as soon as the line of nets is hauled and put down, it is time to begin at the top end again. But suddenly there is a break; the fish have ceased running, and we know we may as well pack up; but we have bagged four hundred odd crawfish, which is not a bad evening's work.

Sometimes, especially in an unworked brook, a net will come up literally piled with these crustaceans in frantic struggles for the bait. Like most fish, the crawfish to be really appreciated should be boiled as soon as caught; and a good supper on the result of one's sport is not an unpleasant conclusion to an evening's craw-fishing.

SONG.

LILIES to the dead are due,
Roses to the quickened breath;
Both upon thy bier I strew:
Thou, who art but mine in death,
Lilies claim'st, and roses too.

Nay, the rose alone is thine,
And the lilies speak for me.
Blanching solitude is mine,
Hope deferred, which hoped for thee,
Far-off hope and joy's decline.

But the mantling, soft repose,
Prelude to a brighter waking,
Endless sun when eyes unclose
In a deathless morrow's breaking—
These are thine: these ask the rose.

ERIMUS.

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AN AMERICAN WATERING-PLACE.

OF the various places of summer resort in the United States, Long Branch, which less than a quarter of a century ago was an obscure seaside village, is at the present time one of the most popular in the Union. Owing to various circumstances, it has succeeded in outstripping many of its elder rivals in the race for public favour; and from a mere barren stretch of the New Jersey coast, it has by the efforts of a few individuals been transformed into one of the most fashionable watering-places of the day. The manner in which this change has been effected is illustrative of the energy and enterprise characteristic of Americans.

Several years ago, a body of capitalists, recognising the natural advantages of Long Branch, as possessing a long stretch of beach of fine firm sand well suited for bathing purposes, determined to give it the same kind of relation to New York as Brighton has to London. The syndicate therefore bought a few of the farms in the vicinity of the village and proceeded to turn them into villa plots. But the difficulty at first was to induce people to purchase them. By dint, however, of constructing new lines of railway, of building large, well-appointed hotels, and by systematic and extensive advertising, season after season, the speculation began to enjoy a fair measure of success. But it was undoubtedly a master-stroke of policy when the owners of the property succeeded in inducing General Grant, at that time President of the United States, to pass his summers at Long Branch. This was effected by the simple device of presenting him with a handsome villa in the best part of the village. As soon as the President was settled in his new abode, the élite of Washington society followed him thither, with a crowd of office-seekers from all parts of the Union accompanied by their 'sisters, their cousins, and their aunts.' The place at once became fashionable; and since then, its popularity has known no diminution, although General Grant's successors in the Pre-

sidential chair have not invariably made it their summer residence.

In one respect the character of life at seaside places in America differs essentially from that in England. The practice of living in lodgings, so prevalent in this country, is almost unknown in the United States, the accommodation for visitors being nearly exclusively afforded by boarding-houses and hotels. In this way, although there is necessarily some sacrifice of that privacy which is enjoyed under the English system, there is an entire escape from that dullness and monotony of indoor existence which is the great drawback of watering-places in England. What, indeed, can be more *ennuyant* than, if residing in apartments at a seaside town in this country, to be compelled by wet weather to remain in the house for days in succession, without either occupation or amusement. I have experienced, *moi qui vous parle*, as Thackeray used to say, having on one occasion been kept a prisoner within doors for a week at Hastings by

A steady, uninterrupted rain
That washed each southern window-pane,
And made a river of the road;

and I do not remember to have passed a more dreary seven days in the whole course of my life. To an American, indeed, who has not that capacity for enduring ennui which is one of the characteristics of our people, such a monotonous life as that which is led by many persons at English watering-places would be simply unendurable. Tommy Goodboy, in Dickens's *Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices*, says, when his friend complains of the dullness of the seaside village at which they are staying: 'There is the sea, and here are the shrimps; let us eat them.' But I fully agree with his companion when he declares, with some warmth, that the mind requires some other amusement than looking at the one, and the body some other occupation than eating the other.

Now, in the United States, instead of visitors to places of summer resort being left almost

dependent upon their own resources for amusement, ample provision is made for their entertainment. At Long Branch, besides the usual out-of-doors occupations of boating, bathing, and fishing, there are found in each of the hotels and large boarding-houses a reading-room, well supplied with newspapers and other periodicals; a billiard-room; a bowling-alley; and two or three drawing-rooms, in each of which chess, draughts, and cards are provided for the use of visitors. Nearly every evening there is a 'hop,' as informal dances are styled in America; and once a week or once a fortnight there is a full-dress ball given, an excellent band being engaged for the occasion. Under these circumstances, time need not hang heavily upon one's hands, even if the weather be unfavourable for out-of-doors pursuits.

Ocean Avenue, the principal promenade and drive in the village, extends along the shore for nearly three miles; and on the beach below, during the summer months, rows of temporary huts, of the most primitive construction, are placed for the accommodation of the public. From these shanties it is necessary for bathers to walk across the sands two or three hundred yards to the sea, movable machines not being employed at Long Branch; indeed, so far as my observation has extended, these conveniences are not provided at any American watering-place on the Atlantic. There is, however, not the same absolute occasion for the use of them in the United States that there exists in this country, since, from the nature of the formation of the whole stretch of the coast, from Fire Island to Cape May, the bather finds himself in tolerably deep water directly he enters the sea.

Of course, under these circumstances, men as well as women are compelled to wear bathing dresses. Those of the gentlemen usually consist of coarse white flannel or blue serge; those of the ladies are made of various materials and colours, and frequently elaborately trimmed. Both sexes bathe together, as is the fashion in France. At Long Branch, however, this practice is absolutely necessary as a precaution of safety, for this part of the New Jersey coast is exposed to the whole sweep of the Atlantic surges, which in rough weather dash furiously upon the shore, there being no projecting headland to break the force of the waves. It is true that a rope—attached to stakes driven into the sands—is stretched along the beach; but when the surf is very heavy, this rope is almost practically useless to women and children, as they are frequently compelled to relax their grasp of it by the force of the waves; and were they not assisted by their male companions, they would be in danger of being dragged down by the under-tow.

A favourite amusement at Long Branch is shark-fishing. The business is ordinarily conducted in this way. Several gentlemen club together and charter a sloop for the day, the owner of the vessel engaging a crew and supplying the requisite tackle. This consists of a large barbed hook quite two feet in length. To the shank of it is attached in the first instance about a fathom of iron chain, and to that a stout rope is fastened. The object of using the chain is to prevent the shark, after it has gorged the bait,

getting away, which, if the rope were connected directly with the hook, it would be easy for it to do, as the saw-like teeth of this fish will cut through the thickest cable in a few seconds. The bait commonly used is a piece of salt pork, which is a favourite delicacy with sharks. These fish are occasionally caught three or four miles off Long Branch six to seven feet long; but the average size of those captured is seldom more than four or five feet, as the larger ones as a rule do not frequent the shallow waters of the coast. The sharks, especially the bigger ones, offer a determined resistance, and it requires the united strength of several men to haul one on board. Once on deck, however, a blow or two on the head with an axe quickly puts an end to its struggles. The shark when caught is always allowed to become the perquisite of the crew of the vessel, and the sailors find a ready sale for its skin and for the oil extracted from the liver.

Deep-sea fishing of every kind is excellent along the whole coast of New Jersey, porgies, cat-fish, black-fish, blue-fish, eels, &c., being abundant. Trolling for blue-fish is considered the best sport of all, as the fisherman, instead of being compelled to sit in a boat at anchor under a broiling sun, can under full canvas pursue this amusement. The fishing-line runs about fifty yards astern, trailing the 'squid,' as the bait is technically termed, along the surface of the water. The squid, from which the hook projects, is a hollow piece of bright tin about the size of a small sprat, and when in motion, is mistaken by the blue-fish for its natural prey.

Before bringing to a close this brief sketch of life at the seaside in America, a word may be said as to the character of the climate. In the Northern States the weather during the summer months continues steadily fine for weeks in succession; while the heat, which it must be admitted is in the inland cities excessive, is tempered on the coast by refreshing sea-breezes. Indeed, there can be no question that a few degrees of latitude make a great difference in the enjoyability of existence; and in summing up the advantages possessed by seaside watering-places in the United States must be included that of being favoured with a climate at once warm and equable.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXV.—CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON.

THE Massingers pitched their tent at Whitestrand again for August. Hugh did his best indeed to put off the evil day; but if you sell your soul for gold, you must take the gold with all its encumbrances; and Winifred's will was a small encumbrance that Hugh had never for one moment reckoned upon in his ante-nuptial calculations of advantages and drawbacks. He took it for granted he was marrying a mere girl, whom he could mould and fashion to his own whim and fancy. That simple, childish, blushing little thing had a will of her own, however—ay, more, plenty of it. When Hugh proposed with an insinuating smile that they should run down for the summer to Barmouth or Aberystwith—he loved North Wales—Winifred replied with quiet

dignity: 'Wales is stuffy. There's nothing so bracing as the east coast. After a London season, one needs bracing. I feel pulled down. We'll go and stop with mamma at Whitestrand.' And she shut her little mouth upon it with a snap like a rat-trap. Against that solid rock of sheer resolution, Hugh shattered himself to no purpose in showery sprays of rhetoric and reasoning. Gibraltar is not more disdainful of the foam that dashes upon its eternal cliffs year after year than Winifred was to her husband's running fire of argument and expostulation. She never deigned to argue in return; she merely repeated with naked iteration ten thousand times over the categorical formula, 'We'll go to Whitestrand.'

And to Whitestrand they went in due time. The plastic male character can no more resist the ceaseless pressure of feminine persistence than clay can resist the hands of the potter, or wood the warping effect of heat and dryness. Hugh took his way obediently to dull flat Suffolk when August came, and relinquished with a sigh his dreams of delicious picnics by the Dolgelly waterfalls, and his mental picture of those phenomenally big trout—three pounds apiece, fisherman's weight—that lurk uncaught in the deep green pools among the rocks and stickles of the plashing Wnion. The Bard had sold himself for prompt cash to the first bidder: he found when it was too late he had sold himself unknown into a mitigated form of marital slavery. The purchaser made her own terms: Hugh was compelled meekly to accept them.

Two strong wills were clashing together. In serious matters, neither would yield. Each must dint and batter the other.

They did *not* occupy Elsie's room this time. Hugh had stipulated with all his might for that concession beforehand. He would never pass a night in that room again, he said: the paint or the woodwork or the chairs or something made him hopelessly sleepless. In these old houses, sanitary arrangements were always bad. Winifred darted a piercing look at him as he shuffled uneasily over that lame excuse. Already a vague idea was framing itself piecemeal in her woman's mind—a very natural idea, when she saw him so moody and preoccupied and splenetic—that Hugh had been really in love with Elsie, and was in love with Elsie still, even now that Elsie was away in Australia—else why this unconquerable and absurd objection to Elsie's room? Did he think he had deceived and ill-treated Elsie?

A woman's mind goes straight to the bull's-eye. No use pretending to mislead her with side-issues; she flings them aside with a contemptuous smile, and proceeds at once to worm her way to the kernel of the matter.

August wore away, and September came in; and Hugh continued to mope and to bore himself to his heart's content at that detestable Whitestrand. To distract his soul, he worked hard at his *Ode to Manetho*; but even Manetho, audacious theme, gave him scanty consolation. Nay, his quaint *Ballade of Fee-Faw-Fum*, that witty apologue, with its grimly humorous catalogue of all possible nightly fears, supplied him with food but for one solitary morning's meditation. You can't cast out your blue-devils by poking fun at them; those cerulean demons will not be laughed down or rudely exorcised by such simple means. They

recur in spite of you with profound regularity. The *fons et origo mali* was still present. That hateful poplar still fronted his eyes wherever he moved: that window with the wistaria still haunted his sight whenever he tried to lounge at his ease on the lawn or in the garden. The river, the sandhills, the meadows, the walks, all, all were poisoned to him: all spoke of Elsie. Was ever Nemesis more hideous or more complete? Was ever punishment more omnipresent? He had gained all he wished, and lost his own soul; at every turn of his own estate some horrible memento of his shame and his guilt rose up to confuse him. He wished he was dead every day he lived: dead, and asleep in his grave, beside Elsie.

As that dreaded anniversary, the seventeenth of September, slowly approached—the anniversary, as Hugh felt it, of Elsie's murder—his agitation and his gloom increased visibly. Winifred wondered silently to herself what on earth could ail him. During the last few weeks, he seemed to have become another man. An atmosphere of horror and doubt surrounded him. On the fifteenth, two days before the date of Elsie's disappearance, she went up hastily to their common room. The door was half locked, but not securely fastened: it yielded to a sudden jerk of her wrist, and she entered abruptly—to find Hugh, with a guilty red face, pushing away a small bundle of letters and a trinket of some kind into a tiny cabinet which he always mysteriously carried about with him. She had hardly time to catch them distinctly, but the trinket looked like a watch or a locket. The letters, too, she managed to note, were tied together with an elastic band, and numbered in clear red ink on the envelopes. More than that she had no chance to see. But her feminine curiosity was strongly excited; the more so as Hugh banged down the lid on its spring-lock with guilty haste, and proceeded with hot and fiery fingers to turn the key upon the whole set in his own portmanteau.

'Hugh,' she cried, standing still to gaze upon him, 'what do you keep in that little cabinet?'

Hugh turned upon her as she had never before seen him turn. No longer clay in the hands of the potter, he stood stiff and hard like adamant then. 'If I had meant you to know,' he said coldly, 'I would have told you long ago. I did not tell you, therefore I do not mean you to know. Ask me no questions. This incident is now closed. Say nothing more about it.' And he turned on his heel, and left her astonished.

That was all. Winifred cried the night through, but Hugh remained still absolute adamant. Next morning, she altered her tactics completely, and drying her eyes once for all, said never another word on the subject. She even pretended to be cheerful and careless. When a woman pretends to be cheerful and careless after a domestic scene, the luckless man whose destiny she holds in the hollow of her hand may well tremble, especially if there is something he wants to conceal from her. She means to egg it all out, and egged out it will all be, as certainly as the sun will rise to-morrow. It may take a long time, but it will come for all that. A woman on the track of a secret, pretending carelessness, is a dangerous animal. She will go far. *Hanc tu, Romane, caveto.*

On the seventeenth, Winifred formed a little plan of her own, which she ventilated with childish effusion at lunch-time. 'Hugh, dear,' she said in her most winning voice, 'do you happen to remember—if you've time for such trifles—that to-morrow's a very special anniversary?'

Hugh's cheek blanched as if by magic. What devilry was this? What deliberate cruelty? For the moment his usual courage and presence of mind forsook him. Had Winifred, then, found out everything?—A special anniversary, indeed! As if he could forget it!—And that she, for whose sake—with the manor of Whitestrand thrown in—he had done it all and made himself next door to a murderer—that she, of all people in the world, should cast it in his teeth, and make bitter game of him about Elsie's death! 'Well, Winifred,' he answered in a strange low voice, looking hard at her eyes: 'I suppose I'm not likely to forget it, am I?'

Winifred noted the tone, silently. Aloud, she gave no token in any way of having observed his singular manner.—'It's a year to-morrow since Hugh proposed to me, you know, mamma dear,' she went on, in her quietest and most cutting voice, turning round to her mother, 'and he does me the honour to say politely he isn't likely to forget the occasion.—For a whole year, he's actually remembered it. But it seems to make him terribly grumpy.—Never mind, Hugh; I'll let you off. I'm a sweet little angel, and I'm not going to be angry with my great bear: so there, Mr Constellation, you see I've forgiven you.—Now, what I was going to say's just this. As to-morrow's a special anniversary in our lives, I propose we should celebrate it with becoming dignity.'

'Which means, I suppose, the ordinary British symbol of merry-making, a plum-pudding for dinner,' Hugh interposed bitterly. He saw his mistake with perfect clearness now, but he hadn't the tact or the grace to conceal it, with a woman's cleverness, under a show of good-humour.

'A plum-pudding is *banal*,' Winifred answered with a smile—'distinctly *banal*. I'm surprised a member of the Cheyne Row set should even dream of suggesting it. What would Mr Hatherley say if he heard the Immortal One make such a proposition? He'd detect in it the strong savour of Philistia; he'd declare you'd joined the hosts of Goliath.—No. It isn't a plum-pudding. My idea's this. Why shouldn't we go for a family picnic, just our three selves, in honour of the occasion?'

'A picnic!' Hugh cried, aghast—'a picnic to-morrow!—On the seventeenth!—Then recollecting himself once more, he added hastily: 'In this unsettled weather! The sandhills are soaked. There isn't a place on the whole estate one could arrange to seat one's self down on comfortably.'

'I hadn't thought of the sandhills,' Winifred answered with quiet dignity. 'I thought it'd be awfully nice if we all bespoke a dry seat in Mr Relf's yawl!—'

'Relf's yawl!' Hugh cried aloud, with increasing excitement. 'You don't mean to say that creature's here again!'

'That creature, I'm in a position to state without reserve,' Winifred answered chillily, 'ran up the river to the *Fisherman's Rest* late last night, as lively as ever. I saw the *Mud-Turtle* come

in myself, before a chipping breeze! And Mrs Stannaway told me this morning Mr Relf was a-lying off the hard, just opposite Stannaway's. So I thought it'd be a capital plan, in memory of old times, if we got Mr Relf to take us down in the yawl to Orfordness, land us comfortably at the Low Light, and let us picnic on the nice dry ridge of big shingle just above the graveyard where they bury the wrecked sailors.'

Hugh's whole soul was on fire within him; but his face was pale, and his hands deadly cold. Was this pure accident, mere coincidence, or was it designed and deliberate torture on Winifred's part, he wondered? To picnic in sight of Elsie's nameless grave, on the very anniversary of Elsie's death, with every concomitant of pretended rejoicing that could make that ghastly act more ghastly still than it would otherwise be in its own mere naked brutality! It was too sickening to think upon. But did Winifred know? Could Winifred mean it as a punishment for his silence? Or had she merely blundered upon that horrible proposition as a sheer coincidence out of pure accident?

As a matter of fact, the last solution was the true and simple one. The sandhills, or Orfordness, were the two recognised alternative picnicking places where all Whitestrand invariably disported itself. If you didn't go to the one, you went as a matter of course to the other. There was no third way open to the most deliberate and statesmanlike of mortals. The Meyseys had gone to Orfordness for years. Why not go there on the anniversary of Winnie's engagement? To Winifred, the proposal seemed simplicity itself; to Hugh, it seemed like a strangely perverse and cunning piece of sheer feminine cruelty.

'There's nothing to see at Orfordness,' he said shortly—'nothing but a great bare bank of sand and shingle, and a couple of lighthouses, standing alone in a perfect desert of desolation.—Besides, the weather's just beastly.—Much better stop at home as usual by ourselves, and eat our dinner here in peace and quietness! This isn't the sort of season for picnicking.'

'Oh! but Hugh,' Mrs Meysey put in, with her maternal authority, 'you know we always go to Orfordness. It's really quite a charming place in its way. The sands are so broad and hard and romantic. We sail down, and picnic at the lighthouse; and then we get a man to row us across the river at the back to Orford Castle—there's a splendid view from Orford Castle—and altogether it makes a delightful excursion, of its kind, for Suffolk. We ought to do something to commemorate the day.—If we weren't in such deep mourning still'—and Mrs Meysey glanced down with a conventional sigh at her crape excrescences—'we'd ask a few friends in to dinner; but I'm afraid it's a little too soon for that. Still, at anyrate, there could be no harm—not the slightest harm—in our just running down to Orfordness for a family picnic. It's precisely the same as lunching at home here together.'

'Do you remember, Hugh,' Winifred went on, musingly, putting the screw on, 'how we walked out that morning, a year ago, by the water-side; and how you picked a bit of forget-me-not and meadow-sweet from the bank and gave it me; and what pretty verses about undying love you repeated as you gave it?—And in the evening,

mamma, I had to go out to dinner, all alone with you and poor dear papa, to Snade vicarage! I recollect how angry and annoyed I was because I had to go out and leave Hugh that particular evening! and because I'd worn that same dinner dress at Snade vicarage three parties running!

'Yes,' Mrs Meysey continued, with another deep-drawn sigh; 'and what a night that was, to be sure! So full of surprises! It was the night, you know, when poor Elsie Challoner ran away from us. You got engaged to Hugh in the morning, and in the evening Elsie disappeared as if by magic! Such a coincidence! Poor dear Elsie! Not a year ago! A year, to-morrow!'

'No, mother dear. That was the eighteenth. I was engaged on the Wednesday, you recollect, and it was the Thursday when we found out Elsie had gone away from us.'

'Thursday the eighteenth when we found it out, dear,' Mrs Meysey repeated in a decisive voice (the maternal mind is strong on dates); 'but Wednesday the seventeenth, late in the evening, of course, when she went away from us.—Poor dear Elsie! I wonder what's become of her! It's curious she doesn't write to you oftener, Winifred.'

Were they working upon his feelings, of *malice prepense*? Were they trying to make him blurt out the truth? he wondered. Hugh Massinger in his agony could stand it no longer. He rose from the table and went over to the window. There, the poplar stared him straight in the face. He turned around and looked hard at Winifred. Her expressionless blue eyes were placid as usual. 'Then, if it's fine,' she said, in an insipid voice, 'we'll ask Mr Relf to give us a lift down to Orfordness to-morrow in the *Mud-Turtle*.'

'No!' Hugh thundered in an angry tone. 'However you go, Relf shan't take you. I don't want to see any more of Relf. I dislike Relf; I object to Relf. He's a mean cur! I won't go anywhere with Relf in future.'

'But, children, you should never let your angry passions rise,' Winifred murmured provokingly.

'Your little hands were never meant
To tear each other's eyes.'

If he doesn't want to go in Mr Relf's boat, he shan't be made to, then, poor little fellow. He shall do exactly as he likes himself. He shall have another boat all of his own. I'll order one this evening for him at Martin's or at Stannaway's.'

'If it's fine,' Mrs Meysey interposed parenthetically.

'If it's fine, of course,' Winifred answered, rising. 'We don't want to picnic in a torrent of rain.—Whatever else we may be, we're rational animals.—But how do you know, Hugh, what Orfordness is like? You can't tell. You've never been there.'

'I went there once alone last year,' Hugh answered sulkily; 'and I saw enough of the beastly hole then to know very well I don't desire its further acquaintance.'

'But you never told me you'd been over there.'

Hugh managed to summon up a sardonic smile. 'I wasn't married to you then, Winnie,' he answered, with a savage snarl, that showed his pro-

jecting canines with most unpleasant distinctness. 'My goings-out and my comings-in were not yet a matter of daily domestic inquisition. I hadn't to report myself every time I came or went, like a soldier in barracks to his commanding officer.—I went to Orfordness one day for a walk—by myself—unbidden—for my own amusement.'

All that afternoon and late into the evening, Hugh watched the clouds and the barometer eagerly. His fate that day hung upon a spider's web. If it rained to-morrow, all might yet be well; if not, he felt in his own soul they stood within measurable distance of a domestic cataclysm. He would not go to Orfordness with Winifred. He could not go to Orfordness with Winifred. That much was certain. He could not picnic, on the anniversary of Elsie's death, within sight of Elsie's nameless grave, in company with those two strange women—his wife and his mother-in-law. Ugh! how he hated the bare idea! If it came to the worst—if it was fine to-morrow—he must either break for ever with Winifred—for she would never give in—or else he must fling himself off the roots of the poplar, where Elsie had flung herself off that day twelve months ago, and drown as she had drowned among the angry breakers.

There would be a certain dramatic completeness and roundness about that particular fate which commended itself especially to Hugh Massinger's poetical nature. It would read so like a Greek tragedy—a tale of Atë and Hubris and Nemesis. Even from the point of view of the outer world, who knew but the husk, it would seem romantic enough to drown one's self, disconsolate, on the very anniversary of one's first engagement to the young wife one meant to leave an untimely widow. But to Hugh Massinger himself, who knew the whole kernel and core of the story, it would be infinitely more romantic and charming in its way to drown one's self off the self-same poplar on the self-same day that Elsie had drowned herself. No bard could wish for a gloomier or more appropriate death. Would it rain or shine? On that slender thread of doubt his whole future now hung and trembled.

The morning of the seventeenth dawned at last, and Hugh rose early, to draw aside the bedroom blinds for a moment. A respite! a respite! It was pouring a regular English downpour. There was no hope—or no danger, rather—of a picnic to-day. Thank Heaven for that. It put off his fate. It saved him the inconvenience and worry of having to drown himself this particular morning. And yet the *dénouement* would have been so strictly dramatic that he almost regretted a shower of rain should intervene to spoil it.

At ten o'clock he started out alone in the blinding downpour and took the train as far as Aldeburgh. Thence he followed the shingle beach to Orfordness, plodding on, as he had done a year before, over the loose stones, but through drenching rain, instead of under hot and blazing sunlight. When he reached the lighthouse, he sat himself down in pilgrim guise beside Elsie's grave in the steady drip, and did penance once more by that unknown tomb in solemn silence. Not even the lighthouse-man came out this time to gaze at him in wonder; it poured too hard and too persistently for that. He sat there alone for

half an hour, by Elsie's watch; for he had wound it that morning with reverent hands, and brought it away with him for that very purpose. A little rusty, perhaps, from the sea, it would keep good time enough still for all he needed. At the end of the half-hour he rose once more, plodded back again over the shingle in his dripping clothes, and catching the last train home to Almundham, reached Whitestrاند just in time to dress for dinner.

Winifred was waiting for him at the front door, white with emotion—not so much anger as slighted affection. 'Where have you been?' she asked, in a cold voice, as he arrived at the porch, a dripping, draggled, wearied pedestrian, in a soaking suit of last year's tweeds.

'Didn't I say well I was bound to report myself to my commanding officer?' Hugh answered tauntingly. 'All right, then; I proceed at once to report myself. I may as well tell you as leave you to worry. I've been to Orfordness—alone—tramped it.'

'To Orfordness!' his wife echoed in profound astonishment. 'You didn't want to go with us there if it was fine. Why, what on earth, Hugh, did you ever go there in this pelting rain for?'

'Your mother recommended it,' Hugh answered sullenly, 'as a place of amusement. She said it was altogether a most delightful excursion. She praised the sands as firm and romantic. So I thought I'd try it on her recommendation. I found it damp, decidedly damp.—Send me my shoes, please!' And that was all the explanation he ever vouchsafed her.

THE KITCHEN CHEMISTS OF ANCIENT TIMES.

GASTRONOMY is a science or art—though the term science is far more exact and descriptive—possessing special interest for us, and we should not be astonished to see how voluminous and varied is its literature. Looking over the ancient writers on this fascinating subject, we nevertheless see much to wonder at, still more to make us stop, and gravely reflect on that well-worn and venerable adage, 'There is nothing new under the sun.'

In the kitchens of the ancients we find the cooks marshalled in regular order, each according to his rank and skill. Among them we find the 'structor' in high estimation. This individual was an artist of considerable merit, who claimed a full share of admiration as a right learned professor; and indeed we feel quite inclined to bow to his claims, and, moreover, enrol him in the noble army of practical chemists. He it was who performed marvels both to charm the eye and delight the palate of the epicure. With a common turnip, a harmless gourd, vegetable marrow, or pumpkin, he could counterfeit with astonishing faithfulness both the shape and taste of fish, flesh, or fowl. Let a king in a far inland camp express a craving for the unprocurable sardine or delicate anchovy, and straightway the structor brought his consummate art into play, and at once the trick was done, and royalty could sit down to discuss a delicious dish of fresh herrings or the much esteemed scarlet rock-fish. We are told that a certain king of Bithynia, while leading his army on some inland expedition, had an intense longing

for his favourite titbit—pilchards. Luckily, a structor was at the head of his majesty's culinary suite. He took a turnip, cut it into the resemblance of the desired pilchards, fried them tenderly in oil, salted and powdered them with the seeds of black poppies, and served the dish to the impatient monarch. His majesty was right well pleased, and recommended the dish as an excellent fry of pilchards. On other occasions the structor was as adroit in preparing flesh courses with the most humble not to say despised of roots.

Greek cooks, as we see in the writings of many of the ancients, claimed that there were few professions requiring wider and sounder knowledge and philosophy than that of cooking; and we can hardly doubt them. The Roman cooks were quite as clever. We are told on credible authority that they contrived to serve up pigeons and young spring chickens—no matter at what season—even though they had nought but the flesh of four-footed beasts or fish on which to exercise their art. Martial has recorded a sumptuous dinner where the guests thought they were partaking of tunny, anchovies, sausages, besides a great number of different vegetables; yet the cook only used common pumpkins, seasoned with oils, various condiments, seeds, and roots.

Now, these culinary feats are pretty well authenticated, and may be accepted as historically reliable facts. We are inclined to inquire: Were these old-world cooks chemical adepts? For, without a doubt, the semi-magical transformations of the structor were nothing more than the labours of clever chemists. Whether he knew it or not, he availed himself of such roots, seeds, and herbs as our chemists of to-day would choose were they to attempt such gastronomic feats. The *Chenopodium vulvaria*—or 'stinking goose-foot,' as it is popularly and appropriately called—is a vegetable sufficiently well known, though not admired either for its beauty or sweet scent. As a matter of fact, it possesses a most disagreeable odour, much resembling that of putrid salt or dried fish. If portions of this plant be distilled together with a solution of common soda, a volatile alkaloid substance passes over. This substance has a rank smell of putrid fish; it is known to chemists as 'trimethylamine.' The 'skunk-cabbage' of America, the agavé of Mexico, and our own common henbane, possess strong smells of putrid flesh, and hence have been vulgarly christened 'carriage plants.' To this list we may add some varieties of the African cacti, and several species of mushrooms and fungi.

We know the constituents of these vegetables now, and can trace without much difficulty their peculiar virtues, by chemical analysis, to special alkaloids. It is undoubtedly of such uninviting and unpromising materials that the structor contrived to delight the 'jovial fellows' of his day.

It is very curious to observe this, the more so if we cannot believe that a knowledge of chemistry had spread so widely and been reduced to such definite rules as these facts would seem to imply. If we are forced to adopt another hypothesis, that the structor's success was merely owing to chance observation, we cannot help admiring the result of such observations, and wondering at their thus falling across apparently obnoxious weeds—they even pressed into their

service the asafœtida—for the concoction of elaborate and delicious artificial dishes.

The modern chemist has lost the secret knack of the ancient structor; still, with a little skill and some study, the art might be revived. The late Professor James F. W. Johnston, a high authority on matters relating to analytical chemistry, says (apparently ignorant or oblivious of the fact that he had been anticipated centuries ago): 'I may suggest to the cook, however, as a possible use to which these fishy-smelling compounds may hereafter be put in the cuisine—the flavouring of imitation fish-cakes, crab, lobster, crayfish, and oyster-pâtés, fish-sauces such as the anchovy, &c. Such preparations as these, by the application of a little skill, may pass off at table, and be made to please the palate as well as genuine salt-water productions, though containing nothing that ever lived in the sea.'

Though only practised extensively by the ancients, yet the art lingered, and even still lingers in out-of-the-way corners. Mercier, who wrote on the customs of the Parisians in 1782, tells us much that is interesting about the table and kitchen. He says that the duchesses and marchionesses had become such gourmands, and carried their love of change so far, that they absolutely declined to eat solid meats or anything prepared in the ordinary way. They disdained having to chew their meats like their vassals the *roturiers* and common herd. The cooks were therefore obliged to reduce everything to *consommés*, jellies, and *purées*. He tells us also: 'Our cooks anxiously turn their attention to the disguising of every dish. During Lent, the king's cooks serve up dinners where vegetables are made to assume the shape of every fish in the ocean; they even contrive to give the flavour to these dishes of the fishes they imitate.' Thus the good king, cardinals, and bishop, while religiously abstaining from forbidden dainties, found an easy and agreeable way of satisfying their gastronomic cravings.

To this day in Italy we may taste excellent veal-pâtés, or wholesome fried pork, made out of tunny-fish; fish-curies of exquisite delicacy made of vegetable marrows. In these instances, it is simply the mode of curing, the oil used, and, in the case of the vegetable marrows, the chemical effect of the heat and curry powder, which cause the change. Beefsteaks, again, juicy and splendidly tender, may be cut from the stem of a pine-tree! These are large mushrooms, or fungi, which are impregnated with a red blood-like fluid.

It would indeed be at once interesting and amusing to see our chemists put on the apron and white cap and serve up a complete artificial dinner from their laboratories, so that the bread and vegetables should come before us in the shape of crayfish soup, well-fried herring, or carefully boiled cod, oyster-pâtés, fish-sauces; to be followed by steak-pies and savoury ragouts. We know that they could with ease, and indeed daily do, serve us with an artificial cheese or paste of jargonelle pears and artificial apple-candy. Such things have been done, and can be repeated. The vegetable juices, long locked up in our coal-beds, are now set free from the odorous tar, to assume considerable commercial importance as flavouring essences. What, however, really arrests our attention and calls for our wonder, with our

present chemical knowledge, is, that so long ago the old-world cooks should not only have discovered, but made practical use of the mysterious chemical virtues of these paradoxical vegetables.

MIN:

A RAILROAD STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER II.

Six weeks of summer passed, and the grand weather of early fall filled the free broad prairies with such an intoxicating atmosphere as only haunts the plains of the West when there is just the faintest suspicion of frost before the sunrise. Macpherson was sitting at his table, with his head turned toward the west window, watching for the freight-train which the telegraph had told him was on the way from Prairie City, a station thirty-odd miles to the west. Away on the horizon the smoke from the locomotive was just becoming visible, when something more tangible than smoke darkened the window—something alive. Mac could scarcely believe his own eyes when he saw that the object was a human being, and a girl at that! Not a fashionably attired young lady, not a city belle, but still, a rather attractive specimen of the gentler sex. Mac could just see enough of a horse's mane to know that his visitor was mounted. Not being posted in feminine fashions or in anywise interested in ladies' wearing apparel, he did not particularly notice the girl's dress. He did, however, perceive that she was young, healthy, and graceful, with a face which, though sadly tanned by the weather, was of rare beauty; while from her head, which was hatless, flowed magnificent tresses of brown wavy hair. That she was rude and untutored, a 'child of the plains,' was apparent as soon as she spoke, and yet her girlish voice sounded strangely sweet and musical to the agent, who for so long had heard nothing but a few passing words from the train-men as they went through 44-mile.

'Be you the agent?' asked the girl, bending forward through the open window.

'Yes, madam,' responded Mac, with as much gravity as though he were selling a ticket to some city dame.

'Well, dad's offul sick; an' he sez as how you kin telegraft ter 'Stan'ople fer a doctor. Kin you, mister?'

'Yes, I guess I can manage to wire for a doctor. But come in, missy. Here's a train coming; it will be gone in a few minutes, and then I can wait on you. Hitch your pony behind the shanty while you come in and rest awhile.'

The girl sprang with agility from her wiry little pony, made him fast, and entered the 44-mile depot. Mac made her sit in his easy-chair, which was evidently a novel luxury to the young lady. She tried to fit it in various ways while Mac was busy giving running orders to the conductor of the freight-train, and at last settled down into a comfortable position. The girl was quite young, perhaps sixteen, and was attired in an old worn and oft-washed cambric gown; while her shoes were evidently 'home-made.' Her dress was short, and betrayed the fact that her feet were stockingless.

What struck Mac—what struck many besides

Mac, afterwards—was the girl's wondrous grace and evident strength of limb: these characteristics were even more prominent than her luxurious hair and bright Western countenance.

'And now,' said Mac, as the freight-train went on its way eastward, leaving only the caboose and a cloud of smoke visible—'now we can talk.—So "dad" is sick. Well, who is "dad"? Where does he live, and what is the trouble?'

But Macpherson's visitor was evidently of a practical turn of mind, for she replied: 'Say, mister, what's the matter with telegrafting for the doctor before we hev our talk?'

'Good for you, Miss—Miss?'

'My name's Min—Min Rossiter.'

'Well, Miss Min, your suggestion's a good one.—Dad's very sick, and needs a doctor? We'll see what they can do for us at Constantinople.' Macpherson turned in his seat, reached his hand over to the 'ticker,' and with his long finger began to tap off a message to the man at Constantinople. 'Click-click, click-clicketty-click,' went the little hammer, while Min watched the performance with wide open eyes and mouth. Mac stopped; but in a minute the ticker started off again, moved by some unseen power, and as the clicking continued, Arthur slowly repeated, aloud, for the girl's benefit: 'Doctor—lives—quite—close—just—left—depot—for—his—house—will—send—over—and—let—you—know—in—five—minutes.'

'Now, then,' said Mac, 'while we are waiting to hear from the doctor, tell me where you live and what is the trouble. Your home must be a long way from here, because I am certain there is no house within sight.'

'All right, mister.—My dad is Jack Rossiter, an' he's pretty old now. Dad's been sick all winter; but he never complained much. Our shanty's over by the Yellow Bottom Creek, 'bout twelves miles from the railroad. I hain't been anear the track since dad an' me come to see the first train go by, more'n three years ago. I was fifteen years old last spring, an' mam's been dead five years. She taught me to read an' write a little, an' learned me to sew an' mend; but sence she died I've had ter sorter look after things for dad, an' hain't had no time for myself. Dad came out here from Illinois, when I was a wee tod of a thing, more'n ten years ago. He allus allows he made a big mistake settlin' on the Yellow Bottom. I think he'd 'a gone back to Illinois if mam had lived; but when she died, the old man lost heart, an', besides, he's been sick quite a good deal.—Yes, dad an' me's all alone now. We hain't got no neighbours within half-a-day's ride. We've raised considerable live-stock o' one kind an' nuther; but o' late years the thievin' Indians come in nights an' steal most of it. We hain't got much money left, I know, an' now dad's real bad, an' I'm 'fraid he's goin' to die.—Ain't thet the doctor, mister?'

The 'ticker' was clicking once more. Mac read the message: 'Doctor—says—he—will—start—on—the—express—to-morrow—mornin'—cannot—leave—before—as—there—is—no—train.'

'Now,' said Mac, 'I did not tell the doctor who was sick nor how far he will have to go after he gets off the train, for fear he might not come. The question now arises, how is he going to find his way over to your place?'

'What time does the train get in, mister?'

'Seven o'clock to-morrow morning.'

'I'll be on hand with dad's horse for the doctor to ride.—Good-bye, mister, an' thank yer.'

The girl would not wait to partake of refreshment, which Mac wished to prepare for her. She unhitched her pony, vaulted across its little back, and galloped away like a true child of the prairies. That was about four in the afternoon. At midnight, Macpherson was soundly sleeping in his 'furnished room,' when he was awakened by a hammering on the door of the 'office,' while a not unfamiliar voice called: 'Mister! Hello, mister!'

He jumped up, pushed his legs through his most important garment, and went to the door. In the moonlight he saw the girl Min seated on a gaunt old horse, a horse of twice the framework of the pony she had ridden in the afternoon, but with scarcely as much meat on his bones.

'Say, mister, I thought I might save the doctor a no-account trip. Dad's dead. I found him stiff an' cold on the bed when I got home.—Poor old dad!' The girl was not crying—did not appear to have been crying, and Mac was a little surprised that she took her misfortune so coolly.

'I'm very very sorry for you,' he said. 'Do come in and rest in my big chair. I will wire Constantinople for them to send a man to relieve me for a day, instead of the doctor, and in the morning I will go over with you to your place. Perhaps I can help you.'

Arthur lit a lamp and a fire. Soon he had the tired girl drinking a cup of hot coffee; and before he got around to his day's work—which commenced at two A.M.—he experienced the pleasure of seeing her quietly sleeping in his large chair.

The next morning, before Min was awake, Ratty Sykes dropped off the express and thrust his long angular limbs into the office. 'Great Scott, man!' he said to Macpherson, 'what's eatin' yer, anyhow? You've raised more excitement atween 44-mile an' 'Stan'ople than's bin knowed in a coon's age. Who'd ha' thought I'd iver hev come ter 44-mile as relief-agent? Here hev I bin playin' gentleman fur over six weeks, an' I break the spell by puttin' in a day's work at the ole cabin.—But what's up, pard? Holy smoke!' This last rather original expletive was called forth by a sight of Min sleeping in the easy-chair. 'A gal, by thunder! Wal, ef this yere don't lick the globe! Darned ef I kin believe my eyes. Is it 44-mile?'

Mac was not much disposed to humour Ratty by telling all the girl's story; still, he felt under some obligation to the man for coming out so promptly to relieve him, so told as much about Min as he thought necessary. Then he woke the child; and after they had all partaken of a simple breakfast, Mac and his new protégée rode slowly away on the old horse, Min sitting like a lady in front of Arthur.

It was almost noon when the travellers reached the bank of the broad but shallow and very muddy stream known as the Yellow Bottom Creek. The Rossiter homestead was a miserable frame shanty, very little larger than the station building at 44-mile. It consisted of a meagre apartment, used as kitchen and living-room, and two small, poorly furnished bedchambers. Upon a bed in one of these undersized rooms lay the

dead body of a man prematurely old—a man (one of thousands) who had died of overwork, exposure, and disappointment, as a pioneer on the plains.

Mac had done many strange things in his life, but he now, for the first and last time, dug a shallow grave, into which, with Min's aid, he gently laid 'dad' beneath the prairie sod. Then he investigated a little, with the result that he found nothing of any account among old Rossiter's possessions. He did discover an old-fashioned wagon, a cow, and the two samples of horse-flesh with which we are already acquainted. He was certain it was no place to leave a lonely girl, especially with winter fast approaching; and as the land was practically valueless, he advised Min to desert the river-side for the present at least. So Mac harnessed the old horse to the wagon, which he loaded up with one or two pieces of furniture, Min's personal effects, and some poultry. Then he fastened the cow to the rear of the wagon, and, with Min mounted on the pony alongside, he started for 44-mile.

Min was not so talkative as she had hitherto been. Now that her father was under the ground and she herself leaving the place which had been her home for years, she seemed to realise all that had overtaken her. She was even more affected than she appeared to Macpherson, though he detected more than once the tear-drops coursing down her sunburnt cheeks. Mac tried to cheer her with a few remarks and suggestions as to the future. 'We'll build you a bit of a place not very far from the depot. You shall keep the poultry and the cow and sell me eggs and milk. Why, we shall have a regular little town up to 44-mile, now. Soon we shall have to build a church and sign a petition for a post-office, if we wish to keep abreast of the rest of the world.'

It was quite late when they reached the station. Ratty Sykes was sleeping soundly on Arthur's bed, and Arthur did not wake him. Arthur Macpherson was rather glad, for himself, to have had this girl thrown in his way, and he did not propose to have his day-old plans spoiled by Ratty Sykes. So Mac persuaded Min to again rest in the big rocking-chair, and the girl was soon asleep. At ten o'clock the train for Constantinople came through, at which time Mac went into the little bedroom and shook Sykes, yelling in his ear: 'Turn out, my lad; here's your train—and here's what I owe you.' Ratty was only half awake, but he heard the locomotive bell and hurried out of doors: he was also wide awake enough to grab the two-dollar bill which Arthur pushed into his hand. Mac had his train orders all ready written out, so that in a minute the train was gone, leaving Sykes no time to ask questions.

Arthur Macpherson, though holding an inferior post, was essentially a gentleman; in other words, he was an honourable as well as a kind-hearted man. He had taken a fancy to Min, but only as a man may be interested in a pretty and 'odd' child. For reasons of his own, he had elected to reside at 44-mile, or a similar place; but the social instinct was still strong within him, and he had often longed for company. If it had come to him unsought, in the person of this little waif of the prairies, why should he allow the idle curiosity and gossip of men like Ratty Sykes to spoil it? Arthur Macpherson was not many

years past thirty, but he felt very old that early morning as he thought the matter over. 'I'm twice as old as the girl anyway,' he reasoned—'quite old enough to take a fatherly interest in her.' And he did—for the time being.

Arthur was very busy for several following days. In about a week the railroad men began to notice a new building a few rods distant from the depot at 44-mile, and many were the questions as to the 'new settlers' put to Macpherson by the engineers and conductors who stopped at his cabin for orders. Before cold weather set in, Mac had Min snugly housed in a little two-roomed dwelling, which, although it might have appeared decidedly rude and insignificant in a town of any architectural pretensions, Min declared was a 'real cute place, anyhow.' In addition to the cottage, a shed was erected for the 'live-stock.'

And then came the winter—a winter which, notwithstanding the drawbacks and hardships of a telegraph operator's life on the plains, proved a quietly pleasant time for Arthur Macpherson and for Min Rossiter too. When the girl first made her appearance at 44-mile station, she was a fair specimen of the wild and uncultured child of the plains. When the mild spring weather made its appearance, she was a tolerably well-informed girl. Arthur, all through those months of snow and frost, took especial delight in instructing his companion, not only in the three Rs, but in general information. Macpherson had read largely along various lines of literature, and even in that out-of-the-way spot kept himself posted in the world's doings by means of Chicago newspapers which reached him two days old. He found in Min a bright girl, eager and quick to learn all he could teach her; so, all the time he could spare from his duties, which were not arduous by any means, he devoted to the girl. And as Min grew in knowledge, she also grew womanly and refined; not with the refinement of New York or London or Paris 'society,' but nevertheless refined—in her thoughts, her words, and her actions. She was a girl, too, with a large heart, like most Western girls, and she appreciated to the fullest extent all that Arthur did for her, showing her gratitude in many little ways. She tidied up his 'furnished room' and the office each day, added to his table many little delicacies of culinary art, the secrets of which were unknown to Arthur, and made her womanly presence known in a hundred ways that could be *felt* rather than perceived by Macpherson.

One thing she did, quite unaided, which much surprised and pleased Arthur when he became aware of it. By merely watching Macpherson, and by practising at odd times on a spare instrument not connected with the battery, she mastered the telegraph operator's art so well, that in less than six months she was an expert at the work, and often relieved Mac when, by any chance, the messages were extra long and numerous.

Of Min's previous history Arthur learned very little more than she told him on their first acquaintance; indeed, there was little more to tell. On the other hand, as Min came to know her good friend better, and as her interest in him grew stronger, she felt sure that he was a man whose life had not always run in the narrow groove of a frontier operator. But with a fine

feeling, which was hardly to have been expected of her, she never questioned him, though he at last satisfied her curiosity to some extent by relating a little of the record of his life.

Arthur Macpherson told his story as of some third person, but Min felt intuitively that it was of himself he spoke. It was a simple story of devotion and admiration almost approaching worship yielded by a young lad to his elder brother. These two brothers were of an old Southern family, with more of gentle blood and intelligence than of this world's goods. Both lads were college bred, and both came North to earn the livelihood which seemed impossible in the conservative South. There was a difference of nearly five years in their age, and by that number of years the older lad preceded his brother to the North. He entered the railroad service, and succeeded. The younger man followed in the footsteps of his brother when he was twenty years old, and also took a position in the telegraph department of the same railroad. Both were located in the same town, and the elder was at the head of the office in which the younger brother worked. He was what is known as Chief Train Despatcher—a most important position on a single-track road, where trains are moved in both directions on the same line of rails by telegraphic orders from the Despatcher, who keeps constantly before him the exact position of all trains, arranging passing-places, and the like. It is unnecessary to state that a clear head is absolutely requisite in the man holding such a position. In an evil hour, Robert—as Macpherson called the elder of the brothers—took to poker-playing; and after playing for hours for heavy stakes, his nerves always became more or less weakened. Upon one memorable occasion Robert went on duty at midnight with his brother as his assistant, and the latter saw that Robert was unduly excited. The fact was that the Despatcher had just come from a protracted sitting at the card-table. Still, he looked over the time schedule and telegraphic reports, and seemed to grasp the situation with his usual alacrity. With his papers before him he sat down, and from time to time wrote out orders for his brother Harry (Mac called him Harry) to send over the wires. About three in the morning came the report of a collision down the road. The Train Despatcher had given a wrong order! Both the brothers were greatly shocked; and the elder, being responsible for the accident, which was attended with fearful loss of life, was almost beside himself with terror. And now came the opportunity for Harry to prove his genuine devotion to his brother, a brother who was really not worthy the sacrifice about to be made in his behalf.

'Robert,' he said, 'I sent that message.—I am going to run away.—Nay, don't stop me. Tomorrow, when the officials investigate, I shall not be here. You need say nothing—to them my disappearance and your silence will explain all. It was an accident, anyway: no one would do such a thing on purpose. Stay where you are—you have more to lose than I have.—Good-bye, Bob.'

Robert certainly had more to lose in the way of a position than his brother, and he was ambitious. But he was also utterly and thoroughly selfish. Of course the investigation came; but Harry, the telegraph operator, had 'jumped the

town.' Naturally, the blame fell on the absent man, for (strangely?) the written orders found on the telegraph table were apparently correct. Robert, as a railroad man, was saved. The terrible error of that night he never forgot: he never again gambled and never drank intoxicating liquor; he became a model official, and promotion rapidly overtook him. Ten years later, he became one of the chief officials of one of the largest railroads in the world. But he *did* forget, and never once by word or deed sought the lad who sacrificed his own reputation to save that of his cold-blooded brother. And that boy went under an assumed name all through the great civil war between the North and the South, after which he tried the gold diggings in California as well as the silver mines of Nevada. For years he tried by excitement and hard work to suppress the feeling of resentment which he now and again experienced when he thought of his brother's base ingratitude. 'But to-day,' said Macpherson, as he closed his narrative, 'he is quietly settled at his old work of telegraphy, and at just such a wild place as 44-mile. Perhaps the strangest part of it all is that he is working under his brother Robert; only there is a wide gulf fixed between them, socially and professionally, and Robert is quite ignorant of his brother's whereabouts.'

THE KOLA NUT.

In an interesting paper read before the Fiji Agricultural Association, Sir John B. Thurston described at some length the interesting properties of the Kola Nut (*Sterculia acuminata*), one of the most useful of the products obtained from Africa. Acknowledging his indebtedness to the information given by Mr T. Christy, F.L.S., in his *New Commercial Plants and Drugs*, Sir John stated that the fresh kola nut had the singular property of clarifying beer and spirits, and of rendering drinkable the foulest waters, evidently owing to the mucilage contained in the nut; and that at the Linnean Society, one of the members—a planter from Jamaica—gave it as his experience that he had seen his foreman cured of drunkenness by being made to swallow a paste consisting of kola and cream. An explanation of this property of the kola nut may be looked for in the fact that it contains over two per cent. of caffeine, the active ingredient of the coffee-bean; for it is a well-acknowledged fact that strong black coffee has a decided effect in righting those who are under the influence of drink.

Sir John then informed his hearers of the discovery that the kola nuts had been prepared by a special process into a paste that cannot be distinguished from cocoa paste. Experiments go to prove that if kola paste be mixed with cocoa it gives chocolate of a quality superior to Caraccas; and that, if mixed with three parts of a low-class cocoa, it improves the latter both in strength and flavour to an astonishing degree. Chocolate made with the kola is ten times more nutritious and sustaining than if made with cocoa, and has, we hear, been in use for the past three or four years in some of the London hospitals as a sustaining and stimulating adjunct in exhaustive and wasting diseases, also where it is necessary to resort to a depressing treatment. We find also the testimony of the sustaining power of the kola nut in a

Report from the Director of the government telegraphs in Egypt, who, during one of his forced excursions into the interior, subsisted solely upon kola chocolate and a few biscuits, without any ill effects.

Kola and its preparations would appear to be of the greatest importance as a food-product. It contains a larger percentage of caffeine than does even coffee, and about five times more than tea. With regard to nitrogenous principles, it will be found that kola is superior to cocoa, coffee, and tea. Its position in medicine is far above that of the maté (Paraguay tea), coca, and guarana.

The flavour of kola is by no means unpleasant, being first sweet, then astringent, and finally bitter. This bitterness in the dried nut partly disappears, but upon soaking the nut in water is nearly restored. In the form of chocolate flavoured with sugar and vanilla, a very pleasant preparation is obtained, which would be a great convenience to travellers taking long journeys without the opportunity of making a proper meal.

As a medicinal product, the kola nut has had a fair share of attention, and has given good results in periodical and chronic headaches, so distressing to the sufferer, in derangement of the equilibrium of the nerves, in heart-complaints, and in diarrhoea. Its greater sphere of action is, however, as a pleasant beverage for delicate constitutions, invalids, convalescents from lowering diseases, and in those cases in which a gentle but sure sustaining and tonic treatment is necessary for the nerves, the digestive organs, and the general condition of the body.

The kola-nut tree is now being cultivated in the West Indies and in certain portions of our Eastern possessions. It is a tree of great interest as regards its habits and treatment for the collection of its crop, and it may interest our readers to take from Mr Christy's book the following extracts :

'On the west coast of Africa, its native country, the kola-tree commences to yield a crop about its fourth or fifth year; but it is not until its tenth year that it is really in full bearing. A single tree will then yield an average of about one hundred and twenty pounds of seed per annum. After the tree reaches maturity, the flowering is nearly continuous, so that a large tree bears flowers and fruit at the same time. There are, in fact, two collections: the June flowering yielding the fruit in October and November; and that of November and December, in May and June. When the fruit is ripe, it takes a brownish-yellow colour, and in this condition dehiscence of the capsule commences along the ventral suture, exposing red and white seeds in the same shell, and it is at this period that they are gathered. According to some authorities, there exist two varieties of kola, one yielding exclusively red seeds, and the other white; but such is not the case. The same capsule may contain up to fifteen seeds, varying considerably in size, white and red together, without the white being considered less ripe than the red. The carpels are from six to nine centimetres long, and three to five thick, and the spongy pericarp is two or three millimetres thick. As many as five ripe carpels may result from a single flower, and these may each contain from five to fifteen

seeds; but in some cases carpels are to be found containing only a single seed. The seeds removed from their envelope weigh according to their development from five to twenty-five or twenty-eight grammes. The epidermis is the principal site of the colouring matter, and beneath it is a tissue, consisting of a mass of cells gorged with large starch granules comparable to potato starch. It is in these cells that the alkaloids caffeine and theobromine are found in the free state.

'On the west coast of Africa the collection is conducted with great care, and is made by women. The seeds are removed from the husk and freed from the skin. In order to maintain their value among the negroes, it is necessary to keep them in a fit state and in good condition. They are therefore carefully picked over, all damaged and worm-eaten seeds being removed, and the sound seeds are then placed in large baskets made of bark and lined with leaves of *bal* (*Sterculia heterophylla*). The seeds are then heaped up and covered over with more bal leaves, which by their thickness and dimensions contribute not a little to the preservation of the seeds by keeping them from contact with dry air. Packed in this manner the seeds can be transported considerable distances, remaining free from mould for about a month, during which time it is not necessary to submit them to any treatment in order to preserve them fresh beyond keeping the bal leaves moist. But if it be desired to keep them beyond that time, the operations of picking and packing have to be repeated about every thirty days, the seeds being washed in fresh water and fresh bal leaves placed in the baskets. Each of these packages usually contains about three hundredweight of seeds. It is in this condition that kola is sent into Gambia and Goree, where the principal dealings in the seeds are carried on. In Gambia they are sold in the fresh state to merchants travelling with caravans into the interior, to make a very agreeable stimulating and nourishing beverage. It most frequently arrives at Sokoto and Kouka in the Soudan and Timbuctoo, where large sales of the seeds are made in the fresh condition. From the Soudanese markets it is carried by caravans to Tripoli, and from Timbuctoo to Morocco.

'As might be expected, the value of the kola increases as it makes its way into the interior of Africa, and it is stated that some of the tribes farthest removed from the sea pay for the dry powder with an equal weight of gold-dust. Kola plays a most important part in the social life of many of the African tribes. An interchange of white kola between two chiefs is indicative of friendship and peace, while the sending of red kola is an act of defiance. When a young chief proposes for the hand of a lady, he sends an offering of white kola to his intended bride's mother: if she returns white kola, the happy suitor is accepted; but his hopes are blighted if red is sent back. The absence of a supply of kola from among the marriage presents would probably endanger the whole arrangement. All the negro West African oaths are administered in the presence of kola seeds; the negro will stretch out his hand over them while he swears, and eats them directly afterwards.

'Fresh kola is used as a masticatory, as is also the dried powder, by the tribes in the African interior. It is not doubted but that kola exer-

cises a favourable influence on the liver, and that white people living in those regions who chew a small quantity before meals escape constitutional changes due to affections of that organ. Some of the natives believe the nut to have aphrodisiac properties.'

Planters in our colonies, says Mr Christy, who have low damp lands should cultivate this very important tree, as the demand for the nut will increase steadily year by year. It is much more easily cultivated, he says, than the cocoa-plant, and yields a large crop twice a year. It does well in low marshy lands, and gives large crops of fruit in some of our West India Islands. The tree will flourish well at elevations lower than one thousand feet, and even at the sea-level.

MY FIRST TAIL-COAT.

YES; I was just fifteen, the awkward age of fifteen. I remember it well, not because of the fact that I was the possessor of two voices, one a deep bass, and the other a shrill treble; or because I knew that I was considered a general nuisance by everybody; but by reason of certain events happening soon after that time, an account of which I am about to give.

It is at any time sad to return to school, but to do so on one's birthday is peculiarly distressing. This, by accident, was my fate on the fifteenth anniversary of my natal day. Nature had not been lavish to me in many respects. I was a fat, sensitive, somewhat retiring boy, more given to day-dreams and my meals than to my books. Everybody said, 'Willie will not be a tall man'—my father and two elder brothers, I should say, made up eighteen feet nine inches among them—and what everybody says, it is acknowledged, must be right. I think, however, nature, by reason of showing me some small sign of favour, had singled me out as the exception to prove the rule, for, with regard to my proportions, what everybody said turned out to be most decidedly and emphatically wrong.

I have said nature had not been too lavish to me; but let me give her all the credit she deserves. In one respect she had been more than liberal—she had endowed me with an extraordinary head of hair. I often wondered why the outside of my cranium had been so richly furnished. Perhaps it was to make up for internal deficiencies in the same region. Be that as it may, my hair stood alone in more senses than one. In colour it was a rich brown, and it tossed in heavy masses, like the waves of a troubled sea. It acted as a sort of weather-glass, indexing my internal emotions. When I was excited, it would stand out like feathers, giving me the appearance of a bird of plumage. When I was happy it would arrange itself in graceful curls. When I was sad—and I was very sad at the moment of which I am writing, as I got into the train at Paddington—it would hang limp and long, in perfect keeping with the sorrowful soul within.

This was the long summer term, and it was an eventful term for me. I don't think I made much progress with my education; my time was fully occupied in unconsciously proving that everybody was wrong. In fact, this was the term in which I made my 'shoot.' I commenced to

grow rapidly the moment I set foot in the fructifying atmosphere of Somersetshire. I opened out on telescopic principles, and became thinner and longer day by day. At the end of five months there was nothing left of the original 'Willie' but his hair. This flourished with its pristine luxuriance, and gave a palm-tree-like finish to the attenuated trunk, which had so suddenly and unexpectedly matured that the family record of male inches had now reached the gratifying total of twenty-five feet.

Now, as I have before stated, I had returned to school on my birthday. Five months had passed, but the sore was still open. As a salve for this, my father had arranged to meet me at Bristol, and special leave had been granted me for a few days' holiday. When this news came to me, I need not describe my feelings; suffice it to say that my hair took on its most feathery aspect, and remained totally irrepressible and unmanageable. So absorbed was I in making the necessary preparations, that I positively gave up growing.

My first confidante on the subject was the wardrobe woman. 'Lor, Master Willie,' said she, 'and you 'aven't any clothes!'

'No clothes!' said I. 'Can't I go as I am?' I was quite unconscious of the fact that the high-water-mark of my costume had risen considerably. The coat sleeves finished off somewhere about the elbow, while the terminal borders of my nether garments were on friendly terms with the upper edges of my socks. As for the waistcoat and the aforesaid nether garments, they refused to meet on any pretence whatever.

'You write home, sir, and tell them you want some clothes,' said the mistress of the robes. 'Your father would like to see you nicely dressed; and you're old enough now to be out of them jackets.'

True. I had for some time had visions of 'tails,' those insignia of manhood; here was my opportunity. I *did* write home. I will give you the identical letter, as found in the family archives:

DEAR FATHER—The wardrobe woman says I must have a tail-coat, with tails. Please get me one, with tails to wear, when you meet me at the Great Western Bristol Railway Station on next half-holiday week. I am so big I have not any money left. She says you must allow for my growing, with tails.—Your affectionate son, WILLIE.

The next four days were days of fears and hopes, my hair meanwhile alternating between damp hay and forked lightning. At last, at the end of a week a parcel for 'Master Willie' was announced, and my hair took on an erectile condition which threatened to be permanent. Shall I ever forget the opening of that parcel! In the solitude of my own bedroom, with trembling hands I severed the string and tore off the brown paper. Yes, there it was in all its glory—a frock-coat with tails! For a few moments I feasted my eyes on its ample lappets, turned back with silk facings, and let my fingers lovingly stroke its velvet collar, and then, blind with excitement, I tore off the meagre habit that sparsely covered me and plunged madly into my new treasure. What cared I though there was

a pinching sensation under the arms and a general feeling of tightness across the chest! I could feel something flapping in the region of my calves and ankles that assured me the tails were there, and I was happy.

In our school they did not encourage vanity; indeed, the looking-glass accommodation was decidedly limited. I have seen on Sunday mornings as many as six boys dodging in front of one diminutive mirror, and bobbing up and down, brush and comb in hand, in the hope of getting even a distant glimpse of their partings before the bell rang for church parade. These mirrors, which measured about nine inches by six, were generally nailed to the wall about four feet from the ground. I had taken the liberty of hoisting the one in my room up about two feet, and in it I could get a good view of my face, although it never included all the hair at one time. How I flattened my nose on that glass and tried to look down at that moment! But it was useless. The appearance of those tails remained a mystery. Perhaps it was well so.

Whether as the result of hints thrown out in my letter, or information gained from other sources, I know not, but the family tailor had acted up to the full letter of his instructions, and had amply allowed not only for my present increased proportions, but also for endless inches yet to be acquired. As I afterwards learned, those tails were absolutely phenomenal, and a cold shudder creeps down my back at this moment as I recall them.

When I got into that coat, life assumed a new aspect; fresh thoughts and ambitions crowded in upon me; a dawning sense of the correlative fitness of things stole into my mind. Perhaps it was this that inwardly told me that a frock-coat demanded a tall hat. At anyrate, I was exercised in my mind on this point. We didn't wear 'toppers' in my school; such things were unknown. We wore 'mortar-boards' on Sundays; but to go on a holiday in one of these badges of servitude was not to be thought of. I was fairly puzzled. My cricket cap would rarely stay on my head, especially if I was excited, and I was highly excited now. We also used straw hats. But how could I face a loving father in a new frock-coat and a hat whose brim depended from the crown by the very last straw! Forgetting my manhood and my tails, I buried my face in my hands and would have wept, had not a sudden and happy thought arisen.

This was the thought. There was a boy in our school named Hobson. Hobson was in his way quite a natural curiosity, physically I mean: he was all chest and arms. If he was eccentric in appearance, he was equally so in his habits. I don't think I ever saw him on his feet; he was generally found depending from convenient gas-pipes, or working his way along between parallel desks or forms on his hands, with his feet in the air. I forgot to mention his peculiarly small head. Now, when he arrived as a new boy at the beginning of the term, on this diminutive head he wore a trim and shiny tall hat. This circumstance had awakened such a lively interest with regard to the name of Hobson's hatter, and so much solicitude on behalf of some unknown individual who had purloined a member of the canine tribe, that

after courting constant attention for one brief half-hour in the playground, Hobson's hat had been quietly stowed away, and had not since been heard of. On this hat all my hopes now depended. Hastily removing my coat and putting it tenderly in my locker, I hurried off to the gymnasium, where I knew I should find Hobson. As I drew near, I could see him hanging by his toes from a high trapeze, his sloth-like form and small head clearly silhouetted against the sky. As I looked at that tiny head, I felt a sinking sensation in my breast; but nothing daunted, I broached the subject of the hat at once. Without getting down, he told me where the precious headgear was to be found, and added, as he began circling round like a St Catherine's wheel on the 5th of November: 'Shy it away when you're done with it, old fellow.'

With Hobson's hat concealed in a towel, I was soon back again in the seclusion of my bedroom. How shall I describe my interview with that hat! At first it absolutely refused to stick on at all; but at last I conquered by thrusting a handful of my hair into the crown; and after flattening down the remainder at the sides and back, I took a view of as much as could be seen of the whole concern in the small mirror, and felt I had reason for much self-congratulation. I felt vexed that no one witnessed my departure the next day, but I had to leave during morning school-hours to catch the train. I had, however, derived much pleasure from my toilet, and I was filled with pleasant thoughts when I reflected how I should astonish the public. I believe I astonished the public very much. The school omnibus carried me up to our sleepy little station. No Roman warrior ever alighted from his triumphal car more puffed up with pride than did I from that homely vehicle. There was no one about but the station-master and one solitary porter; but I was pleased to find that my costume even here excited attention, for the friendly station-master at once remarked: 'Why, zur, that be a voine coat; and they 'aven't forgot the tails, 'ave 'un!'

'No,' I said; 'I particularly mentioned'—

But the rest of my sentence was lost in an uproarious burst of laughter from the porter, whose dull wit I imagined had just discovered the point of some joke he had heard probably the day before yesterday. However, the train came up at that moment, and I jumped in. I suppose the porter had confided his joke to the station-master, for, as we whizzed off, they both appeared doubled up on the platform in convulsions, threatening apoplexy.

What a happy place Bristol seemed to be; all the people appeared to wear a perpetual grin. The little children shrieked with laughter in the streets, and the older inhabitants chuckled as they walked along. The atmosphere seemed veritably charged with laughing-gas. Having to wait two hours for my father, I walked about seeing all I could and letting myself be seen. I became very dusty and tired, for it was extremely warm. My boots were not all they might have been; the right one was very much down at the heel, and a hole, which had been threatening for some time, suddenly appeared in the sole of the left one, creating a blister on my foot, which caused me to limp perceptibly. I finally found myself

in a common back street in the low part of the town in the middle of quite a noisy crowd. I didn't know what they were looking at, but I heard some references to a long tail; so I stopped, and leaning up against a lamp-post, looked vaguely up into the sky, half expecting to see a comet or some other celestial curiosity. I was too hot and tired to remember that it was still broad daylight. The crowd grew more and more exuberant in their cries, and as I gazed vacantly into the heavens, a policeman touched me on the shoulder and said: 'Now, mister, you'd better move on.'

Yes; he was right; time was flying, and my father's train was nearly due, so I said: 'Thank you. Which is the way to the station?'

'Well,' said he, 'I don't want to take you there; but if you don't move on I'll have to.'

'Oh,' I replied, 'I should be sorry to trouble you.'

But at that moment I got a push from behind that nearly made Hobson's hat lose its balance, and gave me an impetus that carried me to the corner of the street, from which point I luckily caught sight of the railway station. Hearing a whistle, I limped along as well as my blister and my carpet bag—which I had religiously carried all this time—would allow me, and arrived synchronously with the London express which rattled in at that moment.

I eagerly scanned each carriage as it glided by, and once I thought I caught sight of my father's face. Could I have been mistaken? The train emptied its contents, but no father of mine! I could have recognised his colossal proportions a mile off. Hurriedly I rushed along, peering into each deserted carriage. Why were all the passengers and porters roaring with laughter and enjoying themselves while I was so anxious? It was cruel! At last, in the front compartment of all I found my missing parent. He was crouching in the far corner with an expression on his face I can never forget. I leapt in, utterly regardless of Hobson's hat, which received a crunch against the door-sash from which it never fully recovered. 'Father!' said I.—'Willie!' said he. 'Then it is you!' That was all the greeting I got. Seizing me firmly by one arm, he hastily hustled me across the platform, threw me into an unoccupied cab, threw himself after me, pulled up both windows, and ordered the cabman to drive to the nearest hotel.

I was strangely puzzled to account for this altered behaviour on the part of my father. As we drove along, he remained silent and abstracted. He was so unlike his usual self. There was an occasional twitching also at the corners of his mouth which I could not understand. When we arrived at the hotel, he alighted, bidding me remain until he had made all the necessary arrangements. After an interval, a waiter came, and after asking me to descend, ushered me straight through the hall door, up-stairs, to our room.

Our dinner was sent up to us; and as the meal proceeded, my father seemed to brighten up somewhat; but I was tired. The excitement of the previous days was telling upon me; so, after making a cardboard sole for the inside of my left boot, I tumbled into bed and was soon fast asleep.

I will not describe our—well, what shall I call it?—well, ramble through Bristol, for want of a more explanatory word. Wherever we went, we went in cabs. The accumulated cab-drives of years seem as nothing to the number of cab-drives we did in that short visit. I began positively to hate the sight of anything on four wheels. Once a break occurred—somewhere in the region of the celebrated suspension bridge—when my father made me visit a deserted Roman mine, which twisted and turned for some miles, apparently, in the bowels of the earth. My father did not go in himself. What he did while I was away I never knew. For myself I know that I wandered about, carrying a candle stuck on the end of a stick, for an indefinite period, and eventually emerged into the light of day only to find that hateful cab awaiting me, and my father beckoning me to jump in quickly. On the whole, however, I was very happy. The possession of that coat and borrowed hat covered a multitude of minor trials and disappointments.

After cabbng all over Bristol, I remember we found our way to Wells; and as soon as we arrived, a fly was hired to convey us to the cathedral. The fly was an improvement on the cabs, because it was open, but unluckily rain commenced to fall, so I turned up my precious coat-collar to preserve the velvet. My hair, however, got a little damp and bedraggled, and I fancy Hobson's hat, which was still suffering from the effects of the accident at the railway station, acquired an additional measure of limpness. That cathedral was charming; at least I can answer for the interior. I was not allowed to see the outside—'on account of the rain,' my father said; but I know the sun was shining again by that time. I was hurried inside with such unseemly haste that I forgot to turn down my coat collar. I was, however, soon lost in admiration of the time-honoured arches and ancient carvings; and putting Hobson's hat on a chair, I sauntered away on a voyage of inspection. As I was thus engaged, an old gentleman with a party of ladies came and entered into conversation with me. I felt much flattered; and as I had read up my guide-book on the journey from Bristol, I enlarged to them on the various objects of interest, giving the date of the stained glass windows and the history of the tombs with wonderful accuracy. They seemed highly gratified, and as they were leaving, the old gentleman slipped a shilling into my hand. I was fairly puzzled; but with a happy impulse, I thrust it into the dainty hand of one of the ladies on whom I thought I had made some impression. She smiled sweetly, and handed it again to her father. He looked first at me, then at the shilling, and then again at me, and then *he* smiled also. Then I smiled; in fact, we all smiled. Then they departed, the old gentleman muttering something about a 'model verger,' and leaving me mystified to such a degree that I was barely conscious of the fact that my father had suddenly emerged from behind a column and caught me by the wrists and was saying something about 'going to the crypt.'

I did not want to go to the crypt; recollections of that Roman mine still lingered. Once there, however—and we got there with remarkable ex-

pedition—I felt really happy. My father seemed kinder to me in that dark retreat. A little of his old self had returned; he even came and put his arm round me and spoke of home. I was glad it was dark at that moment. But when we ascended into the daylight once more, I could again see that weird, unaccountable expression and that mysterious twitching at the angles of his mouth. I found an elderly lady sitting on Hobson's hat; and after apologising for troubling her, we left the cathedral and re-entered the fly.

I do not remember exactly where we went to next; but I know we eventually found ourselves at a place on the banks of the Severn, whence we were to start on board a steamer, with the intention of visiting Chepstow. It was a splendid crossing. It was windy, but the sun shone brightly. My father, who always boasted of being a splendid sailor, retired to the cabin, and resisted all persuasion on my part to tempt him to come up on deck. For myself, I determined the passengers should not be deprived of my presence. I would have 'walked the bridge' all the way, had I not been too much occupied in chasing Hobson's hat about the deck; every lurch of the vessel sent it off; once, a sudden gust of wind carried it down amongst the machinery, where it alighted on a piston, and rose up and down, greatly to the delight of the passengers, until it was fished out on the end of a boat-hook. Another time it was blown through the skylight into the cabin and fell on my father, who was just dozing off to sleep. He seemed very much vexed; but the passengers and crew filled the air with their shouts of delight. The ailing ones even forgot their qualms. They were a jolly lot. My father seemed the only one on board with a vein of sadness in him. This distressed me; it was so unnatural to him to be thus.

When we reached Chepstow, he was positively angry, simply because there were none but open flies for hire. We drove direct to the castle. He seemed anxious that I should see everything, and insisted on my climbing to the tops of all the towers and clambering over every inch of the ancient walls. He remained outside. Standing on those battlements, my tails fluttered gloriously in the wind, and I felt I was an object of marked admiration for a crowd of rustics who had assembled below. Looking down, I could see my father smoking his cigar on a grass plot apart. At that moment Hobson's hat blew off, and after quivering in the air for a brief space, like a wounded bird, it fell on the grass at my father's feet. He started as though he had been shot, and I actually saw him give it an unkind thrust with his umbrella. I followed Hobson's hat, not by the same route, however; and when I reached that grassy plot, my father was on his feet. There was a fixed look in his eye. Casting one anxious glance towards the crowd, which was now drawing near, he placed his hand on my furze-bush head and said, not unkindly, but firmly: 'Willie, I can stand this no longer; we must return to Bristol at once.'

That return journey was not a happy one; I could not tell why. I seemed to have lost my buoyancy, and positively shuddered as we again entered one of those nightmare cabs at Bristol

and drove, this time, to the *Grand Hotel*. I could have kicked that phalanx of grinning housemaids and strangled those cynical-looking waiters with their own white chokers. What were they all 'sniggering' at?

With an air of haughty disdain, I marched up the broad brilliantly lighted staircase. Great heavens! what was that extraordinary figure that gradually appeared before me?—first the head, then the body, and then what ought to have been the legs. My first impulse was to laugh outright; but that would not have been a sufficiently dignified proceeding for an individual wearing a frock-coat and a tall hat. I looked again. There it stood, measuring at least six feet three in height, but lamentably attenuated. On its head it wore a disreputable thing that might once have been a silk hat, but so small that it looked more like a thimble on a telegraph pole than anything else. The figure's hair was wildly tossed, and stood out in forked masses on either side. The body was short and pinched. The lower extremities were completely concealed by a cassock-like skirt that reached almost to the ground, leaving exposed only a short expanse of red striped stocking, and a pair of shabby boots. I felt a queer sensation creeping over me, and a fascination that prompted me to look and look again. I unbuttoned my coat for air; the ghastly apparition unbuttoned *his*, displaying *my* waistcoat! I knew it by its peculiar pattern, and realised that that spectre was none other than the reflection of myself in the staircase mirror! I gathered myself together, and rushed out into the darkness.

Late that night, my father, now melted towards me, persuaded me to take shelter in a humble and sequestered hostelry, and I returned to school early the next morning, and slunk in unobserved.

I don't know what was the ultimate end of Hobson's hat. As for my coat, although the judicious use of the sartorial shears rendered it a tolerably presentable garment, and furnished me with material for waistcoats for some time to come, I have ever since that hour been possessed by an unconquerable horror of anything approaching to a frock-coat, and consequently always appear in 'tweeds.'

A FEW EXPERIMENTS WITH THE GARDEN SPIDER.

THE Garden Spider (*Epeira diadema*) is one of the most beautiful, in form and colour, of the many hundred species we have in England. The manner in which it spins its web—certainly the most regular in make—displays great ingenuity in the way the web is secured to sustain a sudden strain coming on any part of it. We have been watching several experiments with this spider, of which the following are a few of the most interesting.

Having an old fern-case, with sides and top all glass, we filled the bottom with earth, placing a few sticks firmly in the soil, so that the spiders would have some projections to secure their webs to. The first spider we placed in the case was a very fine specimen, nicely marked on the top of the abdomen. We took her from an old laurel tree, in which there were several young ones. The first day she remained crawling

about on the ground ; but on looking next morning, we found a perfect web, spun horizontally across the case, about half-way up ; and on magnifying the ends of the web that were fastened to the glass—which was very smooth—we discovered the spider had frayed out the ends of the web-lines, and had fastened them to the glass by means of a gummy substance, thus giving it a greater power of adhesion than by trusting to a single cord. We placed a small house-fly in the case, where it soon became entangled in the web, the spider immediately rushing down, seizing, and killing it. She then carried it to the top of the glass, and in four minutes had sucked all the moisture out of it. She then wrapped it loosely round with web, leaving only one line to it, by which she carefully lowered it, for about two inches, through a space in the net ; then, cutting the line with her hind-feet, she let it fall to the ground.

After this we placed four flies in the case, three of which were speedily caught. The spider having evidently eaten enough, she disposed of these flies in a different manner from the first. Running to each in turn, she turned the fly rapidly round and round with her front legs ; at the same time, two distinct webs kept winding round the fly from the spinnerets, until it was encased in such a bag of web that the fly could not be seen. She then hung them in different parts of the web, eating two of them the same night. Thinking the flies so wrapped up would be air-tight, we detached one from the web, leaving it exposed to the air for three days. Although the weather was very hot, we found, on carefully opening the case, that the dead fly was quite fresh, and when smashed between the fingers, was in a perfectly juicy condition. This clearly shows their wonderful instinct in preserving food for future meals.

One day we placed in the case a large meat-fly, which immediately flew through the web, tearing it in a destructive manner. The spider at once came down and repaired it ; and in a few minutes the fly was once more in the web, struggling hard. This time, the spider came within about half an inch of the fly, made a strong cord fast to three of the outside lines of the net, and then running quickly over the back of the fly, she made the cord fast on the other sides. On this cord we noticed tiny beads hanging, of a clear-looking substance, which, as the fly struggled, adhered to its wings, impeding its movements. Leaving the fly for nearly two minutes, by which time he was almost exhausted, the spider once more drew near, and quickly had him by the back. Swaying her body from side to side at the same time, she soon bound him with three cords, which she guided about over the fly with her hind-feet in a wonderfully rapid manner. She then pierced him on the side of the trunk, from which place she did not again loose until the fly was dead. Making a slight repast, she bound the remains securely in the web, for future meals. This same spider we have now. Last September she completely destroyed her web, and spun a bright yellow cocoon on the top of the glass, and laid, as near as we have yet examined, about three hundred and sixty eggs. She has since then remained hanging on this cocoon. Her body before she laid the eggs was as large as a small

bean ; it is now (January) not much larger than a grain of rape-seed. She refuses all food, and appears in a dormant, if not a dying state.

There was another old spider, of very dusky colours, which we placed in a large glass jar. Although he was a very large one, he did not erect any web, but used to try and catch the flies we placed in the jar by sneaking round the glass to them while they were resting. A few days after, we introduced a younger spider, about three parts grown, which quickly made a very strong and useful web. The old spider took no notice of the newcomer until the younger spider had completed his home and made all comfortable. Then the old one carefully climbed into the net or web, attacked and killed the owner, and took possession. After this, we placed several flies in the jar, some of which injured part of the web, the spider not attempting to repair the damage, not being able evidently to produce web, through old age or injury. To show the power spiders have of knowing what insects they can safely attack, we placed two large ants, which were neuters or workers, in a web. When the spider came down and saw who the visitors were, he fell from the web to the bottom of the jar, where he lay seemingly paralysed with fear. We then removed the ants. The spider did not return to his web for thirty-five minutes, and then in a cautious, and apparently frightened state.

We used to feed a female spider with a fly every morning ; and she became so used to the habit, that at last, when we shook the net, she would come and take the fly from between our fingers. Unfortunately, she died at the end of the season, after laying a cocoonful of eggs.

In experimenting in different ways with some of the small insects, many hours may be pleasantly spent, greatly adding a rich store of knowledge as to the way in which all things are endowed according to their nature of living.

THE WITNESSES.

Day by day in the open meadows,
The cowslips swing their bells of gold ;
And the young leaves throng, like merry children,
The forest windows grim and old.

Day by day, with a blow that strengthens,
The sun-god smites the springing corn ;
Doubly cool are the dews of evening,
Doubly sweet is the breath of morn.

Day by day in the lower pastures,
Heavier mists at twilight fall,
The sheaves stand thick on the short white stubble,
The peaches glow on the orchard wall.

Day by day, over hill and valley,
The snowflakes wing their passage slow,
Cold white ghosts of the forest children
Dead in the tangled brakes below.

ALFRED WOOD.

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CLOVELLY.

NATURE has made and kept Clovelly unique. Fixed in a narrow North Devonshirecombe, in which it existed at least when Domesday Book was compiled, and which, from the evident age of its houses, it has filled to its extreme capacity for five hundred years and more, further growth was all but impossible. Nestling under its limestone cliffs, the Atlantic storms sweep clean over the little village and leave it scathless. The lands above are mostly a wide windswept moor, no stick of timber being able to hold up its head against the ocean blasts. The jutting rocks to the northward shelter little gorges where trees luxuriate; but wherever they peep above the friendly crag they are dwarfed, twisted, gnarled, contorted, and bleached into a thousand grotesque forms and colours unknown to tree-life elsewhere. The nearest railway approach is at Bideford, whence a drive of some ten miles gradually leads through the luxuriance of a Devonshire landscape to a treeless table-land, its widest contrast. The most expeditious and time-saving conveyance is the two-horse mail wagonette leaving Bideford at six in the morning, and, when in a little more than mid-journey, skirting the cliffs of Clovelly on its way to Hartland—as hungry a drive over the moorland as can easily be found, but not destitute of contrasts and surprises. Talk of fresh air!—here it is certainly to be had in its most untainted form.

Within two miles of Clovelly the horses are suddenly pulled up, and the travellers informed that for the small contribution of fourpence each, demanded by the fair owner towards a pension fund for her old retainers, the mail will leave the highway and drive through her Hobby Woods down the most picturesque of roads, cut, according to Lysons, in 1822. These are glorious woods, the timber grand, and the undergrowth one which Devonshire alone can produce. One enthusiastic fern-writer speaks of a fern paradise: surely this is it. But undergrowth the ferns are not, for they swarm up the trees, nestling in their

moss-grown trunks and perching on their boughs; indeed, it would be hard to say where the venturous little polypody is not to be found. After zigzagging and careering some mile down through the overshadowing trees, you in a moment emerge into the open, and the vehicle stops, that you may feast on a suddenly revealed fairy scene. There below, a mile or more away, lies Clovelly, with its tiny pier and sheltered harbour pool, a scene of sunny enchantment. After a few moments of this feast of contrasts, you plunge again into the gloomy wood, and career some mile farther, when the vehicular journey comes suddenly to an end, and with no apparent reason, for where is Clovelly? Not a trace of it is to be seen; and you dismount in the middle of the high-road, amongst groups of oddly caparisoned donkeys, and men with hand-sleighs, a motley arrangement never before seen, and now not understood. 'New Inn, gentlemen!' shout the donkey and sleigh men; and choosing the latter, the luggage is promptly packed on the sleigh, and rattles down the steep road, impassable of wheels, descending at a run to the hostel in the middle of the village.

Clovelly bursts on the view just as you spy the first and topmost cottage, embowered in tree-like fuchsias and rollicking Virginian creepers. The steep road leads here to a sort of landing-stage, where the heavier things, slid down the abrupt incline, are temporarily deposited, and whence they are distributed. Heavy balks of timber for building repairs—no new erections being permitted—and other weighty matters, here find a temporary resting-place. Lime, burnt near the harbour, bricks, coals, and all such-like matters are carried up thence by donkeys in their capacious panniers, made for the work, this being the only practicable mode of conveyance up the steep inclines and shallow steps. Donkeys, too, carry up the luggage of departing visitors to the point whence it was first sleighed or panniered down, and here meet the public conveyances pursuing their journey north-west to Hartland, or south-east to Bideford.

The main street, from the little landing-stage at its head to the bend which bounds the view downwards, is paved with boulders, which are universal here; and for the most part it is too steep to descend except by steps, still formed of boulders, varied in width and depth with the changing gradient. The houses bounding the road are alike in one thing—they are all old—varying, it is believed, up to a period of eight hundred years or more, Domesday Book affording collateral proof. The constant repairing, remodeling, patching, and extending result in endless variety and diversity. The abrupt descent makes a curious little terrace necessary in the front of the larger dwellings, with a drop at its lower end of from five to ten feet, as the degree of descent dictates, and a balcony becomes necessary for safety, whilst forming an important and picturesque feature of the street view. Creepers grow here, not of compulsion, but of choice, and their profusion changes the humblest cot into a little bower. Of the two sections into which the main street is cut by the bend in the middle, perhaps the lower portion, whilst least steep, is most picturesque.

The North Hill runs at right angles to the main thoroughfare up a very steep acclivity, bordered by cottages of a still more ancient and primitive type. Rising in successive terraces, with flights of steps between, picturesque with all kinds of accretions and side-growths, little flower-gardens intervening in odd corners, the tiny dwellings are out-topped by one claiming seniority, and abandoned as no longer tenable through age. Time and the elements are evidently too much for the maxim of Clovelly Court—'Nothing new in Clovelly.' The houses here 'grewed,' were not built; and modern medievalism producing all its choicest revivals, would be incapable of anything enduring on the spot. There could be no Acropolis but at Athens, no Colossus except at Rhodes, and as certainly nothing but one of its home-grown cottages on the North Hill. Beyond this decaying topmost cottage, the path becomes a long series of steep steps, deep worn into the hillside, and thickly overhung for a distance with the boughs of the shrubs and trees which skirt it. It is quite a relief to emerge from this gloomy arcade upon the bright little plateau at the top, with its divergent paths, one leading round again to the village head, another to Clovelly Court, and a third making a circuit right down to the harbour.

A little-used path leading from the main street in an opposite direction to the North Hill passes a curious door in the hillside, whereby hangs a tale. This odd door is said to lead to a large subterranean vault with a perennially damp floor, the scene of many a smuggler's venture in the old days, when not only kegs of brandy but bags of salt were worth running, and depositing till safely disposable. Rumour has it that there are many such subterranean receptacles in and

around Clovelly. Possibly Kingsley knew of them, and based on this knowledge the thrilling story of the hidden treasure in the shore-cave of Aberlva. This footpath pursued leads into all the wild luxuriance of the lower portion of the Hobby Wood; and pursued still further, conducts to a charming summer-house on the rocks overlooking Clovelly Bay, as well as the wider waters around.

Returning to the main street, we proceed seawards, and in a few steps come to Lookout Hill, with its flagstaff for use on days of mark, and its broad capacious seat for all the gossips and yarn-spinners of the place. Our ancient nautical friend here can tell of hairbreadth escapes in shooting Old London Bridge during his apprenticeship to a London shipping firm—dangers more than imaginary, seeing the upper pool was generally six feet above the level of the lower, and the current through the narrow arches one not to be braved by any boat or bargeman lacking a steady eye and a stout hand. But the tales of Lookout Hill extend to wider fields: the Mediterranean ports and harbours, with Constantinople itself, are minutely discoursed upon; the fisheries of Labrador are described; and some old man-of-war's man may show the wider circle known to the British navy familiar ground to himself. A friendly marine glass is at the general service for scanning the home-craft in Barnstaple Bay, and the more distant and larger vessels bound to far-off foreign ports. It is soon evident that the fine race of seamen here mostly spend their apprenticeship, and, in not a few cases, all their more vigorous days, in distant service, and only come back to the old nest when pretty well worn out, or only fit for the milder pursuits of the bay fishery, touched with the common yearning, 'Here to return and die at home at last.'

Now we must go 'down along' a steep demanding precipitous steps, or a constant zigzag, the left way leading to the pier; the right to the life-boat house, the waterproofing shed for fishing-nets, and the shore drying-ground for newly oiled light nets. At every turn in either path the eye catches the most quaint and picturesque groups of houses, hanging as in mid air one above another. The lowest tier of dwellings is built on the very seawall, and with local characteristics all its own.

After all, the pier and harbour are chief features of interest in Clovelly, and hither all visitors naturally tend. The pier was erected, or improved, according to Williams, in 1804; but according to local tradition, backed by appearances, it is of much more ancient origin. It is formed entirely of boulders thrown up in a constant stream on the shore of the whole bay. Built in a curve, with its round back to the open Atlantic, the sturdy little pier braves the wildest weather, sheltering, in the harbour pool it embosoms, the fishing-boats of the port with their nautical belongings. The pier is, too, the chief promenade, its outer and higher wall, some eight feet broad at top, forming the fair-weather walk, though destitute of any railings or defence on either side. Stormy weather renders this higher walk speedily untenable, and drives the promenaders to the lower and wider one on the

inner side, which is perfectly sheltered from the Atlantic winds. Primitive steps connect the upper and lower promenades, and ladders clasp the inner wall leading down to the vessels in the harbour pool. The horizontal poles on which the fishing-nets hang to dry in all directions on the pier form a curious but characteristic feature of the scene, whilst the pier light and its elevated stage form the complement and finish of the scene.

The sailors say the boulders with which the shore is strewn come steadily up from Hartland Point, work their way past Clovelly harbour in a clearly defined stream, and continue their course round Bideford Bay, as marked stones are traced through the whole route. There is a constant trade in these big pebbles, which are shipped in the harbour almost daily.

But Clovelly is before all things a fishing town, and its herrings are traditionally the earliest and the best. A considerable fleet of trawlers fishes the entire Bideford Bay, which the native sailors look on jealously as their own ground, and from it they bring in at all periods a supply of the season's fish. The proprietary rights of Clovelly Court, now the seat of Miss Fane, are exercised in a mild and gentle fashion, and the old fixed proportion of the fish brought into the port claimed in former times, seems to be exchanged for a daily supply to the manorial table. The dangerous coast here has the worst character with mariners of any round the island, and is guarded by a lighthouse, placed above the village, whose warnings are aided by a double foghorn; and this tiny harbour, with capacity only for trawlers, is the only refuge between Padstow and Bideford. A light, just mentioned, has recently been erected at the end of the pier, to guide the fishermen running home in the dark, when the narrow entrance is hard to make, specially in heavy weather.

No corporate town is better drained or has a better supply of water than this out-of-the-world village, while an air of easy comfort everywhere prevails. The reigning policy is to keep Clovelly as it has so long been, free from all modern innovations; and the most progressive visitor must own the sweet calm and restfulness that result. The worst inroad is made by an almost daily summer steamer from Barnstaple or Ilfracombe, but the shoal of visitors it brings is dependent on the tide, and must leave when the steamer's peremptory bell summons them aboard. Clovelly Court, already spoken of as the historic seat of the owners of the village and its surroundings, has descended through a long ancestral line to the present owner, whose gentle rule is everywhere evident. This, the proprietary house, is situated in a noble park on the tableland above the village, abounding with picturesque and varied views, and much sheltered by depressions of the surface from the Atlantic storms. The wooded walks, with here and there a welcome seat, the most ambitious of which is 'Gallantry Bower,' three hundred and sixty feet above the sea, are unsurpassed for their delightful coast, ocean, and inland scenery. The coast is bold and picturesque to a degree; whilst the heather on the tableland above is as brilliant as nature's pencil under the light of the most brilliant sun can make it. Clovelly Park is

indeed the complement of Clovelly village, and the sheltered softness of the one, combined with the breezy openness of the other, forms a charming and perfect whole.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXVI.—REPORTING PROGRESS.

WARREN RELF spent many days that summer at Whitestrand, cruising vaguely about the mouth of the Char, or wandering and sketching among the salt-marsh meadows; but he never happened to come face to face, by accident or design, with Hugh Massinger. Fate seemed persistently to interpose between them. Once or twice, indeed, Winifred said with some slight asperity to her husband, 'Don't you think, Hugh, if it were only for old acquaintance' sake, we ought to ask that creature Relf some day to dinner?'

But Hugh, who was yielding enough in certain matters, was as marble here: he could never consent to receive his enemy, of his own accord, beneath his own roof—for Whitestrand, after all, was his own in reality. 'No,' he growled out, looking up from his paper testily. 'I don't like the fellow. I've heard things about him that make me sorry I ever accepted his hospitality. If you happen to meet him, Winifred, prowling about the place and trying to intercept you, I forbid you to speak to him.'

'You forbid me, Hugh?'

'Yes'—coldly—'I forbid you.'

Winifred bit her lip, and was discreetly silent. No need to answer. Those two proud wills were beginning already to clash more ominously one against the other. 'Very well,' the young wife thought in silence to herself; 'if he means to mew me up, seraglio and zenana fashion, in my own rooms, he should hire a guard and some Circassian slaves, and present me with a *yashmak* to cover my face with.'

A day or two later, as she strolled on some errand into the placid village, she came suddenly upon Warren Relf, in his rough jersey and sailor cap, hanging about the lane, sketch-book in hand, not without some vague expectation, as Hugh had said, of accidentally intercepting her. It was a painful duty, but Elsie had laid it upon him; and Elsie's will was law now. Naturally, he had never told Elsie about the meeting with Hugh at the Cheyne Row Club. If he had, she would never have imposed so difficult, delicate, and dangerous a task upon him. But she knew nothing; and so she had sent him on this painful errand.

Winifred smiled a frank smile of recognition as she came up close to him. The painter pulled off his awkward cap awkwardly and unskillfully.

'You were going to pass me by, Mr Relf,' she said, with a good-humoured nod. 'You won't recognise me or have anything to do with me, perhaps, now I'm married and done for!'

The words gave him an uncomfortable thrill; they seemed so ominous, so much truer than she thought them.

'I hardly *did* know you,' he answered with a forced smile. 'I've not been accustomed to see you in black before, Mrs Massinger.—And to say

the truth, when I come to look at you, you're paler and thinner than when I last met you.'

Winifred coughed—a little dry cough. Women always take sympathetic remarks about their ill health in a disparaging sense to their personal appearance. 'A London season!' she answered smiling; yet even her smile had a certain unwonted air of sadness about it. 'Too many of Mrs Bouverie Barton's literary evenings have unhinged me, I suppose. My small brains have been overstimulated.—You've not been up to the Hall yet to see us, Mr Relf. I saw the *Mud-Turtle* come ploughing bravely in some three or four days ago, and I wondered you'd never looked up old friends.—For of course you know I owe you something: it was you who first brought dear Hugh to Whitestrand.'

How Warren ever got through the remainder of that slippery interview, gliding with difficulty over the thin ice, he hardly knew. He walked with Winifred to the end of the lane, talking in vague generalities of politeness; and then, with some lame excuse of the state of the tide, he took a brusque and hasty leave of her. He felt himself guilty for talking to her at all, considering the terms on which he stood with her husband. But Elsie's will overrode everything. When he wrote to Elsie, that letter he had looked forward to so long and eagerly, it was with a heavy heart and an accusing conscience; for he felt somehow, from the forced gaiety of Winifred's ostentatiously careless manner, that things were not going quite so smoothly as a wedding-bell at the Hall already. That poor young wife was ill at ease. However, for Elsie's sake, he would make the best of it. Why worry and trouble poor heart-broken Elsie more than absolutely needful with Winifred's possible or actual misfortunes?

'I didn't meet your cousin himself,' he wrote with a very doubtful hand—it was hard to have even to refer to the subject at all to Elsie; 'but I came across Mrs Massinger one afternoon, strolling in the lane, with her pet pug, and looking very pretty in her light half mourning, though a trifle paler and thinner than I had yet known her. She attributes her paleness, however, to too much gaiety during the London season and to the late hours of our Bohemian society. I hope a few weeks at Whitestrand will set her fully up again, and that when I have next an opportunity of meeting her, I may be able to send you a good report of her health and happiness.'

How meagre, how vapid, how jejune, how conventional! Old Mrs Walpole of the vicarage herself could not have worded it more baldly or more flabbily. And this was the letter he had been burning to write: this the opportunity he had been so eagerly awaiting! What a note to send to his divine Elsie! He tore it up and wrote it again half-a-dozen times over, before he was finally satisfied to accept his dissatisfaction as an immutable, inevitable, and unconquerable fact. And then, he compensated himself by writing out in full, for his own mere subjective gratification, the sort of letter he would have liked to write her, if circumstances permitted it—a burning letter of fervid love, beginning, 'My own darling, darling Elsie,' and ending, with hearts and darts and tears and protestations, 'Yours ever devotedly and lovingly, WARREN.' Which done, he burned the second genuine letter in a solemn

holocaust with a lighted fusee, and sent off that stilted formal note to 'Dear Miss Challoner' with many regrets and despondent aspirations. And as soon as he had dropped it into the village letter-box, all aglow with shame, the *Mud-Turtle* was soon under way, with full canvas set, before a breathless air, on her voyage once more to Lowestoft.

But Winifred never mentioned to Hugh that she had met and spoken to 'that creature Relf,' with whom he had so sternly and authoritatively forbidden her to hold any sort of communication. That was bad—a beginning of evil. The first great breach was surely opening out by slow degrees between them.

A week later, as the yawl lay idle on her native mud in Yarmouth harbour, Warren Relf, calling at the post-office for his expected budget, received a letter with a French stamp on it, and a post-mark bearing the magical words, 'St Martin de Lantosque, Alpes Maritimes,' which made his quick breath come and go spasmodically. He tore it open with a beating heart. 'Dear Mr Relf,' it said simply—'How very kind of you to take the trouble of going to Whitestrand and sending me so full and careful an account of dear Winifred. Thank you ever so much for all your goodness. But you are always kind. I have learnt to expect it.—Yours very sincerely, ELSIE CHALLONER.'

That was all: those few short words; but Warren Relf lived on that brief note night and morning, till the time came when he might return once more in his small craft to the South and to Elsie.

When he did return, with the southward tide of invalids and swallows, Elsie had left the first poignancy of her grief a year behind her; but Warren saw quite clearly still, with a sinking heart, that she was true as ever to the Hugh that was not and that never had been. She received him kindly, like a friend and a brother; but her manner was none the less the cold fixed manner of a woman who has lived her life out to the bitter end, and whose heart has been broken once and for ever. When Warren saw her, his soul despaired. He felt it was cruel even to hope. But Edie, most cheerful of optimists, laughed him to scorn. 'If I were a man,' she cried boldly, and then broke off. That favourite feminine aposiopesis is the most cutting known form of criticism. Warren noted it, and half took heart, half desponded again more utterly than ever.

Still, he had one little buttress left for his failing hopes: there was no denying that Elsie's interest in his art, as art, increased daily. She let him give her lessons in water-colours now, and she watched his own patient and delicate work with constant attention and constant admiration, among the rocks and bays of the inexhaustible Riviera. During that second sunny winter at San Remo, in fact, they grew for the first time to know one another. Warren's devotion told slowly, for no woman is wholly proof in some lost corner of her heart against a man's determined and persistent love. She could not love him in return, to be sure: O no; impossible: all that was over long ago, for ever: an ingrained sense of womanly consistency barred the way to love for the rest of the ages. But she liked him immensely; she saw his strong points; she

admired his earnestness, his goodness, his singleness of purpose, his worship of his art, and his hopeless and chivalrous attachment to herself into the bargain. Its very hopelessness touched her profoundly. He could never expect her to return his love; of that she was sure; but he loved her for all that; and she acknowledged it gratefully. In one word, she liked him as much as it is possible for a woman to like a man she is not and cannot ever be in love with.

'Is that right yet, Miss Challoner?' Warren asked one day, with a glance at his canvas, as he sat with Edie and Elsie on the deck of the *Mud-Turtle*, painting in a mass of hanging ruddy-brown seaweed, whose redness of tone Elsie thought he had somewhat needlessly exaggerated.'

'Why "Miss Challoner?"' Edie asked with one of her sudden arch looks at her brother. 'We're all in the family, now, you know, Warren. Why not "Elsie?"' She's Elsie of course to all the rest of us.'

Warren glanced into the depths of Elsie's dark eyes with an inquiring look. 'May it be Elsie?' he asked, all tremors.

She looked back at him frankly and openly. 'Yes, Warren, if you like,' she said in a simple straightforward tone that disarmed criticism. The answer, in fact, half displeased him. She granted it too easily, with too little reserve. He would have preferred it even if she had said 'No,' with a trifle more coyness, more maidenly timidity. The half is often better than the whole. She assented like one to whom assent is a matter of slight importance. He had leave to call her Elsie in too brotherly a fashion. It was clear the permission meant nothing to her. And to him it might have meant so much, so much! He bit his lip, and answered shyly, 'Thank you.'

Edie noted his downcast look and his suppressed sigh. 'You goose!' she said afterwards. 'Pray, what did you expect? Do you think the girl's bound to jump down your throat like a ripe gooseberry? If she's worth winning, she's worth waiting for. A woman who can love as Elsie has loved can't be expected to dance a polka at ten minutes' notice on the mortal remains of her dead self. But then, a woman who can love as Elsie has loved must love in the end a man worth loving.—I don't say I've a very high opinion of you in other ways, Warren. As a man of business, you're simply nowhere; you wouldn't have sold those three pictures in London, you know, last autumn if it hadn't been for your amiable sister's persistent touting; but as a marrying man, I consider you're *Al*, eighteen carat, a perfect hundred-guinea prize in the matrimonial market.'

Before the end of the winter, Elsie and Warren found they had settled down into a quiet brotherly and sisterly relation, which to Elsie's mind left nothing further to be desired; while to Warren it seemed about as bad an arrangement as the nature of things could easily have permitted.

'It's a pity he can't sell his pictures better,' Elsie said one day confidentially to Edie. 'He does so deserve it; they're really lovely. Every day I watch him, I find new points in them. I begin to see now how really great they are.'

'It is a pity,' Edie answered mischievously. 'He must devote his energies to the harmless necessary pot-boiler. For until he finds his

market, my dear, he'll never be well enough off to marry.'

'O Edie, I couldn't bear to think he should sink to pot-boiling. And yet I should like to see him married some day to some nice good girl who'd make him happy,' Elsie assented innocently.

'So should I, my child,' Edie rejoined with a knowing smile. 'And what's more, I mean to arrange it too. I mean to put him in a proper position for asking the nice good girl's consent. Next summer and autumn, I shall conspire with Mr Hatherley to boom him.'

'To what?' Elsie asked, puzzled.

'To boom him, my dear. *B, double o, m*—boom him. A most noble verb, imported, I believe, with the pickled pork and the tinned peaches direct from Chicago. To boom means, according to my private dictionary, to force into sudden and almost explosive notoriety.—That's what I'm going to do with Warren. I intend, by straightforward and unblushing advertising—in short by log-rolling—to make him go down next season with the money-getting classes as a real live painter. Their gold shall pour itself into Warren's pocket. If he wasn't a genius, I should think it wrong; but as I know he is one, why shouldn't I boom him?'

'Why not, indeed?' Elsie answered all unconscious. 'And then he might marry that nice good girl of yours, if he can get her to take him.'

'The nice good girl will have to take him,' Edie replied with a nod.—'When I put my foot down, I put it down. And I've put it down that Warren shall succeed, financially, artistically, and matrimonially. So there's nothing more to be said about it.'

And indeed when Warren returned to England in the spring, to be boomed, it was with distinct permission this time from Elsie to write to her as often and as much as he wanted—in a strictly fraternal and domestic manner.

CHAPTER XXVII.—ART AT HOME.

That same winter made a sudden change in Hugh Massinger's financial position. He found himself the actual and undoubted possessor of the manor of Whitestrand. Winter always tried Mrs Meysey. Like the bulk of us nowadays, her weak points were lungy. Of late, she had suffered each season more and more from bronchitis, and Hugh had done his disinterested best to persuade her to go abroad to some warmer climate. His solicitude for her health, indeed, was truly filial, and not without reason. If she chose Madeira or Algiers or Egypt, for example, she would at least be well out of her new son's way for six months of the year; and Hugh was beginning to realise, as time went on, a little too acutely that he had married the estate and manor of Whitestrand with all its encumbrances, a mother-in-law included; while if, on the other hand, she preferred Nice or Cannes or Pau, or even Florence, or any nearer continental resort, they would at anyrate have an agreeable place to visit her in, if they were suddenly summoned away to her side by the telegraphic calls of domestic piety. But Mrs Meysey, true metal to the core, wouldn't hear of wintering away from Suffolk. She clung

to Whitestrand with East Anglian persistence. Where was one better off, indeed, than in one's own house, with one's own people to tend and comfort one? If the March winds blew hard at the Hall, were there not deadly Mistrals at Mentone and gusts of foggy Föhn at dreary Davos Platz? If you gained in the daily tale of registered sunshine at Hyères or at Bördighera, did not a superabundance of olive oil diversify the stews at the table-d'hôte, and a fatal suspicion of Italian garlic poison the *fricandeaus* of the second breakfast? Mrs Meysey, in her British mood, would stand by Suffolk bravely while she lived; and if the hard gray weather killed her at last, as it killed its one literary apologist in our modern England, she would acquiesce in the decrees of Fate, and be buried, like a Briton, by her husband's side in Whitestrand churchyard. Elizabethan Meyseys of the elder stock—in frilled ruffs and stiff starched head-dresses—smiled down upon her resolution from their niched tomb in Whitestrand church every Sunday morning: never should it be said that this, their degenerate latter-day representative, ran away from the east winds of dear old England to bask in the sunlight at Malaga or Seville, among the descendants of the godless Armada sailors, from whose wreckage and pillage those stout old squires had built up the timbers of that very Hall which she herself still worthily inhabited.

So Mrs Meysey stopped sturdily at home; and the east wind wreaked its vengeance upon her in its wonted fashion. Early in March, Winifred was summoned by telegram from town: 'Come at once. Much worse. May not live long. Bring Hugh with you.' And three weeks later, another fresh grave rose eloquent in Whitestrand churchyard; and the carved and painted Elizabethan Meyseys, smiling placidly as ever on the empty seat in the pew below, looked forward with confidence to the proximate addition of another white marble tablet with a black epitaph to the family collection in the Whitestrand chancel.

The moment was a specially trying one for Winifred. A month later, a little heir to the Whitestrand estates was expected to present himself on the theatre of existence. When he actually arrived upon the stage of life, however, poor frail little wail, it was only just to be carried across it once, a speechless supernumerary, in a nurse's arms, and to breathe his small soul out in a single gasp before he had even learnt how to cry aloud like an English baby. This final misfortune, coming close on the heels of all the rest, broke down poor Winifred's health terribly. A new chapter of life opened out before her. She ceased to be the sprightly, lively girl she had once been. She felt herself left alone in the big wide world, with a husband who, as she was now beginning to suspect, had married her for the sake of her money only, while his heart was still fixed upon no one but Elsie. Poor lonely child: it was a dismal outlook for her. Her soul was sad. She couldn't bear to brazen things out any longer in London—to smile and smile and be inwardly miserable. She must come back now, she said plaintively, to her own people in dear old Suffolk.

To Hugh, this proposition was simply unendurable. He shrank from Whitestrand with a deadly shrinking. Everything about the estate

he had made his own was utterly distasteful to him and fraught with horror. The house, the grounds, the garden, the river—above all, that tragic, accusing poplar—were so many perpetual reminders of his crime and his punishment. Yet he saw it would be useless to oppose Winifred's wish in such a matter—the whole idea was so simple, so natural. A Squire ought to live on his own land, of course: he ought to occupy the ancestral Hall where his predecessors have dwelt before him for generations. Had not he himself fulminated in his time in the gorgeous periods of the *Morning Telephone* against the crying sin and shame of absenteeism? But if he went there, he could only go on three conditions. The Hall itself must be remodelled, redecorated, and refurnished throughout, till its own inhabitants would hardly recognise it: the grounds must be replanted in accordance with his own cultivated and refined taste: and last of all—though this he did not venture to mention to Winifred—by fair means or by foul, the Whitestrand poplar—that hateful tree—must be levelled to the soil, and its very place must know it no longer. For the first two conditions he stipulated outright: the third he locked up for the present quietly in the secret recesses of his own bosom.

Winifred, for her part, was not wholly averse, either, to the remodelling of Whitestrand. The house, she admitted, was old-fashioned and dowdy. Its antiquity went back only to the 'bad period.' After the æsthetic London drawing-rooms of the Cheyne Row set, she confessed to herself, grudgingly—though not to Hugh—that the blue satin and white-gold paint of the dear old place seemed perhaps just a trifle dingy and antiquated. There were tiny cottages at Hampstead and Kensington that Whitestrand Hall could never reasonably expect to emulate. She didn't object to the alterations, she said, so long as the original Elizabethan front was left scrupulously intact, and no incongruous meddling was allowed with the oaken wainscot and carved ceiling of the Jacobean vestibule. But where, she asked, with sound Suffolk common-sense, was the money for all these improvements to come from? A season of falling rents, and encroaching sea, and shifting sands, and agricultural depression, with Hessian fly threatening the crops, and obscure bacteria fighting among themselves for possession of the cattle, was surely not the best-chosen time in the world for a country gentleman to enlarge and complete and beautify his house in.

'Pooh!' Hugh answered, in one of his heroically sanguine moods, as he sat in the dining-room with his back to the window and the hated poplar, and his face to the ground-plans and estimates upon the table before him. 'I mean to go up to town for the season always, and to keep up my journalistic connection in a general way; and in time, no doubt, I shall begin to get work at the bar also. I shall make friends assiduously with what a playful phrase absurdly describes as "the lower branch of the profession." I shall talk my nicest to every dull solicitor I meet anywhere, and do my politest to the dull solicitor's stupid wife and plain daughters. I'll fetch them ices at other people's At Homes, and shower on them tickets for all the private views we don't care about, and all the first nights at

uninteresting theatres. That's the way to advance in the profession. Sooner or later, I'll get on at the bar. Meanwhile, as the estate's fortunately unencumbered, and there's none of that precious nonsense about entail, or remainders, or settlements, or so forth, we can raise the immediate cash for our present need on short mortgages.'

'I hate the very name of mortgages,' Winifred cried impatiently. 'They suggest brokers' men and bailiffs, and bankruptcy and beggary.'

'And everything else that begins with a B,' Hugh continued, smiling a placid smile to himself, and vaguely reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland*. 'Why with a B?' Alice said musingly.—'Why not?' said the March Hare.—Alice was silent.—'Now, for my own part, I confess, on the contrary, Winifred, to a certain sentimental liking for the mortgage as such, viewed in the abstract. It's a document intimately connected with the landed interest and the feudal classes; it savours to my mind of broad estates and haughty aristocrats, and lordly rent-rolls and a baronial ancestry. I will admit that I should feel a peculiar pride in my connection with Whitestrand if I felt I had got it really with a mortgage on it. How proud a moment, to be seized of a mortgage! The poor, the abject, the lowly, and the landless don't go in heavily for the luxury of mortgages. They pawn their watch, or raise a precarious shilling or two upon the temporary security of Sunday suits, kitchen clocks, and second-hand flat-irons. But a mortgage is an eminently gentlemanly form of impecuniosity. Like gout and the lord-lieutenancy of your shire, it's incidental to birth and greatness.—Upon my word, I'm not really certain, Winnie, now I come to think upon it, that a gentleman's house is ever quite complete without a History of England, a billiard table, and a mortgage. Unencumbered estates suggest Brummagem: they bespeak the vulgar affluence of the *nouveau riche*, who keeps untold gold lying idle at his bankers on purpose to spite the political economists. But a loan of a few thousands, invested with all the glamour of deposited title-deeds, foreclosing, engrossed parchment, and an extremely beautiful and elaborate specimen of that charming dialect, conveyancers' English, carries with it an air of antique respectability and county importance that I should be loth to forego, even if I happened to have the cash in hand otherwise available, for carrying out the necessary improvements.'

'But how shall we ever pay it back?' Winifred asked, with native feminine caution.

Hugh waved his hands expansively open. When he went in for the sanguine, he did it thoroughly. 'One thing at a time, my child,' he murmured low. 'First borrow; then set your wits to work to look around for a means of repayment.—In the desk at home in London this very moment lies an immortal epic, worth ten thousand pounds if it's worth a penny, and cheap at the price to a discerning purchaser. Ormuz and Ind are perfect East Ends to it. It teems with Golcondas and Big Bonanzas. In time the slow world must surely discover that this England of ours still encloses a great live poet. The blind and battling must open their eyes and look at last placidly about them. They'll then be glad to buy fifty editions of that divine strain, varying

in character from the large paper *édition de luxe* in antique vellum at ten guineas—five hundred numbered copies only printed, and issued to subscribers upon conditions which may be learnt on application at all libraries—to the school selection at popular prices, intended to familiarise the ingenuous youth of this nation with the choicest thoughts of a distinguished and high-minded living author.—Winnie, I'm tired to death of hearing people say when I'm introduced to them: "Oh, Mr Massinger, I've often wanted to ask, are you descended from the poet Massinger?" I mean the time to arrive before long when I can answer them plainly with a bold face: "No, my dear sir, or madam, I am not; but I *am* the poet Massinger, if you care to be told so."—When that time comes, we'll pay off the mortgages and build a castle—in Spain or elsewhere—with the balance of our fortune. Meanwhile, we have always the satisfaction of knowing that nothing on earth could be more correct or squirearchical in its way than a genuine mortgage.'

'I'm not so sure as I once was, Hugh, that you'll ever make much out of your kind of poetry.'

'Of course not, my child; because now I happen to be only your husband. A prophet, we know on the best authority, is not without honour, et cætera, et cætera. But I mean to make my mark yet for all that; ay, and to make money out of it, too, into the bargain.'

So, in the end, Winifred's objections were overruled—since this was not a matter upon which that young lady felt strongly—and the money for 'improving and developing the estate' having been duly raised by the aid, assistance, instrumentality, or mediation of that fine specimen of conveyancers' English aforesaid, to which Hugh had so touchingly and professionally alluded, a fashionable architect was invited down from town at once to inspect the Hall and to draw up plans for its renovation as a residential mansion of the most modern pattern.

The fashionable architect, after his kind, performed his work well—and expensively. He spared himself no pains and Hugh no money on rendering the Hall a perfect example on a small scale of the best Elizabethan domestic architecture. He destroyed ruthlessly and repaired lavishly. He put mullions to the windows and pillars to the porch, and moulded ceilings to the chief reception-rooms, and oaken balustrades to either side of the wide old rambling Tudor staircase. He rebuilt whatever Inigo had defaced, and pulled down whatever of vile and shapeless Georgian contractors had stolidly added. He 'restored' the building to what it had never before been: a fine squat old-fashioned country mansion of the low wind-swept East Anglian type, a House Beautiful everywhere, without and within, and as unlike as possible to the dingy Hall that Hugh Massinger had seen and mentally discountenanced on the occasion of his first visit to Whitestrand. 'You give an architect money enough,' says Colonel Silas Lapham in the greatest romance—bar one—in the English language, 'and he'll build you a fine house every time.' Hugh Massinger gave his architect money enough, or at least credit enough—which comes at first to the same thing—and he got a fine house, as far as the means at his disposal went, on that ugly corner of flat sandy waste at forsaken Whitestrand.

When the building was done and the papering finished, they set about the furnishing proper. And here, Winifred's taste began to clash with Hugh's; for every woman, though she may eschew ground-plans, elevations, and estimates, has at least distinct ideas of her own on the important question of internal decoration. The new Squire was all for oriental hangings, Turkey carpets, Indian durrees, and Persian tiling. But Mrs Massinger would have none of these heathenish gewgaws, she solemnly declared; her tastes by no means took a Saracenic turn. Mr Hatherley and the Cheyne Row men would make fun of her, and call her house Liberty Hall, if she furnished it throughout with such Mussulman absurdities. For her own part, she renounced Liberty and all his works: she eschewed everything east of longitude thirty degrees: inlaid coffee-tables were an abomination in her eyes; pierced Arabic lamps roused no latent enthusiasm: the only real thing in decoration was Morris; and on Morris she pinned her faith unreservedly. She would be utterly utter. She had a Morris carpet and Morris curtains; white ivory paint adorned her lop-sided overmantels, and red De Morgan ware with opalescent hues ranged in long straight rows upon her pigeon-hole cabinets. To Hugh's poetical mind this was all too plaguy modern; out of keeping, he thought, with the wide oaken staircase and the punctilious Elizabethanism of the eminent architect's façade and ceilings. Winifred, however, laughed his marital remonstrances to utter scorn. She hated an upholsterer's house, she said, all furnished alike from end to end with servile adherence to historical correctness. Such puritanical purism was meant for slaves. Why pretend to be living in Elizabethan England or Louis Quinze France, when we're really vegetating, as we all know, in the marshy wilds of nineteenth-century Suffolk? Let your house reflect your own eclecticism—a very good phrase, picked up from a modish handbook of domestic decoration. She liked a little individuality and lawlessness of purpose. 'Your views, you know, Hugh,' she cried with the *ex cathedra* conviction of a woman laying down the law in her own household, 'are just the least little bit in the world pedantic. You and your architect want a stiff museum of Elizabethan art. It may be silly of me, but I prefer myself a house to live in.'

"The drawing-room does look so perfectly lovely," you remember, Hugh quoted quietly from her own old letters. "We've done it up exactly as you recommended, with the sage-green plush for the old mantel-piece, and a red Japanese table in the dark corner; and I really think, now I see the effect, your taste's simply exquisite. But then, you know, what else can you expect from a distinguished poet! You always do everything beautifully!" Can you recollect, Mrs Massinger, down the dim abyss of twelve or eighteen months, who wrote those touching words, and to whom she addressed them?

'Ah, that was all very fine then,' Winifred answered with a pout, arranging Hugh's Satsuma jars with Japanese irregularity on the dining-room overmantel. 'But you see that was before I'd been about much in London, and noticed how other people smarten up their rooms, and formed my own taste in the matter of decoration. I was then in the frankly unsophisticated state. I'd

studied no models. I'd never seen anything beautiful to judge by.'

'You were then Miss Meysey,' her husband answered, with a distantly cold inflection of voice. 'You're now Mrs Hugh de Carteret Massinger. It's that that makes all the difference, you know. The reason there are so many discordant marriages, says Dean Swift, with more truth than politeness, is because young women are so much more occupied in weaving nets than in making cages.'

'I never wove nets for you,' Winifred cried angrily.

'Nor made cages either, it seems,' Hugh answered with provoking calmness, as he sauntered off by himself, cigar in hand, into the new smoking-room.

Their intercourse nowadays generally ended in such little amenities. They were beginning to conjugate with alarming frequency that verb to nag, which often succeeds in becoming at last the dominant part of speech in conjugal conversation.

One portion of the house at least, Hugh succeeded in remodelling entirely to his own taste, and that was the bedroom which had once been Elsie's. By throwing out a large round bay-window, mullioned and decorated out of all recognition, and by papering, painting, and refurbishing throughout with ostentatious novelty of design and detail, he so completely altered the appearance of that hateful room that he could hardly know it again himself for the same original square chamber. Moreover, that he might never personally have to enter it, he turned it into the Married Guest's Bedroom. There was the Prophet's Chamber on the Wall for the bachelor visitors—a pretty little attic under the low eaves, furnished, like the Shunammite's, with 'a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick'; and there was the Maiden's Bower on the first floor, for the young girls, with its dainty pale-green wardrobe and Morris cabinet; and there was the Blue Room for the prospective heir, whenever that hypothetical young gentleman from parts unknown proceeded to realise himself in actual humanity; so Hugh ventured to erect the remodelled chamber next door to his own into a Married Guest's Room, where he himself need never go to vex his soul with unholy reminiscences. When he could look up at the Hall with a bold face from the grass plot in front, and see no longer that detested square window, with the wistaria festooning itself so luxuriantly round the corners, he felt he might really perhaps after all live at Whitestrand. For the wistaria, too, that grand old climber, with its thick stem, was ruthlessly sacrificed; and in its place on the left of the porch, Hugh planted a fast-growing new-fangled Ampelopsis, warranted quickly to drape and mantle the raw stone surfaces, and still further metamorphose the front of the Hall from what it had once been—when dead Elsie lived there. All was changed, without and within. The Hall was now fit for a gentleman to dwell in.

Only one eyesore still remained to grieve and annoy him. The Whitestrand poplar yet faced and confronted him wherever he looked. It turned him sick. It poisoned Suffolk for him. The poplar must go! He could never endure it. Life would indeed be a living death, in sight

for ever of that detested and grinning memorial. For it grinned at him often from the gnarled and hollow trunk. A human face seemed to laugh out upon him from its shapeless bores—a human face, fiendish in its joy, with a carbuncled nose and grinning mouth. He hated to see it, it grinned so hideously. So he set his wits to work to devise a way for getting rid of the poplar, root and branch, without unnecessarily angering Winifred.

SMITH-OLGY.

WE have all of us, probably, at one time or another in our lives heard some friend speak jocularly of the rarity of the name Smith. Most of us, too, have remarked, upon hearing this observation, that the name certainly was uncommon, but that we had nevertheless heard it before. Although this would-be and time-honoured jest has by frequent repetition come to be what is usually termed 'odious,' but very little research is needed to show that, in the first instance at least, it had a great deal of point. So overwhelmingly numerous, indeed, are the members of the great Smith family, that they are well worthy of being made a special study; and that this study, which may be conveniently termed Smith-ology, is one of no slight interest, the following remarks are intended to show.

Who the original Mr Smith was, it is now impossible to say; but it may safely be presumed of him that he would have been no supporter of the doctrines propounded by Mr Malthus, had that gentleman lived before him. It may also be taken for granted that he derived his now familiar name, etymologically, from his occupation. As an old saw has it:

From whence came Smith, all be he knight or squire,
But from the Smith that forges in the fire?

At the present day we have many smiths of many kinds—goldsmiths, silversmiths, locksmiths, blacksmiths, &c.; and there is no reason to doubt that in early times they were proportionately just as numerous; for we read (2 Kings, xxiv. 16) that the king of Babylon took captive 'all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand.' But however this may have been, there is certainly no scarcity of Smiths in our days. In all English-speaking countries the Smiths outnumber the members of any other family; and they are also very numerous in all European countries. Thus, the German Schmidt is almost as familiar as our Smith; while in other foreign tongues the same well-known name may be detected under many curious disguises. Its various other English forms, as Smithe—which is very uncommon—Smyth, and Smythe, can hardly be spoken of as disguises; for although these spellings of the name nowadays certainly indicate a desire on the part of those so spelling it to show that they come of more ancient and aristocratic or better family than the other Smiths, it is the case that these forms are more ancient than the ordinary modern form. In times when the spelling of personal surnames was made to vary according to the ignorance or caprice of the writer, it was common to spell Smith with a double *i*. This double *ii* was written *y*, as may still be seen in

physicians' prescriptions, and in the name of the Bowyer-Smijths, Baronets, of Hill Hall, Essex, now almost, if not quite, the only family so spelling the name. In the course of time this form, having the dots omitted, became the *y*, as we now see it in Smyth and Smythe.

A few statistical facts relating to Mr Smith's very large family may now be found of interest. Turning to any Peerage of the United Kingdom, we find that not a single peer now bears the name of Smith in any of its various forms, although the father of the present and third Lord Carrington, now governor of New South Wales, assumed the name of Carington, instead of that of Smith, by royal license, in August 1839; and the late Viscount Strangford, who died in 1869, when his titles became extinct, bore the highly distinctive name of Percy Ellen Algernon Frederick William Sidney Smythe. He was Viscount Strangford in the Irish peerage, and Baron Penshurst in the English.

Among the baronets the name is not uncommon, as no fewer than nine bear it in its different forms, though only three in its ordinary, unadorned, plebeian dress. These three are Sir William Cusack Smith, of Newtown, Ireland; Sir Charles Cunliffe Smith, of Suttons, Romford, Essex; and Sir William Smith, late captain of the Worcestershire yeomanry. Three more baronets, however, bear the name Smith in a compound form. These are Sir Lionel E. Smith-Gordon, of St Florence, Pembrokeshire, who assumed the additional surname of Gordon by royal license in 1868; Sir William H. Smith-Marriott, of Down House, Dorset, whose father, the fourth baronet, assumed the additional surname; and Sir C. E. Smith-Dodsworth, of Thornton Watlass, Yorkshire. The three remaining baronets all distinguish themselves by spelling their common name in different ways. They are: Sir J. H. Greville Smyth, of Ashton Court, Somerset, who assumed the name of Smyth, instead of his original name of Upton, in 1852, he being descended from the late Sir John Smyth, whose titles became extinct in 1849; Sir Charles F. Smythe, of Eshe Hall, Durham; and Sir William Bowyer-Smijth, already alluded to, who is descended from the illustrious Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State in the reigns of Edward VI. and Elizabeth, and author of *The Commonwealth of England*.

Eight knights also bear the name Smith: they are chiefly colonial knights, and one of them spells it Smyth.

Of the judges on the bench, only a single one is named Smith—namely, the Honourable Sir Archibald L. Smith, judge of the Queen's Bench.

Among the six hundred and seventy members forming the House of Commons at the present time, there are only four Smiths, and one of these—Mr W. Bickford-Smith, the member for the Truro division of Cornwall—bears the name in a compound form. The others are of course: Mr Abel Smith, member for the eastern division of Hertfordshire; Mr Samuel Smith, member for Flintshire, the well-known Liverpool philanthropist; and the Right Honourable W. H. Smith, member for the Strand division of London, and First Lord of the Treasury in the present Government.

On the whole, it cannot be contended that the name of Smith is especially aristocratic, as it is decidedly uncommon among the 'upper ten'; whilst those who do bear the objectionable name exhibit, as a rule, a most marked desire to disguise it by eccentric spelling, or by using it in a compound form. This weakness must, however, be recognised as one not confined to the Smiths alone.

The Medical Register for 1887 enumerates three hundred and four doctors named Smith, nineteen named Smyth, and three named Smythe; or no fewer than three hundred and twenty-six Smiths of all kinds, being about 1·1 per cent. of all the doctors on the list. Some of these, for distinction's sake, have had bestowed upon them some very high-sounding names. Thus, we meet with Aquilla Smith, Campbell Snodgrass Smith, Gordon S. R. V. Smith, Heckstall Smith, Kenneth Rawlings Smith, Opie Smith, Nicholas Scottowd Smith, Protheroe Smith, &c.

Turning next to the last Clergy List, we encounter three hundred and one clerical Smiths, or about 1·2 per cent. of all the names—about twenty-five thousand—on the list. In proportion to their brethren of other names, therefore, the clerical Smiths are almost exactly equal in number to the medical Smiths. Again, too, we come across names evidently intended to stamp their bearers as something superior to the ordinary Smiths, such as Boteler Chernocke Smith, Orlando Spencer Smith, Hely Hutchinson Smith, Augustus Smith, &c.

The army does not seem to be very abundantly officered with Smiths, as only three hundred and twenty Smiths of all kinds appear in the Army List for 1887, these forming no more than about 0·9 per cent. of the total number of names given, including militia, yeomanry, and Volunteer officers.

In the London Directory, which contains one of the most extraordinary lists of names in existence, eighteen hundred and thirty-nine Smiths are enumerated, twelve hundred and sixty-four of them being in the Commercial Directory, and five hundred and seventy-five in the Court. Among them, are 3·2 per cent. of Smyths and Smythes, these being proportionally far more numerous in the Court than in the Commercial Directory. In the list, one comes across some very curious names, perhaps the most amusing being that of Friend Smith—evidently our old friend of that name—who keeps the *Union* public-house in a thoroughfare near Regent Street. In the Court Directory there are enumerated twenty-two Miss Smiths and fifty-two Mrs Smiths; while in the Commercial Directory we meet with Alfred Smith twenty-six times, Charles Smith sixty-one, Edward Smith thirty-eight, Elizabeth Smith ten, Frederick Smith thirty-four, George Smith seventy-eight, Henry Smith eighty-one, James Smith sixty, John Smith ninety-three, Joseph Smith twenty-nine, and William Smith, one hundred and forty-eight times. The number of different trades, too, carried on by some of these gentlemen is very great; thus, Mr George Smith carries on thirty-two; Mr Henry Smith, forty-one; Mr John Smith, forty-nine; and Mr William Smith, fifty-three.

In the Paris Directory, the name Smith occurs

nine times only. In Burke's *General Armory*, another of the most remarkable lists of English surnames in existence, Messrs Smith, Smyth, Smythe & Co., occupy about one per cent. of the space. The Smiths only occupy two pages out of five hundred and eighty-six in Haydn's *Universal Index of Biography* (1870) and only about the one-tenth part of one of the thirty-two volumes of Chalmers's *Biographical Dictionary* (1816). It must be admitted, therefore, that, except for their great numerical strength, the Smiths as a whole have not, so far, greatly distinguished themselves in the world at large. Among the most illustrious members of the great Smith family named in the works above mentioned are the following: Adam Smith, political economist and author of the *Wealth of Nations*; Sydney Smith, divine, critic, and wit, canon of St Paul's, and originator of the *Edinburgh Review*; Sir Thomas Smith, statesman and scholar; and William Smith, 'Father of British geology.' It would be offensive, perhaps, to include with such as these Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, as very few Smiths probably would be found to declare that he had conferred any honour upon their well-known name.

In literature alone, however, the Smiths seem to have been tolerably prolific. The titles of their publications fill ten whole volumes of the stupendous catalogue of the British Museum Library, a catalogue which itself extends to over two thousand volumes! The Smith entries, indeed, are so numerous that they have had to be supplied with an 'Index to Smith,' which itself fills one entire volume—an index, that is, to an index! Neither Brown, Jones, nor Robinson is similarly honoured, nor do they altogether occupy above one half so many volumes of the catalogue as does Mr Smith. Among living literary Smiths, we have a brilliant example in Professor Goldwin Smith, the widely-known Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In defunct periodical literature may be noted *Smith's Journal* and *Smith's Luminary*, both edited by Smiths, but both, unfortunately, short-lived. The *Smiths of Northants*—whoever they may be—seem to have been specially studied by a certain Mr F. C. Smith, who has published their genealogy. The *Heraldry of Smith* has been treated at length by a Mr H. S. Grozebrook, while another gentleman has written on the *Heraldry of Smith in Scotland*. 'Smith College' is an educational establishment situated at Northampton, Massachusetts, United States of America. Somewhere in America, too, there is a 'Smith Manufacturing Company.' This Company is not in any way responsible, as might perhaps be supposed, for the present great superabundance of Smiths; it is simply a Company which manufactures agricultural implements, and which—as is common in America—takes its name from its originator, who in this case happened to be a member of that great family which has already originated so many other important undertakings.

Mark Twain, who has evidently observed the great numerical strength of the Smiths, dedicates his *Celebrated Jumping Frog*, as follows: 'To JOHN SMITH, whom I have known in divers and sundry places about the world, and whose many and manifold virtues did always command my esteem, I dedicate this Book. It is said that the man to whom a volume is dedicated always buys a

copy. If this prove true in the present instance, a princely affluence is about to burst upon THE AUTHOR.

In England, probably because names of places had already become fixed before Mr Smith became so ubiquitous, he has given his name to very few localities, though Smithsby and one or two similar names appear in the *National Gazetteer*. In America, however, Mr Smith has indelibly associated himself with innumerable towns and villages. Thus, in De Colange's *National Gazetteer of the United States* we find mentioned ten places simply named Smith, in addition to the following curious medley of names due to the omnipresence of Mr Smith: Smith and Jordan, Smithborough (two), Smithburgh (two), Smith Creek, Smith Centre, Smithdale, Smithfield (seventeen), Smith Grove, Smith Lake, Smithland (five), Smithpoint, Smithport, Smithriver, Smithroad, Smith's (four), Smithsbasin, Smithsborough, Smithsbridge, Smithsburg (two), Smith's Corners, Smith's Creek (three), Smith's Crossing, Smith's Cross Road (three), Smith's Ferry (four), Smith's Flat, Smith's Ford, Smith's Fork, Smith's Gap, Smith's Grove, Smith's Island (two), Smith's Landing (three), Smith's Mill (two), Smith's Mills (seven), Smith's Point, Smith's Rancho, Smith's Ridge, Smith's River (two), Smith's Station (three), Smith's Turn-out, Smith's Valley (two), Smithton (four), Smithtown (two), Smithville (twenty-one), Smithwick, &c. Many of these names speak very clearly the rudeness of the 'Wild West,' of the crudity of the place-nomenclature employed there, and of the bold and enterprising manner in which the Smiths have ever performed the part of pioneers in the wilderness. Fancy-spellings of the name seem to find but little favour in America, as there is only one place spelling its name with a *y*.

Whilst upon this part of the subject, it should be explained that, according to the best authorities, Mr Smith cannot claim the honour of having given his name to Smithfield, that place having had its name corrupted in the course of time from *Smooth-field*, the 'campus planus' of more ancient times.

And now, to crown all: How many Smiths are there in England? It is impossible to answer this question with precision; but there are data from which an approximately correct idea may be obtained. The Registrar-general tells us that in 1856 it was possible to estimate, from certain records in his keeping, that there were then living in England and Wales about 253,600 Smiths, or one in every seventy-three persons composing the entire population. Supposing that this estimate was correct, and that the same proportion has since been maintained, the statement may fairly be made that there are now about 355,814, or over one-third of a million, Smiths in England and Wales. It is not quite easy to realise at once what an enormous number of people these figures represent. A few simple illustrations may serve to make the matter clearer. For instance, there are more Smiths in England and Wales than there are people in Dublin—indeed, excluding London, there are only four towns in the United Kingdom—namely, Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester—containing more people than there are Smiths; while twenty-six out of the fifty-two counties of England and Wales, or one half, have fewer people than the immortal house of Smith

has representatives. It is on record, too, that in the seventeen years between and including 1838 and 1854, 286,037 Smiths were registered as having been either born or married or as having died. Although, as every one knows, the Smiths form numerically the strongest tribe in England, there being one Smith to every seventy-three persons comprising the population, still the Joneses run them very close indeed, there being one in every seventy-six persons. Next in order on the list, according to officially compiled statistics, come Messrs Williams, Taylor, Davis, and Brown. Mr Robinson, who is commonly associated with Messrs Brown and Jones, stands eleventh on the list in respect of his relative numerical strength.

It is in the English language alone, however, that the name may be said to have an undistinguished look. The German Schmidt and the Dutch Smid are closely allied to our own form; but in Gaelic it becomes, as all readers of the *Fair Maid of Perth* must remember, Gow. It is in the French and Gipsy tongues, however, that Smith receives its most splendid transformation; for in the former it becomes Lefèvre, and in the latter Petulengro.

MIN:

A RAILROAD STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER III.

MIN ROSSITER had been established at 44-mile just a year, and in some respects she was much such a girl as when she rode up to Macpherson's office in search of the doctor. She was still a thorough girl—a Western girl, full of health and spirits: she still did many things which would hardly have been considered 'correct' by women of the world, even so far west as Chicago: she still indulged in many a scamper over the plains on the bare back of her tough little pony, quite innocent of such superfluities as hat and gloves. Yes, she was still Min.

And yet, on the other hand, she had vastly improved in many ways. Such articles of dress as her wardrobe contained were old and worn, it is true, but they were always scrupulously neat and clean. Be sure there were no artificial aids to graceful dress in Min's meagre outfit; there were many things besides gloves to which the girl's lithe figure and perfectly formed limbs were utterly strange. Restraint of any kind would have been an abhorrence to Min. Yet, as she came more and more under Macpherson's influence, she knew by feminine intuition—though he spoke never a word about such matters—that he was better pleased when she wore shoes and stockings. And then, though she certainly might have been 'plucked' at a Vassar or Girton examination in almost any branch of study, Min was, thanks to Arthur, well informed upon many subjects, and in the science of telegraphy she was really becoming an expert. Besides, although retaining the old animal spirits and keen enjoyment of outdoor life, in many respects she had stepped over the dividing line between girlhood and womanhood. Slowly, but surely, the truth began to dawn upon Arthur that Min was

growing into a woman—a good woman, too, whom he was in danger of placing in an utterly false position.

And Arthur? Well, he was much the same Arthur who alighted from the cars to relieve Ratty Sykes—at least he seemed so. Whether he still cherished a fatherly regard for Min, remains to be seen; indeed, it is doubtful whether he ever stopped to honestly analyse the exact relation in which he stood, morally, socially, and psychologically toward his one friend. Perhaps he did not care to think about it until it should become absolutely necessary.

Have you ever handled a slender piece of cord through which—unknown to you at first—ran a strand of fine wire? Have you ever tried to snap such a piece of cord? If you have, some such remark may have escaped you as, 'I never dreamed of so much strength in a wisp of twine!' Well, it was much the same with Arthur Macpherson and Min: they were drawn together by cords which must be well strained before their strength could be thoroughly proven.

That autumn there was serious trouble on the great Chicago, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Railroad. There was a strike of locomotive engineers and their firemen. Of course that meant enforced idleness for the vast majority of the other employees; while of those who were retained at their regular duties, there were many who, openly or secretly, evinced sympathy for the strikers. The strikers were at least honest in that they had the courage to back their convictions by their actions: those who openly sympathised with them were also honest to themselves and to the Company. There were others who continued to accept the wages of their employers, who were secretly aiding the discontented men, and among these traitors were several telegraph operators. It is not necessary here to discuss the merits or demerits of this or any strike; it is sufficient for the purposes of this story to know that the strike existed.

Railroad engineers are perhaps the finest class of skilled labourers anywhere to be found, as the nature and responsibility of their duties require a high order of intelligence: they are generally level-headed men; and the striking engineers on the C. R. M. & P. decided to carry their point, if possible, by moral suasion, without recourse to violence or any kind of law-breaking. Most of them respected this resolve of their leaders; but, as there are black-sheep to be found in almost every flock, there were some wild spirits among the engineers who cherished vindictive feelings towards the railroad management, and who chafed under the restraint laid upon them by the law-abiding majority. Macpherson, having no cause for playing false to his trust, remained faithfully at his post, resolved, so long as he filled the agency at 44-mile, to act in the best interests of his employers. No freight-trains were running, though the passenger trains made their usual journeys, as the U. S. government insisted upon the mail contract being carried out. So telegraph operators had very little to do, especially at such unimportant points as 44-mile. But Arthur became aware that a great many cipher messages were being sent over the wire, chiefly from a station west to New Constantinople on

the east. He noticed, too, that these were invariably sent late in the evening, when he was supposed to be 'off duty.' This rather aroused his suspicions, and Mac decided to take off all these cipher messages as they passed over the wire and try to read them. He of course possessed no key to the cipher; but by dint of close attention and a little study, he discovered the secret, and so was enabled to read all the contraband messages.

It was about eleven o'clock on a dark October night when Mac, who was reading, heard his instrument begin to click as a cipher message passed over the wire for New Constantinople. Instantly, Arthur was all attention, and carefully jotted down on paper the apparently senseless medley of letters and figures which followed each other in rapid succession. When it was finished and acknowledged at Constantinople by the sign O. K. (correct), he took from his pocket the key which he had compiled, and deciphered the following: 'Special on the way west from Omaha with officials. They will be at Constantinople about one A.M., and will require a fresh engine. Have Sam Ripley take the run, if possible. He will know what to do.'

Upon reading this very unofficial message, Macpherson knew full well that mischief was in the wind. At first the thought struck him that he might telegraph east and put the occupants of the special train on their guard; but when he recollected that the telegraph circuit which included 44-mile only extended to Constantinople, where all messages were repeated, he knew the attempt would be useless. Constantinople was well known to be a veritable hotbed of the very worst element of the strikers. Only two extra engines were kept at Constantinople, and Sam Ripley was one of the engineers. He was a clever mechanic and a shrewd, wide-awake engineer; but he was perhaps the most unprincipled man in the service. The very fact that he had not 'gone out' with the rest of the engineers, although he was known to be generally dissatisfied, was in itself cause for suspicion.

In a moment Arthur tried to review the whole situation. He knew that the mischief might all take place before the special could reach 44-mile, which was more than an hour's run from Constantinople. Yet, somehow, he thought Ripley would get the train clear of 44-mile—where he knew Arthur remained loyal—before attempting any foul-play. So he resolved to let the train come on, and then signal it to stop—or at least slow up at 44-mile.

Macpherson made his calculations, and figured that the special would be along in about three hours. One hour later he received a message from the Division Train Despatcher to keep the track clear for a special going West. At 1.15 he was notified that the special had left Constantinople. Then he ran over to Min's little cottage and rapped on the door. 'Min, get up quickly and come over to the office!'

Three minutes later the girl stood beside him in the ten-feet square telegraph office, an inquiring look upon her wide-awake face.

'Min,' said Arthur, 'there is some queer business going on. I cannot tell you what it is because I don't know myself. A West-bound

special will be here in a little while, and the engineer is Ripley, of whom you have heard me speak. Well, I have no orders for the special; but I am going to stop her on my own responsibility, and I am going to quietly board the train. You can attend to the station while I am gone, can't you?"

'Well, I should say so!' answered the girl gaily, elated with the idea of being left in charge of what was to her the most important place on earth. But as a second thought flashed through her brain, her face clouded and she asked: 'Will it be safe for you, Arthur?'

'O yes,' he replied cheerily. 'I shall be back in a few hours probably, or, at latest, on the Atlantic Express in about twenty-four hours.—You just attend to the telegraph, Min. Nobody will interfere with you. If any of the trainmen come through and ask questions, you just tell them to mind their own business.'

Arthur all this time had never thought of possible danger to himself, and if he had, he would never have hinted as much to Min. This was the first time those two had parted, even for a few hours, and both felt the occasion keenly; Arthur more than the girl; for, as they sat in the solemn stillness of the dark night awaiting the train, *he* knew that he might never return to 44-mile alive; while *she* had accepted his assurance that it was only for a short time he would be absent. Min was comparatively content. Macpherson was feeling for the first time the strength of the slender cord which bound him to his young companion.

A slight but ever increasing creaking of the rails told them that the special, though still far distant, was approaching. Arthur put on his hat, buttoned up his coat, took a red lantern in his hand, and prepared to step outside the building.

'Good-bye, Min,' he said, grasping her hand in his. 'Keep a good heart, and don't make any mistakes.'

'Good-bye, Arthur,' was the simple rejoinder—but, as Macpherson took a backward step, the girl, without affectation, put one of her plump arms around his neck and drew his face down while she kissed him on the lips. It was the first time she had kissed him, and afterwards he thought a good deal about that kiss.

As Arthur stepped out on to the track, he could see the huge glaring headlight of the locomotive as it thundered along towards him like some demon monster. On it came with terrific noise and speed, causing the track to throb and rattle with the giant vibrations. Up went Arthur's red light, and in a moment a hoarse shriek from the steam-whistle assured him that his signal had been perceived. As the special came up to him at a slow rate of speed, Macpherson noticed that it consisted only of a baggage car and the President's car, drawn by an enormous locomotive known as 'No. 404.' Chiefly, however, he noticed the handsome, even when dirty, face of the traitorous Sam Ripley. As the engineer peered from his perch in the furnace-illuminated cab out into the dark night, he would have made a splendid subject for some such master of weird pictures as Gustave Doré.

'What funny business is this, Mac?' shouted Ripley as he slowly passed Arthur, who was

standing, lantern in hand, outside the dimly lit office. 'I got orders at 'Stan'ople to run to Prairie City.'

'Something wrong, I guess,' said Arthur loudly, so as to be heard above the noise of escaping steam.—'But go ahead, Sam; it's all clear now.'

Ripley drew back and closed the windows of the engine-cab after him; while Arthur, setting his red lantern on the ground, swung himself on to the rear platform of the second car, which was the car occupied by the sleeping officials.

CURIOUS GLEANINGS FROM A BLUE-BOOK.

IN a late discussion in the House of Commons, blue-books were declared to be both voluminous and unreadable—that is to say, not generally interesting. To the bulk of ordinary readers, that is quite an accurate description of these publications. They cannot compete, certainly, in point of popularity with the usual branches of literature, such as fiction, biography, travels, and the like. Still, they have considerable interest of their own kind in various ways; and the particular volume with which it is proposed here to deal contains a good deal of readable and attractive matter. It is the forty-eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, lately issued, presenting the usual statement of the year's work. The Appendix, which extends to a formidable length, includes several Calendars or lists of state papers; and it is from one of these, a Calendar of Privy Seals, royal proclamations, &c. during four years of the reign of Charles I. (1632-35), that we propose to make some selections.

The most generally interesting of the notices, which are of an infinitely varied description—mechanical, historical, commercial, and social—are those, perhaps, relating to the granting of privileges and patents for new mechanical processes, some of these being curious foreshadowings of modern inventions. Here, on the first page (5th April 1632), is a grant to John Saunders, Nathaniel Waterhouse, and John Ayrs: 'Patent of privilege for their invention of an engine for forcing ships, hoys, &c. against wind and tide.' It would be interesting to know what was the principle of the moving power here. Not steam, it is to be supposed, but rather some sort of mechanical contrivance for moving paddle-wheels. Another privilege, somewhat analogous, is conceded to Richard Norwood in similar terms: 'Patent of privilege for his invention for diving into the sea, or other deep waters, and for raising lost goods,' &c. There is an interesting entry of an agricultural kind which may also be quoted: 'Patent (to William Parham and three others) for the engine invented by them for ploughing land without horses.' Two hundred and fifty years have elapsed since this attempt at improving agricultural operations; but it is only within the last thirty or forty years that the idea of ploughing without horses or cattle has been realised.

Nor is 'high-farming' quite so modern as is generally supposed, as we find noticed in this list of patents 'an invention for fertilising arable

land.' A variety of other schemes of the same nature may be enumerated in a summary way. There are several for draining mines of water, a plan for raising submerged ships, one or two patents for making salt, others for saving fuel, which last read like the advertisements of a newly invented stove. The following has a quaint flavour: 'Patent and privilege (to two Frenchmen) for fourteen years to use a secret for making water-mills upon standing waters, provided it be not inconvenient to the commonwealth, and they keep an English apprentice.' A William Barton has also a privilege for fourteen years for his invention of 'an engine for continuous motion,' a dream of paradoxical physicists in all ages! An invention for making charcoal, or 'charking-coal' as it is termed, also gets a patent; and in another department, a process for making woollen cloth waterproof is mentioned. The dispensation, in the involved style of the period, runs thus: 'Privilege to three persons for fourteen years to put in practice, in England and Ireland, ways by them newly invented for making woollen cloth impenetrable of wet, and serviceable for coaches and wagons.' Some sort of glazing or japanning, probably, such as there still is in the manufacture of wagon-covers.

Monopolies of various kinds are granted in connection with literature, printing, &c. A state-favour of this description is conceded in 1634 to George Latham and two others 'for the sole printing and sale of all set songs, sonnets, &c., to continue twenty-one years.' A preacher and schoolmaster, by name William Brathwaite, gets the sole right to publish music-books. George Sandys, son of an Archbishop of York, and whose name we find among hymn-writers, has granted him a monopoly—copyright, in fact—of the publication and sale of his translation of the Psalter, which is not likely to have proved of great pecuniary benefit. A license to Matthew Cox, for fourteen years, for the sole making of wafers, would be more profitable. A cognate entry appears in favour of 'Edmund Woder, gent.' apparently a teacher of writing: 'Privilege for fourteen years for the sole practice of his new way of teaching to write.' Just below is a proclamation for settling the Letter Office, the designation then of the Post-office.

From a presentation to Stephen Smith we notice the comparative unimportance of the port of Liverpool in 1634. The office to which he was promoted was the Collectorship of Customs at Chester, Beaumaris, and Liverpool! The population of Liverpool was then and for many years afterwards under five thousand! The grandmotherly legislation of these times is amply illustrated by the minute regulations regarding commerce, manufactures, social life, and so on. There are numerous decisions of the Privy Council about the making of girdles, the prices at which butter, cheese, candles, and other commodities were to be sold, what sort of coal was to be used or not used, brewing, and other lofty examples of imperial legislation.

Several prominent names, some of historical and political interest, occur in these old records. There is a presentation to Christopher Wren, father of the great architect, of the Deanery of Windsor. Inigo Jones, for services to art, is exempted from all taxes and tithes, from serving

on juries, and has also a pardon for refusing the honour of knighthood which had been offered him. A pension of two hundred pounds a year is also granted to Sir Anthony Vandyke. Sir H. Vane, father and son, figure here as recipients of the royal bounty, although eclipsed in this respect by William Murray, son of the minister of Dysart, and a youthful companion of King Charles. He is made a Groom of the Bedchamber, gets a pension of five hundred pounds a year, and numerous gifts in the shape of rents of crown lands, produce of taxes, prizes taken in war, and other things. Eventually, he was raised to the peerage by the title of the Earl of Dysart, a dignity still existing. The Dowager-Duchess of Richmond was also specially favoured. She has an annuity of one thousand pounds for ten and a half years, a commutation of her interest in the making and venting (*sic*) of farthing tokens; and in 1635, she and the Duke, her nephew, receive 'a license for twenty-one years to transport woollen cloth undressed.' The two most important names, however, in those notices are those of Laud and Strafford, the two ruling spirits of the day, equally absolute in their political views, and in the end equally unfortunate. Of the Archbishop there is frequent mention. He is promoted to London, thence to Canterbury, and he is the most important member of numerous Commissions both for secular and ecclesiastical purposes. Strafford appears as Viscount Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland, as the title then was.

On the other side of the political stage there are two entries, in February 1633-34, regarding Prynne, the unfortunate author of the *Histrio-Mastix*, a few days after the barbarous punishment inflicted on him by the Star Chamber. In 1632, Lord Baltimore has an important grant of American territory, now forming the State of Maryland; hence the name of the commercial capital, Baltimore; while the province itself owed its name to Queen Henrietta Maria. Another valuable concession, also connected with America, was the monopoly granted to Sir W. Alexander, poet and statesman (afterwards Earl of Stirling), and seven others: 'Demise for thirty-one years of the sole trade into and from the gulf and river of Canada [the St Lawrence now] for beaver-skins, beaver-wools, furs, and skins of wild beasts.' This may be regarded as the precursor of the Hudson's Bay Company, established thirty-seven years afterwards. A very roving commission is also granted to Thomas Young, 'empowering him to explore the undiscovered parts of America.' A singular entry regarding an ancestor of Lord Reay is as follows: 'Revocation of the Commission to Lords Lindsey and Arundel to see the accusation of Donald Mackeay, Lord Reay, against David Ramsey, tried by wager of battle.' This event never took place; both Ramsey and Lord Reay were sent to the Tower.

The successors of George Heriot as the king's jeweller are noticed in these pages. George died in 1624, and was succeeded by his brother James, of whose death there is mention in 1634; and in February 1635, a successor, Jaques Duart, is appointed. In March of the same year, Alexander Heriot is appointed jeweller in ordinary. Pursuing the matter further, there is a record in the first London Directory, dated 1677, of James,

Heriot, a descendant, in the list of 'goldsmiths who keep running cashes ;' that is, bankers.

Among the miscellaneous notices, those relating to eating flesh on fast days are amusing. Sir Henry Clerke has 'a license to eat flesh on fast days, to extend to his wife, their children, and two or three friends at his table, provided he pay thirteen shillings and fourpence yearly at Michaelmas.' Many proclamations occur regarding the time for coming to court to be touched for king's evil. The service of 'the Healing' is to be found in some editions of the Prayer Book about 1710. The form of 'denisation,' or naturalisation, frequently appears. In general, the names are those of foreigners; but Scotsmen were also subject to the same disability, as we find here and there Galloway, Douglas, Kennedy, and other northern names. Licenses to the East India Company to export gold coin are also mentioned, a species of the precious metals not now in circulation in India. Predatory bands of 'broken men' were still giving trouble on the Border, and have a paragraph to themselves. An influential Commission is appointed in 1635 'to arrest and try such persons.' The suppression of profane swearing and cursing is the subject of one or two proclamations, and a Robert Lesley is granted the office of receiver of all forfeitures thus incurred in England and Wales for a period of seven years. Most of these offices, it may be remarked, were granted for 'a consideration,' which in some cases is directly mentioned. That money was frequently scarce in high places there is abundant evidence, and it is likely that most of these privileges would be paid for. Here, in conclusion, is an entry showing that royalty had sometimes to condescend to pawning: 'Commission to Sir W. Boswell, the king's agent at the Hague, and Nathaniel Gerrard, jeweller, to sell certain jewels for twenty-six thousand pounds, and redeem certain others pawned to Francis Vanhoven of Amsterdam.'

Many other interesting items might be quoted; but there is enough, probably, to justify the assertion that blue-books are not always such dry reading as people suppose. The names in the three Calendars included in the volume, dated respectively 1279, 1422-70, 1632-35, numbering several thousands, would themselves form an interesting chapter on English nomenclature; but the subject is too large to be touched on here.

AN INDIAN GHOST.

I WAS very weary, after a long day's work in the scorching, blinding sun among the tea-bushes, and my limbs ached with that dull pain which is the common precursor of malarious fever. I would gladly have slept; but the wind, which had sprung up at sunset, had grown fainter and more faint, and now the air was still and heavy with the damp oppressive heat which foretells a storm. Great banks of black cloud slowly piled themselves in the western sky and blotted out the light of the stars. As I lay before the open door which led into the wide veranda in front of the bungalow, I watched the threatening masses growing higher and higher over the dark belt of forest which formed the boundary of my tea-garden. Outside, I could see wheeling swarms of fireflies lighting up the tea-bushes with fantastic illumina-

tion. Within, all round me was the monotonous murmur of countless mosquitoes. From their venomous sting I was protected by the gauze-net which hung round my bed; but their faint drone dwelt with unwonted persistency upon my overstrung nerves, and effectually dispelled all hope of slumber. Now and again—a hideous relief to the hateful singsong of the mosquitoes—howled a chorus of jackals, now near, now far, but always jarring upon my nerves with a shock of surprise.

I lighted my lamp and tried to read; but my eyes were dazed with the shadeless glare of the day, and my head felt hot and feverish. The words chased each other across the pages, or mixed themselves incoherently with my own wandering thoughts. I felt inclined to wake one of my servants; but the effort of rising was more than I cared to undertake. It seemed easier to lie and watch the storm gathering, to see the distant hills and the brown frothing current of the stream in which the long black masses of the tea-boats were moored, lighted up by lurid flashes of lightning. Save myself, there was not a single soul in the bungalow. It is usual in Indian households for one or two of the servants to lay their simple bedding in one of the doorways or verandas, and there enjoy the sleep which comes so readily to the average oriental by night or day. But my bungalow had the reputation, among the servants and the coolies in the lines, of being haunted. I had not troubled myself to discover the details and the origin of the story. It is enough for an innocent screech-owl to establish herself among the convenient rafters of an Indian roof, to confer a superstitious horror upon the house; and I had not only repressed any faint curiosity I might have felt as to the particular demon or ghost which frightened my servants, but had indulged their wish to keep out of its way. That night, however, my nerves were unstrung; and in spite of repeated efforts to recall my mind to a more rational mood, I felt a sense of solitude and discomfort which hardly amounted to positive terror, but still weighed heavily upon my spirits. I felt vaguely that this unwonted depression of nervous energy, and the dull physical aching which accompanied it, were due to an incipient attack of fever; and, half unconsciously, I got up and helped myself to a dose of quinine from my medicine chest. As I walked across the room I looked automatically in the corner where my spaniel Ponto habitually lay. He was not there; and it was a moment or two before my confused brain remembered that he had been sent away to the native doctor's hut in the lines to be treated for cancer in the ear, a pest to which dogs of his kind are much subject in India. His absence pressed strangely upon my already disordered nerves, and I felt more than ever desirous of some kind of human society.

Meanwhile, the slowly gathering storm seemed to have gathered its strength for the final onset. Far away in the distant woods I heard the sound of rain and wind, growing louder and nearer, and vivid flashes of lightning were followed by deafening rolls of thunder. A cooler air poured through the open door and caused my lamp to flicker and waver. Suddenly the rain and the wind burst upon the bungalow; great drops pattered on the thatched roof, and there was a

sound of rushing sluicing water round the eaves. The open doors began to bang and beat to and fro, and the lamp went out. Outside and inside the bungalow was pitchy darkness, momentarily rent asunder by the piercing whiteness of the flashes of lightning; and in the sudden glare the drops falling from the thatch seemed to stand still. I felt that I ought to get up and close the doors; but in spite of the comparative coolness of the air, which brought with it a revivifying odour of moist earth, I felt loth to stir, and I drew a light quilt over me and languidly watched the lightning. The storm gradually passed its height, and the rushing wind gave place to a steady and strenuous sound of pouring rain. I cursed the foolish fear which prevented my servants from coming to close the jalousies, and listened, in spite of myself, to ascertain if any of them should pluck up courage to come to my aid with a lantern. At last I heard the sound of feet in the veranda at the back and heard the boards creak. I called out, but received no reply. The steps approached my room, and with them, strange to say, I heard the faint clank of a chain. Again I called aloud and again got no reply. The steps came nearer, nearer, and suddenly I felt a heavy weight on my chest, a hot breathing in my face, and the glare of two green eyes close to mine; and then I fainted.

When I came to myself, the lamp was lighted, and my bearer was treading cautiously about the room. Poor Ponto, he said, had been frightened by the storm and had broken loose from his confinement in the doctor's quarters. And then I noticed that Ponto was under my bed, licking my hand as it lay over the edge.

As some excuse for the scare I experienced, I must explain that it was followed by a very severe attack of jungle fever, which compelled me and Ponto to take a change of air and scene. As for my bearer, he believes more firmly than ever that the bungalow is haunted, and has invented a theory that had not Ponto, warned by an instinct keener than human wisdom, come to my aid, his master would have been slain outright by a gigantic and ghastly *bhut*.

THE TELAUTOGRAPH.

America, the land of startling inventions, has just added another to the long list of surprises with which it has favoured the world of science. Professor Elisha Gray, of Highland Park, near Chicago, is reported to have perfected an invention which is destined to displace the telephone for many purposes. The new instrument is called the Telautograph, and by its use a man of business will be enabled to sit down in his office, take up a pencil or pen, write a message, and as his pencil moves, so will a pencil move simultaneously in the office of his correspondent, reproducing in fac-simile the same letters and words. The mode of using the telautograph is as follows: The person wishing to communicate with another pushes a button, which rings an annunciator in the office of the person with whom he desires to hold written communication. Then the first party takes his writing pen or pencil from its holder and writes his message on a roll of paper. As he writes, so writes the pen at the other end of the wire. In writing, the pen or pencil is

attached to two small wires, and these wires regulate the currents which control the pencil at the other end. But these wires give no trouble, and the message may be written just as easily as if they were absent. The writer may use any language; he may write in shorthand, or use a code or cipher; no matter, a fac-simile is reproduced. More than that, if a picture is to be sent by the telautograph, it may be faithfully reproduced. The artist of an illustrated paper may thus transmit a sketch of a railway accident, or any other event, with just as much facility as a reporter telegraphs his description in words. The two pencils move synchronously, and there is no reason why a circuit of five hundred miles cannot be worked as easily as one of ten miles. As observed above, the telautograph will supplant the telephone in many ways, for it will have marked advantages over the latter. It will be noiseless and less affected by induction, and no misunderstanding can arise in its use.

A SONG IN JUNE.

CALM in his chamber the dead man lay,
Shrouded and hid from the face of day.

All fair things in the world outside
Smiled in their fulness of summer pride.

Trees he had loved in his broad demesne,
Stood in their mantle of summer green.

Flowers he had tended, lived and grew,
Welcomed the sunlight and drank the dew.

Children—his own—with prattle and play
Filled the long hours of the sweet June day.

Children too young to grieve or weep,
Knew not the depth of his long quiet sleep.

Day wore on, and the clear cool night
Fell like a veil, with lessening light.

Night passed by, and the pale dawn broke,
Sleeping Earth from her slumber woke.

Through the death-chamber, by sound unstirred,
Trembled the song of a woodland bird—

Song as delightful, and glad, and free,
As a ransomed soul's in heaven might be.

And the mourner—the wife who had lost and loved,
Felt half the weight of her woe removed.

For she said: "Tis an angel sent to tell
That with my Belovèd all is well."

After the night of weeping, she slept.
God save all who such tears have wept!

God send His angel blest to tell
That with their dear ones all is well!

J. C. HOWDEN.

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THE FLUSH OF SUMMER.

LAST evening the nightingales were in full song for the first time this season—a soft misty evening, with sweet flower-odours floating in the balmy twilight, and loading the atmosphere with perfume, until it suffused human sensation with dreamy delight in the still warm June gloaming. 'The late sweet air' had been full of the pure liquid song of England's sweetest warbler, and during the short serene night, the sustained length of rapturous melody and clear flexibility of voice, the depth and richness of its flute-like notes, has been heard with little intermission, holding the ear entranced in almost breathless listening, as little by little the shy brown birds have answered each other from the young fir plantations in the coppices, to those hidden in the garden shrubberies. The linked sweetness of plaintive harmony is full of love and joyance as one of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, or tender and changeful as a Beethoven symphony.

All the short June night I have heard at intervals these full-throated songsters, as also in the earliest dawning, when the stars begin to fade in the purple vault of heaven, which grows paler every minute, and

The Morn,

Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of Light.

My blood is on fire with the glory and beauty of the morning, when the flush of summer gladness is over all the earth. I cannot rest in my room; a wild longing comes over me to steal away from the house in the ambient dawning and float down the river—that I can see shimmering not far off—in the swiftly coming light.

For the first time in my life I am staying with a friend in an old country-house, situated on the banks of the Avon, and surely Will Shakespeare never saw a quainter, fairer dwelling-house or a more glorious morning to inspire his genius. The household keeps late hours both night and morning, though buried in the heart of the Mid-

lands; so, scribbling a note to leave on the hall table, and having *carte blanche* to amuse myself as I please for the few days of my holiday from the rush and tear of town-life, I slip down-stairs in the semi-darkness of the closed house, unbar the door, and am standing on the threshold outside. My eyes are dazzled by the sudden flood of sunshine pouring over the dewy garden, that with its first warm rays brings out all the luscious perfume of the wealth of roses, pinks, and faint sweet-scented white hawthorn. As I stand gazing in silent admiration at the fair scene before me, the clock in the hall strikes four. The rays of the sun gleam through the fresh green leafage of the young lindens and kiss them into fluttering gold, and turn the meadow-grass into a sea of waving blossoms. I cross the closely clipped lawn and go down the winding path, through the shrubbery, under huge trees of drooping laburnum and snowy guelder-roses, the pale-green blossoms of the glossy leaved daphnes adding to the wealth of subtle scents that the fresh morning breeze renders so intoxicating. Through a lane with sweet-brier hedges for fifty yards or so, and before me flows the river, on which float a small boat and a couple of canoes in the little sandy pebbly cove, where the bright rippling wavelets lap in soft tidal splashes up to the grassy edge of the lane. Unfastening one of the canoes, I get in and paddle slowly up stream. The birds are revelling in the sunshine, and make a perfect chorus of sweet sounds; numberless larks rise high in the clear blue ether, and sing with wild delirious joy a flood of exhilarating music.

A light breeze springs up, rippling the surface of the green limpid river, and waving the reeds and sedges along the banks, between whose stems trail the myosotis, gazing with forget-me-not eyes up to the bluer sky, that seems clearer and bluer than later in the day. Now I glide along under the ancient pollard willows, with their rough hollow trunks and drooping rain of leaves; among the gnarled and twisted roots the sleek brown water-rats slink suspiciously, or splash into the deep mud-holes. Sometimes I pause beneath the

sweeping boughs of a giant chestnut, still crowned with cones of waxy blooms, or stop to inhale the heavy penetrating scent of the limes, in whose honey-laden flowers hang thousands of honey-laden bees, whose humming makes 'a slumbrous sound that brings the feelings of a dream.'

It is a new and delightful sensation to me to be on the river so early in the day, when the flush and glow and sparkle of the early morning are in their prime, and full of a wealth of hitherto unknown beauties. I can do little but gaze and wonder and enjoy. Surely it was on such a morn that Adam and Eve had the first glimpse of their earthly paradise, and wandered in childlike innocence and faith through the freshly budded woods and flowery hedgerows,

Where the green grew golden above,
And the flag-flowers lighted with laughter,
And the meadow-sweet shook with love.

I hardly realised how long I had been paddling slowly mid-stream, or pausing to take in all the sweet homely sights and sounds of the country, that for the last hour or so had come, mellowed by distance, to my awakened ears: the whistle of the labourer; the sharp bark of a dog and stamping of horses, with the clink of pail or whetting of scythes; the far-off clap of a swing-gate backwards and forwards. Slowly and noiselessly a barge glided past me; a rough-looking man bade me a surly 'Lookout, maister!' as the cord trailed over the canoe and barely escaped capsizeing my frail bark. Sitting on the barge was a gypsy-faced, black-eyed woman, with a ragged hat tilted over her eyes; by her side stood a chattering, laughing, blue-eyed child, over whose lint-white locks four summers had barely passed. She was feeding with ravenous appetite on bits of bread and bacon, cut from a big hunch in the woman's hand, the imperious baby voice calling impatiently for 'More, more!' after every mouthful. A shock-headed boy of ten or twelve lay extended half over the barge, beating the water with a stick.

Whether it was the sight of the little one's keen enjoyment of the homely fare, I know not, but suddenly I became conscious I had been fasting some hours in the morning air, and wondered if I could obtain food anywhere. A few yards farther, turning a bend of the river under a huge cluster of elder bushes, I saw on the bank a dozen or two of cottages, an old church on the hill, and within twenty yards of the bank, a rambling whitewashed inn, called the *Three Pigeons*. It might quite as correctly have been called the Hundred Pigeons, from the great number of those birds that were perched upon the quaint, red-tiled, gable-ended roof, and nestling upon every coign of vantage under the broad eaves, sunning their glossy purple-and-green plumage; the pure white fantails and strutting pouters congregating round the stone trough of the ivy-covered pump, in the sunny strip of courtyard. Here I had a big meal of homely country dainties—ham and fresh eggs, sweet home-made bread and butter, and best of all, a jug of warm new milk. I was very glad of some food, for I had been fasting fourteen hours,

and the fresh breeze on the river for five hours had given me a tremendous appetite.

Afterwards, I sauntered through the hamlet to the queer little one-sided stone church. The door was locked; but I looked in through the narrow grated windows of muddy-green glass. It seemed a bare barn of a place, with high narrow pews and dark and gloomy interior, probably from the sharp contrast outside of the brilliant midsummer sunshine pouring down so joyously upon the moss-grown headstones and grassy mounds of the primitive 'God's-acre,' where a few sheep were contentedly nibbling the short thymy herbage. All round could be seen a fair sweep of green undulating slopes and meadows and leafy woods, the gleaming river winding in and out till it became a tiny silver streak, lost in the misty blue distance.

Down below was the village, a veritable 'Sleepy Hollow,' for any sign of life to be heard or seen. Only behind one cottage a stout red-faced woman was hanging clothes, on lines stretched between rows of beehives; and inside another was heard the drowsy hum of young voices counting to some rhyme, mingled with the jingle of bobbins on the lace pillow. In the distance sounded the dreamy monotonous cry of the cuckoo; from the woods and hills echoed the soft 'wandering voice,' till the wooing summer breeze seemed full of the murmurings.

Gaining the river once more, I paddled slowly along, idly watching the darting swifts and skimming swallows, and drinking in the balmy air, now full of the scent of new-mown hay. About half a mile from the village, a slip of a girl, with a faded blue frock and bright pink sun-bonnet, sat upon the bank amongst the reeds. Her lap was full of cuckoo-flowers, her brown hands as well, the bare brown feet dipping into the water. She might have sat for Mrs Browning's 'Little Ellie,' with her wide blue-eyed smiling face gazing wonderingly at the paddle flashing in the water, and wishing for 'her lover on a red-roan steed.' But no such thought had yet come to the open childish face; the sweet shrill voice was singing 'Shall we gather at the river,' when a woman suddenly called loudly from the next field: 'Sally, Sally, come here!' The singing stopped abruptly; and with a sly grin at me, 'Sally' slipped herself down among the reeds and rushes till she was hidden from view, and with the cuckoo-flowers gathered up in her blue frock, crept along the shelving bank till she was behind a clump of osiers.

On and on in the still hot sunshine of mid-summer. A soft misty haze suffuses the far-reaching hills of which I catch glimpses in the bends of the river, now one side, now the other. Everywhere is the scent of hawthorn and freshly cut grass; past waving fields of young grain, luscious patches of beans in full blossom, glorious sweeps of red clover, coppices of hazel and birch; an old, pleasant-looking farmhouse, nestled under half-a-dozen magnificent beech-trees, on one bank; three or four low crouching thatched cottages on the other; and from up a narrow back-water, come the sound of a rushing mill-wheel and splash of water over the sluice. Somewhere over the fields I can see the brown spire of another church; here a sheltered nook, where

the blue kingfisher yet lingers ; there, a shallow, where cows stand knee-deep in water. Then a dense wood comes in sight ; a little nearer, and I find a small stream under the thick tangle of undergrowth, where I can run the canoe, that rustles the broad leaves of the hartstongue ferns, growing in rich luxuriance, amongst the deep soft moss and water-weeds.

After the clear brilliant sunshine on the river, under these trees it looks pleasantly cool and dim. The grass is soft and green. I fetch my rug from the canoe, spread it at the foot of a giant beech, a monarch of the woods, and stretch myself, with a delicious sense of rest and ease. Overhead, the young leaves are whispering songs of blue skies and golden weather ; the coo of the stockdoves and caw of rooks sound far above me. I close my eyes and dream. Barely sixty hours ago I was in the midst of the tide and rush of business life in London, with the unceasing roar of city traffic in my ears. Now I am out of reach of all sounds save those of Nature—the soft slumberous rustle of

Leaves around, a little stirred,
A sense of music which was rather felt than heard.

With this mingled the flow of water, or the sibilous noise of the yellow willow-wren, that haunts the tops of the beech, singing its queer grasshopper note. Full twenty years have passed since I, a boy of fifteen, last heard that note ; but the rapid association of ideas bridges over time quickly as a flash of electricity from London to Paris, and recalls incidents in those long-forgotten years, with all the clinging memories of youth, when our future life seemed one long vista of fulfilled successes. Ah ! how refreshing is this dreamy rest of mind and body, this ‘silence and stillness, the sweetest of human joys’ under the cool dim shadowy trees. Like as of old to our forefathers was ‘the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,’ so are the ‘green pastures and still waters’ to those amongst us that are compelled to bear the burden and heat of the day in the close warehouses and offices of the city.

Lulled by the cooing doves and tired with the long hours in the open air, I must have insensibly passed from waking dreams to those of sleep. I woke, rested and refreshed, to find it was nearly six o’clock. In a few minutes I was again in the canoe and paddling back at a rapid pace towards Longmead ; but I had come much farther than I imagined ; and it was past eight before I reached the sandy cove whence I started in the dewy morning sunshine. The sweet-brier hedge exhaled its ravishing perfume as I lingered with loitering steps towards the shrubbery path, loth to break the spell of the long peaceful midsummer day. As I stood under the laburnums watching the golden splendour of the setting sun over the distant hills, a liquid note or two greeted my ears, a pause, a *roulade* of joyous music followed ; then the long-sustained, mellow, tender, half-melancholy, flute-like song breaks forth ; clear, keen, and high it mounts like the note of a violin in a master’s hand, as full of bewildering beauty as on the previous night. As one after another of the shy brown warblers takes up the rich cadences, I listen with rapt ears, unconscious of the footsteps approaching, till John Fane lays his hand on my shoulders and says quietly : ‘I began to think

you were lost or drowned. Come in now. You must be famishing.’ With a laugh I turned and followed him. I did not lie and listen to the nightingales that night ; I slept soundly for ten hours without waking.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—REHEARSAL.

MEANWHILE, when the house was all finished and decorated throughout, Hugh turned his thoughts once more, on fame intent, to his great forthcoming volume of verses. Since he married Winifred, he had published little, eschewing journalism and such small tasks as unworthy the dignity of accomplished squiredom ; but he had been working hard from time to time at polishing and repolishing his *magnum opus*, *A Life’s Philosophy*—a lengthy poem in a metre of his own, more or less novel, and embodying a number of moral reflections, more or less trite, on the youth, adolescence, maturity, and decrepitude of the human subject. It exactly suited Mr Matthew Arnold’s well-known definition, being, in fact, an exhaustive criticism of life, as Hugh Massinger himself had found it. He meant to print it in time for the autumn book-season. It was the great stake of his life, and he was confident of success. He had worked it up with ceaseless toil to what seemed to himself the highest possible pitch of artistic handicraft ; and he rolled his own sonorous rhymes over and over again with infinite satisfaction upon his literary palate, pronouncing them all, on impartial survey, of most excellent flavour. Nothing in life, indeed, can be more deceptive than the poetaster’s confidence in his own productions. He mistakes familiarity for smoothness of ring, and a practised hand for genius and originality. It is his fate always to find his own lines absolutely perfect ; in which cheerful personal creed the rest of the world mostly fails altogether to agree with him.

In such a self-congratulatory and hopeful mood, Hugh sat one morning in the new drawing-room, holding a quire of closely written sermon-paper stitched together in his hand, and gazing affectionately with parental pride at his last-born stanzas. Winifred had only returned yesterday from a shopping expedition up to town, and was idling away a day in rest and repair after her unwonted exertion among the crowded bazaars of the modern Bagdad. So Hugh leaned back in his chair at his ease, and, seized with the sudden thirst for an audience, began to pour forth in her ear in his rotund manner the final finished introductory prelude to his *Life’s Philosophy*. His wife, propped up on the pillows of the sofa and lolling carelessly, listened and smiled as he read and read, with somewhat sceptical though polite indifference.

‘Let me see, where had I got to ?’ Hugh went on once, after one of her frequent and trying critical interruptions. ‘You put me out so, Winnie, with your constant fault-finding ! I can’t recollect how far I’d read to you.’

"Begotten unawares:" now go ahead,' Winifred answered carelessly—as carelessly as though it was some other fellow's poems he had been pouring forth to her.

"Or bastard offspring of unconscious nature, Begotten unawares," Hugh repeated pompously, looking back with a loving eye at his much-admired manuscript. 'Now listen to the next good bit, Winifred; it's really impressive.—

XXXII.

When chaos slowly set to sun or planet,
And molten masses hardened into earth;
When primal force wrought out on sea and granite
The wondrous miracle of living birth;
Did mightier Mind, in clouds of glory hidden,
Breathe power through its limbs to feel and know,
Or sentience spring, spontaneous and unbidden,
With feeble steps and slow?

XXXIII.

Are sense and thought but parasites of being?
Did Nature mould our limbs to act and move,
But some strange chance endow our eyes with seeing,
Our nerves with feeling, and our hearts with love?
Since all alone we stand, alone discerning
Sorrow from joy, self from the things without;
While blind fate tramples on the spirit's yearning,
And floods our souls with doubt.

XXXIV.

This very tree, whose life is our life's sister,
We know not if the ichor in her veins
Thrill with fierce joy when April dews have kissed her,
Or shrink in anguish from October rains;
We search the mighty world above and under,
Yet nowhere find the soul we fain would find;
Speech in the hollow rumbling of the thunder,
Words in the whispering wind.

XXXV.

We yearn for brotherhood with lake and mountain,
Our conscious soul seeks conscious sympathy;
Nymphs in the coppice, Naiads in the fountain,
Gods on the craggy height or roaring sea.
We find but soulless sequences of matter;
Fact linked to fact in adamantine rods;
Eternal bounds of former sense and latter;
Dead laws for living gods.

'There, Winifred, what do you say to that now? Isn't that calculated to take the wind out of some of these pretentious fellows' sails? What do you think of it?'

'Think?' Winifred answered, pursing up her lips into an expression of the utmost professional connoisseurship. 'I think "granite" doesn't rhyme in the English language with "planet;" and I consider "sentience" is a horribly prosaic word of its sort to introduce into serious poetry.—What's that stuff about liquor too? "We know not if the liquor in her something." I don't like "liquor." It's not good: bar-room English, only fit for a public-house production.'

'I didn't say "liquor,"' Hugh cried indignantly. 'I said "ichor," which of course is a very different matter. "We know not if the ichor in her veins." Ichor's the blood of the gods in Homer. That's the worst of reading these things to women: classical allusion's an utter blank to them.—If you've got nothing better than that to object, have the kindness, please, not to interrupt me.'

Winifred closed her lips with a sharp snap;

while Hugh went on, nothing abashed, with the same sonorous metre-marked mouthing:

XXXVI.

'They care not any whit for pain or pleasure
That seem to men the sun and end of all.
Dumb force and barren number are their measure:
What can be, shall be, though the great world fall.
They take no heed of man, or man's deserving,
Reck not what happy lives they make, or mar,
Work out their fatal will, unswerved, unswerving,
And know not that they are.

'Now, what do you say to that, Winifred? Isn't it just hunky?'

'I don't like interrupting,' Winifred snapped out savagely. 'You told me not to interrupt, except for a good and sufficient reason.'

'Well, don't be nasty,' Hugh put in, half smiling. 'This is business, you know—a matter of public appreciation—and I want your criticism: it all means money. Criticism from anybody, no matter whom, is always worth at least something.'

'Oh, thank you, so much. That is polite of you. Then if you want criticism, no matter from whom, I should say I fail to perceive, myself, the precise difference you mean to suggest between the two adjectives "unswerved" and "unswerving." To the untutored intelligence of a mere woman, to whom classical allusion's an utter blank, they seem to say exactly the same thing twice over.'

'No, no,' Hugh answered, getting warm in self-defence. '"Unswerved" is passive; "unswerving" is active, or at least middle: the one means that they swerve themselves; the other, that somebody or something else swerves them.'

'You do violence to the genius of the English language,' Winifred remarked curtly. 'I may not be acquainted with Latin and Greek, but I talk at least my mother-tongue. Are you going to print nothing but this great, long, dreary incomprehensible *Life's Philosophy* in your new volume?'

'I shall make it up mainly with that,' Hugh answered, crest-fallen, at so obvious a failure favourably to impress the domestic critic. 'But I shall also eke out the title-piece with a lot of stray occasional verses—the *Funeral Ode for Gambetta*, for example, and plenty of others that I haven't read you. Some of them seem to me tolerably successful.' He was growing modest before the face of her unflinching criticism.

'Read me *Gambetta*,' Winifred said with quiet imperiousness. 'I'll see if I like that any better than all this foolish maundering Philosophy.'

Hugh turned over his papers for the piece 'by request,' and after some searching among quires and sheets, came at last upon a clean-written copy of his immortal threnody. He began reading out the lugubrious lines in a sufficiently grandiose and sepulchral voice. Winifred listened with careless attention, as to a matter little worthy her sublime consideration. Hugh cleared his throat and rang out magniloquently:

'She sits once more upon her ancient throne,
The fair Republic of our steadfast vows:
A Phrygian bonnet binds her queenly brows;
Athwart her neck her knotted hair is blown.
A hundred cities nestle in her lap,
Girt round their stately locks with mural crowns:
The folds of her imperial robe enwrap
A thousand lesser towns.'

"Mural crowns" is good,' Winifred murmured satirically: 'it reminds one so vividly of the stone statues in the Place de la Concorde.'

Hugh took no notice of her intercalary criticism. He went on with ten or twelve stanzas more of the same bombastic, would-be sublime character, and wound up at last in thunderous tones with a prophetic outburst as to the imagined career of some future Gambetta—himself possibly:

'He still shall guide us toward the distant goal;
Calm with unerring tact our weak alarms;
Train all our youth in skill of manly arms,
And knit our sires in unity of soul:
Till bursting iron bars and gates of brass
Our own Republic stretch her arm again
To raise the weeping daughters of Alsace,
And lead thee home, Lorraine.'

'Well, what do you think of *that*, Winnie?' he asked at last triumphantly, with the air of a man who has trotted out his best war-horse for public inspection and has no fear of the effect he is producing.

'Think?' Winifred answered. 'Why, I think, Hugh, that if Swinburne had never written his Ode to Victor Hugo, *you* would never have written that Funeral March for your precious Gambetta.'

Hugh bit his lip in bitter silence. The criticism was many times worse than harsh: it was true; and he knew it. But a truthful critic is the most galling of all things.

'Well, surely, Winifred,' he cried at last, after a long pause, 'you think those other lines good, don't you?—

And when like some fierce whirlwind through the
land
The wrathful Teuton swept, he only dared
To hope and act when every heart and hand,
But his alone, despaired.'

'My dear Hugh,' Winifred answered candidly, 'don't you see in your own heart that all this sort of thing may be very well in its own way, but it isn't original—it isn't inspiration; it isn't the true sacred fire: it's only an echo. Echoes do admirably for the young beginner; but in a man of your age—for you're getting on now—we expect something native and idiosyncratic.—I think Mr Hatherley called it idiosyncratic.—You know Mr Hatherley said to me once you would never be a poet. You have too good a memory. "Whenever Massinger sits down at his desk to write about anything," he said in his quiet way, "he remembers such a perfect flood of excellent things other people have written about the same subject, that he's absolutely incapable of originality." And the more I see of your poetry, dear, the more do I see that Mr Hatherley was right—right beyond question. You're clever enough, but you know you're not original.'

Hugh answered her never a single word. To such a knock-down blow as that, any answer at all is clearly impossible. He only muttered something very low to himself about casting one's pearls before some creature inaudible.

Presently, Winifred spoke again. 'Let's go out,' she said, rising from the sofa, 'and sit by the sea on the roots of the poplar.'

At the word, Hugh flung down the manuscript in a heap on the ground with a stronger expression than Winifred had ever before heard fall from his lips. 'I hate the poplar!' he said angrily;

'I detest the poplar! I won't have the poplar! Nothing on earth will induce me to sit by the poplar!'

'How cross you are!' Winifred cried with a frown. 'You jump at me as if you'd snap my head off! And all just because I didn't like your verses.—Very well then; I'll go and sit there alone.—I can amuse myself, fortunately, without your help. I've got Mr Hatherley's clever article in this month's *Contemporary*.'

That evening, as they sat together silently in the drawing-room, Winifred engaged in the feminine amusement of casting admiring glances at her own walls, and Hugh poring deep over a serious-looking book, Winifred glanced over at him suddenly with a sigh, and murmured half aloud: 'After all, really I don't think much of it.'

'Much of what?' Hugh asked, still bending over the book he was anxiously consulting.

'Why, of that gourd I brought home from town yesterday. You know Mrs Walpole's got a gourd in her drawing-room; and every time I went into the vicarage I said to myself: "Oh, how lovely it is! How exquisite! How foreign-looking! If only I had a gourd like that, now, I think life would be really endurable. It gives the last touch of art to the picture. Our new drawing-room would look just perfection with such a gourd as hers to finish the wall with." Well, I saw the exact counterpart of that very gourd the day before yesterday at a shop in Bond Street. I bought it, and brought it home with exceeding great joy. I thought I should then be quite happy. I hung it up on the wall to try, this morning. And sitting here all evening, looking at it with my head first on one side and then on the other, I've said to myself a thousand times over: "It doesn't look one bit like Mrs Walpole's. After all, I don't know that I'm so much happier, now I've got it, than I was before I had a gourd of my own at all to look at."'

Hugh groaned. The unconscious allegory was far too obvious in its application not to sink into the very depths of his soul. He turned back to his book, and sighed inwardly to think for what a feeble, unsatisfactory shadow of a gourd he had sacrificed his own life—not to speak of Winifred's and Elsie's.

By-and-by Winifred rose and crossed the room. 'What's that you're studying so intently?' she asked, with a suspicious glance at the book in his fingers.

Hugh hesitated, and seemed half inclined for a moment to shut the book with a bang and hide it away from her. Then he made up his mind with a fresh resolve to brazen it out. 'Gordon's *Electricity and Magnetism*,' he answered quietly, as unabashed as possible, holding the volume half-closed with his forefinger at the page he had just hunted up. 'I'm—I'm interested at present to some extent in the subject of electricity. I'm thinking of getting it up a little.'

Winifred took the book from his hand, wondering, with a masterful air of perfect authority. He yielded like a lamb. On immaterial questions it was his policy not to resist her. She turned to the page where his finger had rested and ran it down lightly with her quick eye. The key-words showed in some degree at what it was driving: 'Franklin's Experiment'—'Means of Collection'

—'Theory of Lightning Rods'—'Ruhmkorff's Coils'—'Drawing down Electric Discharges from the Clouds.'—Why, what was all this? She turned round to him inquiringly. Hugh shuffled in an uneasy way in his chair. The husband who shuffles betrays his cause. 'We must put up conductors, Winnie,' he said hesitatingly, with a hot face, 'to protect those new gables at the east wing.—It's dangerous to leave the house so exposed. I'll order them down from London to-morrow.'

'Conductors! Fiddlesticks!' Winifred answered in a breath, with wifely promptitude. 'Lightning never hurt the house yet, and it's not going to begin hurting it now, just because an Immortal Poet with a fad for electricity has come to live and compose at Whitestrand. If anything, it ought to go the other way. Bards, you know, are exempt from thunderbolts. Didn't you read me the lines yourself, "God's lightnings spared, they said, Alone the holier head, Whose laurels screened it," or something to that effect? You're all right, you see. Poets can never get struck, I fancy.'

'But "Mr Hatherley said to me once you would never be a poet,"' Hugh repeated with a smile, exactly mimicking Winifred's querulous little voice and manner. 'As my own wife doesn't consider me a poet, Winifred, I shall venture to do as I like myself about my private property.'

Winifred took up a bedroom candle and lighted it quietly without a word. Then she went up to muse in her own bedroom over her new gourd and other disillusionments.

As soon as she was gone, Hugh rose from his chair and walked slowly into his own study. Gordon's *Electricity* was still in his hand, and his finger pointed to that incriminating passage. He sat down at the sloping desk and wrote a short note to a well-known firm of scientific instrument makers whose address he had copied a week before from the advertisement sheet of *Nature*.

WHITESTRAND HALL, ALMUNDHAM, SUFFOLK.

GENTLEMEN—Please forward me to the above address, at your earliest convenience, your most powerful form of Ruhmkorff Induction Coil, with secondary wires attached, for which cheque will be sent in full on receipt of invoice or retail price-list.—Faithfully yours, HUGH MASSINGER.

As he rose from the desk, he glanced half involuntarily out of the study window. It pointed south. The moon was shining full on the water. That hateful poplar stared him straight in the face, as tall and gaunt and immovable as ever. On its roots, a woman in a white dress was standing, looking out over the angry sea, as Elsie had stood, for the twinkling of an eye, on that terrible evening when he lost her for ever. One second, the sight sent a shiver through his frame, then he laughed to himself, the next, for his groundless terror. How childish! How infantile! It was the gardener's wife, in her light print frock, looking out to sea for her boy's smack, overdue, no doubt—for Charlie was a fisherman.—But it was intolerable that he, the Squire of Whitestrand, should be subjected to such horrible turns as these.—He shook his fist angrily at the offend-

ing tree. 'You shall pay for it, my friend,' he muttered low but hoarse between his clenched teeth. 'You shan't have many more chances of frightening me!'

A VISIT TO 'LA CONCIERGERIE,' STATE PRISON OF PARIS.

IN the early part of June last year, a friend and myself wandering in that portion of old Paris famous for its historical associations, stayed our steps before the gilded portals of the newly restored Palais de Justice, one of the most imposing monuments in that fairest of cities. It is superfluous to attempt to narrate all the purposes to which that building has been put since the period of its occupation by the kings of France up to the present time. The portion which more particularly demands our attention for the present is the 'Conciergerie,' the gloomy old Paris prison, and one of the most famous in the annals of France. The ancient prison of the royal palace, its name is derived from the *conciierge* (keeper). Occupying the left wing of the Palais de Justice, running parallel with the Seine, it is one of the principal existing monuments of the Great Revolution. A permit bearing the signature of the prefect of police being necessary before admittance could be gained, our first care was to call at the Prefecture, where on presentation of our cards the required authorisation bearing our names was accorded us. Crossing the broad open courtyard of the police barracks, we retraced our steps to the Quai de l'Horloge, which runs parallel to the river Seine. On the north-east corner of the Tour de l'Horloge, near the Pont au Change, is fixed the oldest public clock in France, having been constructed in 1370 by Henry de Vie, a German clockmaker, and restored in 1852. It is flanked by two figures representing Justice and Piety.

A short walk along the bank of the river brought us to a sentry of the Garde Republicaine on duty before a heavily barred gate. The bell was rung; and presenting our authority to a gate-keeper, we were duly admitted within the precincts. We traversed a rectangular courtyard, and on turning to the right, noticed a pointed doorway secured by a heavily barred door, on the top of which, in stone letters, was the word 'Conciergerie.' We then handed our permit to a warder, and were admitted into the ancient guardroom of St Louis, still used as such by the guardians on duty. After scrutinising our ticket, he opened another barred gate; and descending some steps, we found ourselves in the famous state prison where the principal scenes of the revolutionary drama of 1789 to 1795 were enacted. In a large and lofty hall with Gothic pillars and groined ceiling, we awaited the official conductor who was to show us round.

On the right of the entrance two staircases lead to the Council Chamber on the one side, and to the director's apartments on the other. These two rooms facing the quay are respectively situated in two pointed turrets, called Tour de Castille and Tour de César. The rooms in the Tour de César were used as a prison for Prince Pierre Bonaparte in 1870, and in January 1883 for Prince Jerome Napoleon. The third turret is known as Tour d'Argent, formerly used as the king's treasury, and originally the apartments of

Queen Blanche, the mother of St Louis. The fourth, at the extreme end of the building, in olden days used as a torture chamber, is derisively called *La Tour de Bonbec*, because the prisoners' cries were often heard piercing the thick walls with agonising shrieks. Listeners used to exclaim, '*Il a bon bec*;' alluding to the cries of the hapless and suffering victims.

Quitting the entrance hall, a second broad hall dimly lighted, separated by a *grille* from the first, is entered.

It bears the historic name of the *Rue de Paris*, because during the Reign of Terror two hundred and fifty prisoners were huddled together in this passage. We were informed by the warder who showed us through—a man upwards of seventy years of age, and who has held nearly fifty years the post of keeper at the *Conciergerie*—that the late Emperor, when Prince Napoleon, after his unlucky manifesto, used here to take his daily exercise, no doubt pondering on the vicissitudes of his eventful life. To the left, the visitor looks down into the *Salle St Louis*, a large Gothic crypt, with groined ceiling, and supported upon stone pillars in the same style of architecture. At each angle of the hall are four immense open fireplaces, and a staircase, which formerly led to the *Seine*. This hall was formerly used as a refectory for the servants and others of the king's household. It was recently proposed to have cells placed in this hall; but as it was originally ten feet lower than the level of the quay, it was judged unsatisfactory from a sanitary point of view, and was abandoned.

After viewing this ancient hall, we passed into a small corridor, the walls being whitewashed and kept very clean. It is here that the prisoners' bread is stored. The officials say with a charmingly self-satisfied air: 'Here is made the best prison-bread in the world.' According to their opinion, '*Messieurs les prisonniers*' are not badly treated in the *Conciergerie*. At the end of this corridor in which the bread is kept, an old iron gateway, now blocked up, is seen. This, we were told, was the old *Conciergerie* entrance. Through here, *Marie-Antoinette* went to the scaffold on the 16th of October 1793, in the dreaded *tombereau* vehicle, which called there daily for its human freight to feed the hungry guillotine.

To the right of this corridor is a small square room, the furniture composed of a rusty stove and some camp bedsteads. In this dark room was imprisoned the celebrated *Marquis de Lavalette*, condemned to death for joining the Emperor Napoleon on his return from *Elba* in 1815, but who, on the day before that fixed for his execution, in December of that year, escaped in his wife's clothes, leaving her hidden in his prison bed. Three Englishmen who aided him in his escape were subsequently sentenced to three months' imprisonment. *Lavalette* returned to Paris in 1820, and died in retirement ten years later. In an adjoining room, now used as a kitchen for one of the officers of the prison, Marshal *Ney* was confined, when he used to disturb the *Marquis de Lavalette* by playing the flute. On the 7th of December 1815, the gallant marshal was shot in the garden of the *Luxembourg* for joining the Emperor. When an attempt was made to blind-fold him, he tore away the bandage and

indignantly exclaimed: 'Have you forgotten that for twenty-six years I have lived among bullets?' and laying his hand upon his heart, called out with a steady voice: 'Aim true. France for ever! Fire!' In this cell was also detained the famous poet, *André Chénier*.

Outside is a large square courtyard, in the middle of which stands a circular stone: this is the last vestige of the *Montgomery Tower*—finally demolished in 1789—where the unfortunate Count *Montgomery*, who accidentally, but mortally wounded *Henry II. of France*, was imprisoned after the fatal tournament.

In one corner of this courtyard stands a heavy stone trough, pompously called a fountain. In this basin, during the Revolution, the court ladies and aristocratic beauties were in the habit of washing their linen *en famille*. The courtyard at that time was nicknamed by the Republicans the *Boulevard de Gand*, an ironical allusion to the then fashionable promenade.

Many notable persons left the *Conciergerie* during that sanguinary period, among whom were the *Duc d'Orleans*, *Madame Du Barry*, *Madame Roland*, *Danton*, and others, without mentioning *Robespierre*, *Custine*, *St Just*, and others of the *Revolutionary Tribunal*. Opposite *André Chénier's* window, as they still call it at the prison, are the grated bars behind which *Louis Napoleon*, and his faithful friends, *Morny* and *Conneau*, were put under lock and key. This courtyard is deeply interesting when we hear the illustrious names of those who have paced its stone flags unwillingly, and fain would we linger a little longer here; but the most interesting portion of the prison, *Marie-Antoinette's* cell, remains to be visited. Proceeding along another dimly-lighted passage, at the end of which is a large square opening and a dead wall, stand, on the left, two dirty yellow doors. One is condemned; the second closes with a ponderous lock. From his girdle our guide takes the self-same key as that used at the time of the imprisonment of *Marie-Antoinette*, and we are ushered into the last earthly dwelling-place of that unfortunate queen. The doorway is very low, and we are obliged to stoop in passing through. This was so arranged—we were told—in order to force the proud and royal head to bend before her persecutors. Tradition states that as the queen left her cell on her way to the scaffold in her sweeping robes, she failed to stoop low enough, and so struck her forehead against the top of the doorway as she passed out. Be it true or not, it is certainly accepted by the Austrian royal family; for at the time of *Princess Christine's* passage through Paris on her way to *San Sebastian* to meet her royal fiancé, the young *Princess* and her mother the *Archduchess of Austria* went to the cell of their illustrious ancestress and knelt before the marble monument erected by *Louis XVIII.* to the royal lady's memory; and the young *Princess*, ere quitting the cell, stooped and reverently kissed the spot where a few of *Marie-Antoinette's* gray hairs are said to have been found sticking on the blood-stain left by the blow. The cell, after the Restoration in 1816, was transformed into a small chapel. It is paved with dark-red bricks of a corrugated pattern, the same as existed in 1793. The white marble monument before mentioned, on the left of

the entrance, is surmounted by an urn with a Latin inscription, stating that in this cell Marie-Antoinette-Joséphine-Jeanne d'Autriche, wife of Louis XVI., was confined for seventy-six days before her execution. On an altar stand a crucifix and two candlesticks. The crucifix still occupies the position it did in the hapless queen's day, and no doubt many a time was fervently embraced by her in her hour of fearful trial. A lamp is also suspended from the ceiling.

There are in this cell two paintings, one by Drolling, representing the queen partaking her last sacrament; the other representing her removal from the Temple to the Conciergerie. The queen's furniture at that epoch consisted of a wooden table, a straw-chair, and a truckle bedstead placed against one of the walls. The last-named has since been removed.

A second cell, supposed to have been Marie-Antoinette's oratory, contains a portrait of the unfortunate queen. In the recess of the window in this cell, out of reach of the vandals, is an old-fashioned armchair, the favourite seat of the queen at the Tuileries. It was sent to the prison by Louis XVIII., to be kept there as a relic. It is in the Louis XVI. style, covered with silk, but so faded as to be almost colourless. From this cell we enter the chapel, furnished with rows of wooden pews, and a marble altar like a sarcophagus surmounted by brass candelabra. This chapel is interesting from its associations with the massacre of the Girondists on the 2d of September 1792. The small doorway through which the victims walked out, one after the other, and were foully murdered outside, still exists in the chapel. On the walls at either side may still be seen the remains of the autographs, now almost entirely effaced, traced by the hands of the brave and ill-fated victims when in here on the eve of their execution. Mass used to be said here; and at the far end, above the stone archways, may still be seen the places where the female prisoners attended divine worship. A wonderfully realistic painting, by Müller, of this chapel with prisoners huddled together, used to hang in the Museum of the Luxembourg, entitled 'Last Days of the Reign of Terror.'

At the present time, prisoners are now only kept at the Conciergerie who are awaiting trial. The prisoners are on the spot for their lawyers' visit. After trial, if they be found guilty, they are transferred to different penitentiaries, such as La Roquette, Mazas, &c. A few are brought in the morning, and reinstated in their various places of seclusion in the evening, when awaiting their trial. Sometimes they are brought for days in succession, for they never know the exact time they will be tried. They arrive in what the Parisians strangely call the *Panier à Salade*, better known amongst us as the 'Black Maria,' a closed vehicle, with a series of compartments for one person on each side, with room in the middle for a soldier to keep watch.

The Conciergerie contains about sixty-three cells, constructed in 1864. They are built on a concrete foundation, facing the large windows that look out upon the river Seine, and are said to be among the finest in Europe. They are occupied by prisoners awaiting their trial at the courts, which are held in another part of the building. During our visit, the notorious murderer Fran-

zani was confined there. Our guide informed us that during his time he had had many noted and distinguished prisoners under his charge, including, among others, Orsini and, as we have said, the late Emperor Napoleon; whilst his reminiscences were both many and varied.

MIN:

A RAILROAD STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Macpherson entered the great palace car, all was still as death, save for the swaying of the car, as with increasing velocity it was hauled after the huge locomotive. All the curtains of the sleeping berths were closely drawn, and even the darkey porter was snoring away the hours, seated snugly in a reclining chair. Arthur approached the sleeping man of colour, and by means of a powerful shaking managed to awake the woolly-headed fellow, who started up, vaguely imagining that he had at last fallen into the hands of Western train-robbers.

'Now, don't make a fuss, my lad. If you had kept awake and attended to your business, you would have seen that I got aboard at a regular station. I am one of the agents of this Company, and I have business with the Superintendent. Is he aboard?'

'Ye-ye-yes, sah,' tremblingly replied the half-awakened porter.

'Well, you get him up as quickly as you can. Tell him the 44-mile operator is on the train with an important message.'

Two minutes later, Superintendent Ferris, without coat, collar, or shoes, stood beside Macpherson, whom he eyed closely, much as he had done in his Chicago office more than a year before. It was the first time the two men had met since, for the official had never redeemed his promise to visit 44-mile. Beyond this scrutinising glance, there was nothing strange in the greeting of the Superintendent, who was cool and collected, as became a Western railroad magnate.

'You have a message for me?'

'Yes, sir. Not directly either—but read that.' As he spoke, Arthur handed the official his translation of the last cipher message.

'Very good. Make yourself comfortable. We will see what comes of this.—By the way, where are we now?'

'We are, I should judge,' said Arthur, 'about ten miles west of my place, and about twenty-five miles east of Prairie City, the next station.'

The official proceeded to complete his toilet, and then lit a cigar, which he smoked in silence.

Seven or eight minutes passed, when suddenly Macpherson crossed the car to where the Superintendent sat. 'You know of Ripley, sir—the man who is on the engine?'

'I have heard of him.'

'Well, we are slowing. Perhaps you have hardly noticed it yet. There is no station, no

telegraph cabin or any water-tank near here ; neither is there any level crossing or up-grade. I have good reason for suspecting that the mischief will come in right here, though just what shape it will take I cannot even guess. The boys on the road understand you to be a fearless man : if that is so, follow me. Have you got a revolver—and loaded ?

'Yes.'

'That's good ; you may need it.—Are you a dead-shot ?'

'No.'

'Then give me the revolver. For a short time, try to forget that you are managing this road, and obey my orders.'

Macpherson took the official's pistol, and led the way through the train until they stood upon the front platform of the forward coach—the baggage car.

'I suppose,' said Arthur, 'you are willing that we should at all hazards preserve this train from destruction and get her through in safety ?'

'Of course.'

'Then climb on to the locomotive with me and be prepared for anything.'

The train was now running at a rate of not more than fifteen miles an hour, so that the two men managed to raise themselves on to the tender of the locomotive with comparative ease. As they crawled over the stacks of firewood, both master and man took in the situation at a glance. The engineer was at that instant turning on a full head of steam ; the fireman was closing the door of the furnace which he had just filled up with coal. Both were preparing to desert the engine !

As the two men lay stretched on the top of the tender, Macpherson motioned the Superintendent to keep very still. The fireman made a move to get down from the left-hand side of the engine. 'Come !' shouted Arthur ; and quick as a flash rushed for the fireman, helping that individual to the track by a heavy blow. Almost in the same instant he turned to the engineer, who, though not so far advanced in his movements as the fireman, was preparing to descend the steps on the right-hand side of the engine. Placing the revolver close to the renegade engineer's ear, he shouted : 'Get back there and do your work ! Attend to anything beside your business, even for a moment, and I'll fire !—Furthermore, if this train is not at Prairie City in time, I will see that we have a tarring and feathering exhibition in the station yard.—You need not take your hand off the lever, for I have brought you a fireman—the Superintendent. He will be stoker, while I watch you !'

The engineer was completely cowed. The train, with half-a-dozen valuable lives, was saved from a fearful destruction, and the special, drawn by locomotive No. 404, rolled into Prairie City on schedule time.

It is almost needless to remark that Sam Ripley was discharged at Prairie City, where the Superintendent decided to stay until another crew could come and take the engine. It is almost unnecessary to state that Arthur Macpherson, for his prompt action and personal bravery, received the hearty thanks, not only of Superintendent Ferris, but of the five or six directors who were passengers on the special—among them being the pompous

President of the C. R. M. & P. Of course these important personages immediately thought of cancelling their indebtedness to Arthur by bestowing upon him some sort of a reward. Naturally, promotion for the plucky and faithful agent seemed the easiest and most satisfactory *quid pro quo* with which to balance the account. So the President of the Company very graciously informed Arthur that they were on their way West to try and adjust the difficulty with their engineers, but instructions would be given Mr Ferris to stop at 44-mile on his return trip, when the Superintendent would be authorised to make Mr Macpherson an offer of something better in the way of a position on the C. R. M. & P.

It was in October that Arthur Macpherson saved the special from the destruction planned for it by Sam Ripley and his confederates. Now a year had passed away, and Mac was still at 44-mile ; but how changed the place seemed to him ! What an unsatisfactory period of time his second year had been, as compared with the first ! True, his duties were not more arduous, and, true enough, when the directors learned that he preferred 44-mile to promotion, they agreed that his salary must be substantially advanced—and it was. He still had his office and his 'furnished room,' and there at a little distance was the tiny cottage he had built for Min. But Min ?

There was where the difference lay, and what a difference ! No, she was not dead ; sometimes Arthur almost wished the girl *had* died, for then he would have had her still near him. At least he would have had her grave to tend and care for, and he would have had the satisfaction of knowing that if she had not been his, in the fullest sense of the word, she was no other's. As it was, he knew nothing certainly, except that Min was a thousand miles away—a surpassingly beautiful girl in a great city. Yes, he knew one other thing as certainly as he knew of his own existence : he knew that he loved Min Rossiter—not as a father or as a brother or as a friend, but with all the ardent, whole-souled affection that comes to men and women but once in a lifetime. Arthur began to suspect as much the first quiet hour he spent after the incident on the locomotive, when he thought upon the thrill that ran through him as the girl put her arm around his neck and kissed him. A week later, he knew it all ; for, a week later, Min was gone.

As the President promised, the Superintendent had stopped at 44-mile on his way East, to talk with Arthur. Mr Ferris was much impressed with the girl—as, indeed, most men were who met her afterwards—and became especially interested after learning her history. With Arthur the official could do nothing, as Mac was bent upon staying at the quiet station on the plains. But when he offered Min a place in his own important office in Chicago as his private telegraph operator, with a salary far exceeding that paid to Arthur ; and when he supplemented the financial inducement by picturing to the girl in glowing language the exciting social life of the gay and luxurious Western city, with the promise to assist her to the personal acquaintance of many influential ladies in the world of society—Min succumbed. She was only a girl, and, girl-like, she wanted to see the world. So she went.

Do not think, reader, that Min was ungrateful. Many a sharp twinge of regret did she experience on Arthur's account, and more than once she came near telegraphing Mr Ferris that she had changed her mind. But then she could not look at both sides of the question, and, ignorant of Arthur's unselfish affection for her, she thought that it would be positively wrong to refuse so exceptional a chance of making herself independent. She had no relatives, and really had no claim on Arthur; she ought to be at work in the world, with thoughts for the future. So she reasoned, and Arthur could not do otherwise than uphold her reasoning.

Why not? Why could he not have told her of his love and ask her to be his wife? Well, he might have done that; but such is not the manner of men like Arthur Macpherson. To him such a course would have seemed like taking advantage of the girl's isolated position and her ignorance of the world and its ways. No; he would let her go: he would let her mingle with all sorts and conditions of men: he would let her have all the opportunity possible of seeing the various combinations in the kaleidoscope of life: she should be admired by other men, and—if it must come to that—she should be loved by other men. At present, Arthur was far from certain that Min cared for him with a feeling deeper than gratitude; indeed, he was rather doubtful whether the girl knew the real meaning of love. If she did understand it, and if she did experience it—for him—then Mac thought he knew Min well enough to feel quite safe as to the ultimate issue. And if, after all the tinsel and glare of life in Chicago, he should discover that Min's love was for him alone, then he would join his love with hers, and consider the honours and emoluments of the world well lost for the one prize desired by him.

So Arthur helped her to start—helped her in many ways—with his advice and with his purse. For Min's wardrobe was considerably augmented after a day which she spent in the rather heterogeneous stores of New Constantinople, at Arthur's positive command; and if the girl was not ultra-fashionably dressed when she started away on the Atlantic Express, she appeared far from unbecoming in the outfit which Arthur's thoughtfulness had procured for her. It was two o'clock in the morning when Min boarded the train at the lonely little 44-mile depot; and if her eyes were very red from crying when the express stopped at breakfast-time, I think that something very like a tear trickled down Arthur Macpherson's sunburnt face as, for the first time for more than a year, he made coffee for *one*.

The months passed away, and Arthur became more accustomed to his lonely life, though always there remained the aching void, the incessant longing for the girl who was all he cared for in the world. True, he got many letters from Min; long letters, filled with glowing accounts of her successes, socially and in business. He learned by them that Mr Ferris was very kind and attentive, and that everything possible had been done by him to make Min feel comfortable amid her new surroundings. He had found her a home with a widow and her daughter, and many ladies of his acquaintance had called upon her. Altogether, Arthur came to the conclusion that Min

was really having what she called 'a good time.' Once, one of the conductors, who frequently passed through 44-mile, told Arthur that he had recently visited Chicago, where he saw Min and heard a good deal about her. This man told Macpherson rumour had it that the Superintendent was 'sweet' on his telegraph operator, and was going to marry her. This was not good news for Arthur. Such news is not pleasant for any man to hear. Men with love of a most utterly hopeless nature will feel a keen pang when they learn that the object of their love is to marry another. So Arthur suffered acutely when the conductor told him of the rumour that had come to his ears. It seemed more than a rumour when, a few weeks later, Superintendent Ferris himself made his appearance at 44-mile and plied Arthur with a number of questions relating to Min; and, although the Superintendent did not tell Arthur his object in so many words, a man of less perception and with not half so much interest in the matter could have read Robert Ferris's motives.

When the official had gone, Arthur attempted to reason himself into looking at the matter philosophically. 'Whatever is, is best,' he said, and tried to stop there; but he could not. 'It's hard though, very hard. I did all that a man could do for *him*. I gave him more than fortune, or even life itself. I gave him my name and my reputation, with all my chances in life—which were as good as, ay, better than his. Yet he is not satisfied. He has to come to my lonely hiding-place out here in the wilderness and steal away my one treasure. It's hard! And yet—even now I might—No; never!' And again his thoughts would revert to the girl herself, and he would wonder much that she had not taken him into her confidence on so important a matter as her possible marriage. Poor Arthur!

And Min? Amid all her surroundings, her thoughts continually sped westward to the little station on the plains and her old friend Arthur. She was but a girl, and a young girl at that, and naturally enough she thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of city life. Being a healthy girl, with warm youthful blood coursing through her veins, she entered with zest into all the entertainment and amusement which came in her way. She liked to dance, and she liked to attend the theatre; she liked pleasant company, and she liked to be admired; she liked to remember that she was young and pretty, and she liked to know that others cared to think well of her. But these superficial 'likes' did not represent the innermost feelings of Min's soul. It was not in her nature to forget the man who had stood her in such good stead when she had no other friend in the world. Nay, more than that; Min had discovered, as well as Arthur, that when the strain was laid upon the cord which bound them together, there was a hidden strength which it was utterly impossible to snap. The comparisons which the girl made between Macpherson and all the men, great and small, she met in Chicago were invariably in Arthur's favour; and after an entire year of absence, she found that she still cared more for Arthur Macpherson than for any man she had yet seen. In the summer-time she had tried to arrange for leave of absence, so that she might visit 44-mile; but Mr Ferris had persuaded

her to put off her vacation, on the score of pressing business; so October had come, and she was still at her daily duty in the Superintendent's office.

THE ANIMAL ALKALOIDS.

THE alkaloids are substances which occupy a very important place in the chemistry of life. When absorbed into the animal system, they act most powerfully upon it, some of them being among the direst poisons known to us, while others are invaluable medicines. In order to give the reader a general idea of their nature, it is only necessary to refer to a few typical examples of the class. Take, for instance, nicotine, one of the most poisonous of the alkaloids: this substance is the active principle of the tobacco plant, and is familiar to every smoker, if not by name, at least physiologically; for it is the cause not only of the soothing effects of smoking on the system, but also of the sickness which supervenes upon over-indulgence in the pipe. Strychnine and curarine are also good examples of the more poisonous of the alkaloids. The former is principally derived from the seeds of a plant called *Strychnos Ignatius*, or St Ignatius' bean; while the latter is the poison which gives their deadly character to the arrows used by the natives of certain tropical countries. On the other hand, however, there are included among this class of substances some of the most valuable medicines we possess in these times, such as quinine, which is extracted from the bark of certain species of trees called the Cinchonas; and morphine, one of the alkaloids of opium.

It will be observed that all the substances instanced above are of vegetal origin. Indeed, until very recently, it was thought that plants were the sole agents in the manufacture of alkaloids. Substances of a character very similar were, it is true, frequently detected in animal matter; but their presence there was in the eyes of most people satisfactorily explained by the supposition that they got into the system from without, through the consumption of vegetable matter, or otherwise. Strong arguments in favour of a different explanation might easily have been obtained; for cases of poisoning from animal food in which the symptoms were exceedingly like those which customarily followed overdoses of the known alkaloids, were of by no means rare occurrence. But no regular experiments were undertaken to find out the true cause of the phenomena observed in such cases; and until very recently it does not seem to have been suspected that alkaloids might be elaborated in the tissues of the animal body as well as in those of plants.

The first person who boldly hazarded the hypothesis that substances belonging to the same chemical genus as the vegeto-alkaloids could be elaborated in animal matter was Armand Gautier, a Frenchman. This scientist—who has earned for himself a world-wide reputation for his researches on this subject—about the year 1870 made some interesting observations, which led him to suspect that alkaloids were invariably elaborated during the course of putrefaction of albuminoid matter. Now, by far the greater part of the solid matter of which the animal body is made up consists of

albuminous substances; so that it did not require much straining of argument to show that it was extremely probable that alkaloids would also be formed in decaying animal matter. This probability seems to have at once attracted Gautier's attention; for he soon carried on a series of experiments on fibrin of the blood—that is to say, the albuminous substance which separates from the blood after it has left the body in consequence of the putrefaction, which in such circumstances it quickly undergoes; and from this fibrin, about 1872, he succeeded in obtaining various complex alkaloidal extractives. Thus was his grand hypothesis proved by facts; and the new substances which he discovered were called *ptomaines*, a name clearly indicative of their origin, for it is derived from the Greek word signifying a corpse.

About this same period, Professor Selmi, the famous Italian toxicologist, was engaged in independent researches, which led to a result exactly similar to that obtained by Gautier. This is shown by the communication which Selmi made to the Academy of Science of Bologna early in 1872, the main conclusion of which was, that in the bodies of persons who had died from natural causes were to be found substances which when tested chemically gave evidence of being closely allied to the alkaloids extractable from plants. When it became known that both Gautier and Selmi had arrived at precisely similar results by totally different methods—for the one approached the subject chemically, whereas the other came to his conclusions in consequence of observations made for legal purposes on bodies suspected to have been poisoned—the greatest interest was excited in the scientific world; and this interest was much increased when, shortly after, it was seen that these discoveries would play a most important part in criminal investigations. Selmi himself was engaged in one of the first cases where the question came up. The prosecution had endeavoured to make out that the cause of death was strychnia, one of the vegetable alkaloids; but Selmi, who was called on behalf of the suspected persons, pointed out conclusively that there were certain important differences between strychnia and the poison under examination, and gave his opinion that the compound found was a *ptomaine*. It can easily be seen that if the two kinds of alkaloids are so similar in constitution, it must be very difficult to ascertain which species is actually present in any case, and that much might hang upon the degree of care with which the tests were applied. Many attempts, consequently, were made to discover means whereby the animal and vegetable alkaloids might be distinguished from one another. At one time, it was thought that the requisite tests had been discovered; but the most recent researches seem to show that the chemical constitution of both classes is very similar, and that some at least of the *ptomaines* are identical with the vegetal alkaloids. For example, muscarine, an alkaloid formerly thought to be only derivable from certain poisonous mushrooms, has been discovered by Brieger to be a product of the decomposition of fish, and has even been artificially prepared from other chemical substances.

The origin of these *ptomaines* seems now to be clearly explained. That they arise from

albuminoid material in a state of putrefaction is undoubted, seeing that they have been artificially produced from it. One of Gautier's great scientific triumphs was the separation of various *ptomaines* from pure albumen, which he had allowed to undergo putrefaction free from atmospheric contact, so that there could be no suspicion of their coming from without. But that it would be wrong to assert that putrefaction was the sole means whereby the animal alkaloids were created, was soon to be made evident. With this new departure the name of Gautier is again associated; and it is due to the experiments which this veteran observer undertook between the years 1882 and 1886 that we are now in a position to affirm that it is not only in dead animal matter that cadaveric alkaloids are developed, but that they are also regularly elaborated in healthy tissues in which there is no trace of putrefaction, the vital processes being of themselves quite sufficient to cause their formation.

Suspecting that the poisonous nature of the bites of snakes and other animals was due to alkaloids, Gautier made various experiments in order to come to some conclusion on the subject. One of the most important of these consisted in the extraction from the fangs of the cobra di capello of various substances, which, when injected into mice and birds, even in very minute doses, caused death, preceded by symptoms very similar to those resulting from bites by that species of snake. Finding his suspicions so far correct, he next turned his attention to the human body, and in the course of various experiments on healthy muscular tissue he succeeded in obtaining five new alkaloids. To these newly discovered *vital* alkaloids, as we might term them, he gave the name of *leucomaines*, a word formed from the Greek for albumen, their connection with this latter substance being now firmly established. It only remains in this connection to add, that the varieties of both *ptomaines* and *leucomaines* which have been already discovered are many; but there is here a wide field for further research, not only with a view to finding new alkaloids, but to classifying and fixing upon the chemical constituents of those already detected.

To the importance of these recent discoveries in a legal sense, reference has already been made. From a medical point of view, however, they are likely to be more important still. It is not difficult to understand that there is here a subject the branches of which may be made, without the exercise of much imagination, to extend to almost every corner of pathology. We know as a matter of fact that the other natural waste products of the body, such as urea, carbonic acid, &c., when accumulated in excess in the system cause marked types of disease. Now, if that is so with respect to these substances, surely products of, in general, so poisonous and intricate a character as the *ptomaines* and *leucomaines* must also exercise a most appreciable effect on the system; and if not regularly and constantly eliminated, must undoubtedly cause ill-health. It is a familiar fact that persons constantly fall into states of ill-health which are extremely difficult to cure, and the real cause of which doctors cannot clearly explain. When, however, the symptoms accompanying many of these cases are considered, there is to be seen a wonderful likeness to those

following upon alkaloidal poisoning. The subject is still new, and it would be hazardous to prophesy too much at present with respect to the next advance; but of this we may be certain, that when the influence which these substances exert on the system becomes better known, a complete reform in the medical treatment of many diseases may be anticipated.

THE STORY OF A CRYPTOGRAM.

MR and MRS RONAYNE were generally considered by their friends and acquaintances to be an exceptionally happy and fortunate couple. They had a pretty house at Chiswick, got up in the latest æsthetic-fashionable style. Mrs Ronayne drove out daily either in her neat victoria or neater brougham, drawn by the most spanking pair of chestnuts that ever came out of Tattersall's. Mr Ronayne was known to be 'something in the City,' though what the 'something' was no one knew precisely; but the resulting income must be, every one argued, considerable. No small economies were apparent in their ménage, even to the eyes of the most critical and prying of spinster ladies. Mrs Ronayne had her gowns made at the best of West End 'houses,' and her bonnets and other accessories of attire were quite beyond reproach. As for Ronayne himself, Poole and Smalpage tailored for him, Hoby shod him, and Lincoln and Bennett covered his slightly bald cranium with the most immaculate and glossy of silk hats.

The little dinners given by this fortunate pair were quite epicurean in their way. Though limited as to the number of guests—for it was seldom that more than ten or twelve sat down to the Ronaynes' exquisitely decked table—the hostess was noted for her skill in getting pleasant people together, and therefore her invitations were rarely, if ever, declined, and her guests were never bored. All the married folks of their acquaintance quoted them to each other as a realised ideal of matrimonial felicity.

'Oh Arthur, if you treated me with half the deference and affection with which Mr Ronayne treats his wife,' said Mrs Fitzsharp to her mild-faced lord and master, 'what a happy woman I should be!'

'My dear Mathilda, can't you get a gown to fit you as Mrs Ronayne's fit her? But I suppose it's not the fault of your gowns, after all; it's the dowdy woman inside them,' snarled Mr Brown to his patient spouse, whose only answer was a weary sigh. 'Ronayne is a lucky fellow.'

And so the Fitzsharps and the Browns thought themselves very much to be pitied, while their more fortunate neighbours were to be envied, admired—and toadied.

Everybody was civil, nay, more than civil, to the Ronaynes. Mrs Ronayne's gowns and bonnets were copied by all the maids and matrons in Linden Park; her drawing-room was always full to overflowing on her 'At Home' days, and compliments and pretty speeches floated like incense on the air whenever she put her daintily-shod foot inside her neighbours' doors.

The fortunate Mrs Ronayne lacked nothing; her two children were as pretty and picturesque

as any to be seen portrayed in all the glory of golden hair, plush, and well-turned legs on the walls of Burlington House. Just as a rose looks best with an unfolded bud or two near it, so a pretty woman never looks more charming than when a flower-faced child or two hangs about her. Mrs Ronayne knew this, and 'darling Evie' and 'darling Robbie' were generally to be seen in the drawing-room on her Thursday afternoons, or in the carriage when she drove in the Park. Was there any locked cupboard holding its grinning, bony inmate in that gorgeously furnished suburban villa? Was there one little rift in the lute that made music for the Ronaynes? one crumpled leaf in their couch of roses? one black coarse thread in the cloth-of-gold web of their lives? Let us peep, like Asmodeus, under the Ronaynes' roof and see.

The breakfast hour at Honeywood Villa was nine o'clock, rather an early hour for Londoners, but Mr Ronayne liked to get down to his office by half-past ten, and Mrs Ronayne liked to preside over her husband's matutinal repast, pouring out his coffee with her own fair hands, and casting a solicitous, not to say curious, glance at him as he looked over his correspondence. Indeed, so anxious was she that her lord should lack none of the *petits soins* which were his due, that she always entered the breakfast-room at least a quarter of an hour before him, and cast a housewifely regard over the table, to see that everything was arranged in accordance with his somewhat fastidious taste. At the same time, and for her own satisfaction, she was in the habit of scrutinising pretty closely the covers of all Mr Ronayne's letters.

One bright spring morning Mrs Ronayne emerged fresh and fair as Aurora's self from her chamber, and descending the stairs rather more quickly than usual, entered the cosy little breakfast-room, and went straight to the table where Mr Ronayne's extensive correspondence was spread out imposingly. Running the array of letters over rapidly, she finally singled one out. 'At last!' she said, her colour deepening and her fine eyes growing bigger and brighter as she fixed them indignantly on the address of the letter. 'Post-mark, London, W., and the same handwriting. I should know those *ps* and *ys* anywhere. I will find out who is the writer!' And she slipped the letter in question into the pocket of her artistic morning-gown; and then, as she caught the sound of her husband's footsteps crossing the hall, she turned nonchalantly towards the window and bent over a *jardinière* of white and pink primulas that were putting forth their delicate blossoms to enjoy the morning sunshine.

Mr Ronayne sauntered into the room and went at once to look at his letters. A slight shade of disappointment crossed his face as he shuffled them about like a pack of cards, and he uttered an impatient exclamation.

'What is the matter, dear?' said his wife sweetly. 'Has anything gone wrong?'

'A letter which I expected hasn't come, that's all,' replied Mr Ronayne in a tone of vexation.

'Perhaps it will come by the next post. Was it a very important letter—a business letter?' inquired Mrs Ronayne, looking her husband full in the face.

'Well, yes—it would be rather an important letter—at least it might be.'

'I wonder how much of that is true?' thought his wife. Aloud she said: 'I am so sorry, Dolph.—But eat your breakfast; here are some of the *rognons sautés* you like so much.'

But that morning Mr Ronayne had no appetite; he trifled for a few minutes with his knife and fork, then gulped down his coffee, opened and read some of his letters, none of which seemed to give him any satisfaction, glanced hastily at the *Times*, and finally went off to the City without bestowing upon his wife a single caress, or uttering one of those endearing epithets the constant and public use of which had won for the Ronaynes the reputation of being 'such a happy pair.'

When her Adolphus had taken his departure, Mrs Ronayne ran up to her boudoir, locked the door, and took the purloined letter out of her pocket. 'It's a woman's handwriting—I know it is,' she said to herself as she held it between her trembling fingers. 'Now, I should like to know what business my husband has to receive letters from any woman but his wife.' She turned the offending missive over and looked at the back. It was not sealed, only secured in the ordinary manner. Nothing could be easier than to open it in such a way that none could suspect that it had been tampered with. Running down-stairs, she re-entered the breakfast-room and held the letter to the steam of the kettle, which still stood on the brass trivet beside the fire. In five minutes the envelope had been forced to yield its secret, and Mrs Ronayne was free to indulge her curiosity. With a quickly beating heart she unfolded the single sheet of note-paper the envelope contained, ran her eyes over it, then read word by word what follows:

'3 cannot you realise 10 road run ground mile quarter scarlet runner police and shares 5 in the ambush fine †††† 7 condition so will come enforced sound mine 13 break from my heart to years ago thoroughly prepared so doubtless unavailing fall 20 makes me indeed scattered exception to multitudes little solitude puffs to have spent seven in all ivory remember please impending.'

That was all. There was neither date nor signature to the letter. Mrs Ronayne read it over at least a dozen times, and her delicately pencilled brows drew together in a puzzled frown. What on earth did it all mean? Was the letter a foolish hoax? Was it written by some inmate of Bedlam or Colney Hatch? Or, stay.—Yes; this surely explained the mystery. The letter was in cipher, a cryptogram of the Donnelly-Bacon-Shakespeare order.

'I'll find it out!' panted Mrs Ronayne fiercely.—'I'll find it out—and then tax Adolphus with—with'

As she had not yet settled in her own mind the precise nature of the crime of which her Adolphus had been guilty, Mrs Ronayne could not complete her sentence. All sorts of conjectures were floating in her excited brain. Perhaps it was on this account that although she spent the whole morning in puzzling over the purloined letter, the only thing she got out of it was a racking headache, which not even her favourite remedy, sal-volatile, could cure.

When Mr Ronayne came back from the City about five o'clock, he found his wife reclining gracefully on the sofa in her boudoir, looking pale and heavy-eyed.

'What's the matter, Julia?' he asked kindly. 'You seem seedy.'

'I've a horrid headache,' she answered crossly. '—You don't look particularly bright either,' she added, glancing at Mr Ronayne's puckered forehead and haggard eyes.

'Oh, I've been rather bothered to-day—about business. Nothing of much consequence.'

'Oh—is that all?' answered Mrs Ronayne with one of her quick suspicious glances. She had passed the afternoon shut up there in her room alone, and had worked herself into a perfect fever of doubt and surmise, and finally of jealousy, for jealousy was charming Mrs Ronayne's besetting weakness. It is no doubt very flattering to a man's vanity that his wife should think so highly of his personal attractions that she is in constant dread lest some other woman should fall a victim to them. But, on the other hand, it is a dreadful nuisance when one can't address half-a-dozen words to a pretty girl, or remark that Mrs So-and-So is a very agreeable woman, without enduring a subsequent *peine forte et dure* of reproaches and sneers—and tears.

Mrs Ronayne pored perseveringly over that, to her, nonsensical and unintelligible letter, and at length arrived at the conclusion that it was a cryptogramic love-letter. The handwriting was undoubtedly feminine, and why, argued Mrs Ronayne, should a woman write a letter in cipher to her husband unless she desired to hide something disgraceful.

Mrs Ronayne made up her mind to solve that wicked cryptogram or perish in the attempt. She resolved also to watch her husband carefully during the next few days. Now, Julia Ronayne, though quite clever enough to hold her own in the conventional small-talk conversation usual in her set, had never guessed a conundrum or solved an acrostic in her life. To puzzle out a cryptogram of the simplest nature was quite beyond her power. Baffled and angry, she was at last compelled to own herself nonplussed by the ingenuity of the woman who had written that horrid letter. She, however, resolved to carry out the other part of her plan of campaign—namely, to watch her husband.

Certainly, Adolphus was greatly changed since the eventful morning when she had possessed herself of that queer letter. Each day saw him looking more anxious and careworn and *distrait*.

'He must be very fond of that—that creature,' thought Mrs Ronayne angrily. And she hardened her heart against her husband. She felt that things were coming to a crisis of some sort. Adolphus was evidently depressed and wretched. He ate little and slept less; even the children's chatter failed to rouse him from his fits of gloom. At last the crash came. One evening he returned earlier than usual from the City and went straight up to his wife's boudoir. Mrs Ronayne saw at once that some catastrophe had befallen. Disaster was written on her husband's white, drawn face.

'Julia,' he said huskily—'Julia, my dear'—he took her hand and gazed wistfully into her face—'do you care very much for—for all this?' He

just indicated the luxurious furnishing of the room with a gesture of his left hand.

'What do you mean, Dolph?' asked Julia, startled out of her usual lazy indifference.

'I mean, dear, would it distress you very much to leave Honeywood Villa—and give up'—

'O Dolph, something has happened!' interrupted his wife with a scared look. 'Something has gone wrong in the City.'

Mr Ronayne smiled a wan tired smile. 'Yes, Julia,' he said quietly, 'something has gone wrong—very wrong. I am ruined for'—

'Ruined!' almost shrieked Mrs Ronayne. 'O Dolph, you have been speculating! Haven't I warned you a hundred times against that horrid Stock Exchange? Haven't I often begged you to devote all your energies to the business?'

'Don't cry "I told you so" at me now, Julia,' said Mr Ronayne wearily. 'It is so easy to be wise after the event. This speculation would have made a millionaire of me had it not been for a most unlucky *contretemps*.'

'Of course! That is always the case,' wailed his wife, hiding her face in her pocket-handkerchief and dissolving into tears.

'Come, come; don't cry, my dear,' said Mr Ronayne, who hated to see his wife cry, which was perhaps the reason why she did it so often. 'Things mayn't turn out so badly after all.—You didn't let me finish my sentence just now. I was going to say that I am ruined for the time being. But with a year or two of retrenchment and hard work, I shall pull through, I daresay. What troubles me most is that I must deprive you of so much that I know you care for—your pretty house, your carriage—and unlimited credit at Madame Eulalie's,' he added with a smile.

'How did it happen? Tell me all about it,' said Mrs Ronayne, drying her eyes. Curiosity put grief to flight. She looked up at him with the tears hanging on her lashes and her rosy lips parted eagerly. She had never looked prettier. 'Was it this tiresome business that has made you look so anxious lately?' she added quickly.

'Yes; you see, all this trouble might have been averted had it not been that an important letter miscarried.'

Mrs Ronayne's heart stood still for an instant and then beat furiously. 'An important letter—miscarried,' she repeated in a dazed tone.

'Yes; it was like this. You remember the Thurstons? Well, Thurston and I invested largely in Fourcross Mine shares last year. It's a long story, and I know you don't like business details, so I'll cut it as short as I can. The Fourcross Mine is in South America, and Thurston went over a couple of months ago to see whether the thing was *bonâ fide* or not—whether the shares were worth sticking to, or only good for speculation.—You know the sort of woman Mrs Thurston is?'

'O yes; a dreadful dowdy, and wears spectacles,' interpolated Julia contemptuously.

'A shrewd woman of business though—Thurston's right hand. It was arranged that Mrs Thurston should communicate to me the result of her husband's investigations, which he sent to her by cable in cipher. I daresay you can guess why I did not wish him to communicate with me direct: it was imperative that my connection with him should be kept secret. Unluckily, a

few weeks ago scarlet fever broke out among the Thurston children, and I would not go to the house for fear of bringing the infection here; therefore, Mrs Thurston agreed to write to me in a cipher of a very simple kind, but which would not be intelligible to every one in case any of the letters were tampered with'—

'O Dolph, will you ever forgive me?' burst out Mrs Ronayne suddenly, throwing herself on her husband's breast. 'It was I who stole the letter—it is I who have ruined you!'

'You!' cried Mr Ronayne incredulously.

Julia drew back with a pale frightened face; she dared not meet her husband's eyes. Then she rose mechanically, unlocked her *escritoire*, and took from it the letter, which she tremblingly put into his hand.

'There it is, Dolph,' she said in a low voice.

He took the letter, opened and read it in silence. 'How did you get it?' he said at last, fixing his eyes sternly on his wife's tear-stained face. 'Julia, I can scarcely believe that even you could be such a fool as to have intercepted this letter.'

'I did. But, O Dolph! it was in a woman's handwriting—and I thought—I thought'—

'It's that idiotic jealousy of yours, I suppose!' he interrupted. 'Look here! Will this convince you that Mrs Thurston hasn't written me a love-letter?' he added with grim irony. Then he held the letter towards her, and with a shaking forefinger, indicated first the numerals and then the corresponding words of the cryptogram. 'It's a very simple cipher. *Realise shares Fourcross Mine. Fall impending.* If I had received this letter a week ago, I should have sold the shares at a high figure, and realised a fortune. As it is they are little better than waste paper; if you look at this morning's Money Market you will see why. The Thurstons are all right; for I happened to hear to-day that Mrs Thurston—acting on the private information she had received—instructed her broker to sell a week ago—at the time when she wrote me this letter. But for your folly—or my anxiety about the children, if you like to put it that way—I should have been able to retire from business altogether. As it is, we must let this house for a few years, and live in lodgings as cheaply as we can.—It will be a hard trial for you, my poor girl; but I hope it will have cured you once and for always of your foolish and groundless jealousy.—And,' he added with a smile, 'perhaps in future you won't think it necessary to tamper with my letters.'

TEARS IN LITERATURE.

TEARS have played no unimportant part in literature, especially in high-flown novels and sentimental poems. For some considerable time it was the custom to make the characters weep copiously upon every possible occasion. Tears of joy, tears of grief, tears of anger, tears of indignation—tears, in short, whenever they could be dragged in, were with the writers of a past generation a standing rule; and in those days the character whose 'grief is too deep for tears' would have been regarded as a glaring anomaly, and as an absurd and impossible creation. Carlyle very truly observed that the eighteenth century was an age of 'shams and

windy sentimentalities;' but it must be noted that the great feature of the age was a reaction against false sentiment. This really set in during the latter half of the seventeenth century, at a period when *The Rehearsal* was produced to ridicule the extravagances of the 'heroic' plays of the Restoration. Other burlesques aimed at the same objects soon followed. Ten years before Fielding held up to ridicule 'the puny Cockney bookseller' who poured forth 'endless volumes of sentimental twaddle,' his *Tom Thumb* was produced; and in some notes which he added afterwards, he has transmitted to us many amusing examples of the stilted language of the plays then in vogue. In the first act of Fielding's burlesque, *King Arthur* says to Queen Dollalolla:

Ha! what wrinkled sorrow
Hangs, sits, lies, frowns upon thy knitted brow?
Whence flow those tears fast down thy blubber'd
cheeks,
Like a swollen gutter, gushing through the streets?

In explanation of this, the author observes that floods of this character are very frequent in the tragic writers, and quotes these examples from plays of the period:

Near to some murmuring brook I'll lay me down,
Whose waters, if they should too shallow flow,
My tears shall swell them up till I will drown.

Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
The wrath of heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin.

From another extract it would seem that the waters of grief may soon be changed to those of joy:

These tears, that sprung from tides of grief,
Are now augmented to a flood of joy.

The tears of another character drown the whole world:

Our swelling grief
Shall melt into a deluge, and the world
Shall drown in tears.

Sterne was, as everybody knows, an extensive dealer in tears, and his reference in *Tristram Shandy* to the tears of the recording angel is as well known as any passage in literature. Barham cleverly and characteristically parodied this in the *Lay of St Nicholas*:

The accusing Byers 'flew up to heaven's Chancery,'
Blushing like scarlet with shame and concern;
The archangel took down his tale, and in answer, he
Wept—(see the works of the late Mr Sterne).

Indeed, it is said, a less taking both were in
When, after a lapse of a great many years,
They book'd Uncle Toby five shillings for swearing,
And blotted the fine out again with their tears!

To compile an index to the references to tears in Sterne's works would be no slight task, because most of his characters were of what Mr Charles Jeames Yellowplush would call a 'mist constitution.' But to Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*—much of which is written after the manner of the author of *Tristram Shandy*—there has been appended an index to the tears shed in the course of the attractive story, and a very interesting compilation it is, showing conclusively that, as Professor Henry Morley has observed, it can scarcely be called a

'dry' book. The compiler of this odd contribution to the curiosities of literature, who is careful to state that chokings, &c., are not counted, gives no fewer than forty-seven references to tears in that short work. In one instance, it will be remembered, Mr Atkins' daughter falls to the ground and 'bathes' her father's feet with her tears; while there are also several references to 'showers' of tears. As Mackenzie afterwards assisted in writing tracts against the doctrines of the Revolutionists—of which this absurd sentiment, so freely indulged in by Rousseau and Sterne, was a serious reflection—we may take it that his opinions with regard to tears underwent a change.

In the writings of those great realists in English fiction, Fielding and Smollett, tears do not play a very important part, nor do Scott and other great novelists deal much in extravagant sentiment; but for many years there was plenty of high-falutin' in the productions of some of the lesser fry. The famous Minerva Press poured out stuff of this kind in great quantities, keeping a number of the customary phrases ready composed in type, to facilitate printing, as Sydney Smith said, because the proprietor of the Press well knew that such phrases must form a part of every story he printed. Macaulay, who could read anything, used to skim through many of these sentimental novels, a specimen of one of the catastrophes in which has been recorded by his biographer. Literature of this character must have inspired a clever little skit, entitled *The Tears of Sensibility*, which Macaulay wrote; but the people to whom it was sent took it in sober earnest!

Of more modern novelists, Lytton undoubtedly stands at the head of the sentimental school. Whether he deserves all Thackeray's satire is, however, another matter. Thackeray himself was by no means sparing in his use of tears. In the course of *Vanity Fair* there are a good many instances in which the 'green eyes' of Becky Sharp 'looked up to heaven and filled with tears;' and as to sentiment, Alexander Smith said that the only faculty with which the great novelist gifted his good women was the supreme faculty of tears. Without going so far as this, it must be confessed that Thackeray's women are, to use his own phrase, 'uncommonly watery,' although they do not shed 'showers' or 'rivers' of tears, like the heroines of a past generation.

Every novelist has some pet idea, just as every man has some pet word or phrase; and Dickens's pet resource for producing humour was tears, of which he avails himself largely. Nearly all his humbugs are gifted with the power of producing at least one tear at command; and in *Martin Chuzzlewit* he runs through the whole gamut of tears—the tears of grief, the tears of joy, the tears of sentimental drunkenness, the tears of indignation ("Indignation," observed Mr Pecksniff, "will bring the scalding tear into the honest eye, I know"—he wiped his own elaborately), and the tears of hypocrisy—although perhaps the tears of indignation should be included with the latter. Of his use of tears for producing humour, only two examples need be quoted. Bailey junior expressed his contrition on a memorable occasion by 'affecting to wipe away scalding tears with his apron, and afterwards feigned to wring a vast amount of water out of that garment.' Of a letter which he intended to write to his aunt, Dick Swiveller

said: 'I mean to blot it a good deal and shake some water over it out of the pepper-caster, to make it look penitent. "I'm in such a state of mind that I hardly know what I write"—blot—"if you could see me at this minute shedding tears for my past misconduct"—pepper-caster—"my hand trembles when I think"—blot again.—If that don't produce the effect, it's all over.' These are two instances out of many in which Dickens makes use of tears with inimitable effect, and with all the little embellishments of which he was such a master. Dickens's humbugs, with their unlimited power of shedding crocodile tears, have frequently evoked criticism; but in the course of a controversy that has recently taken place on the 'Anatomy of Acting,' it was stated that anybody with a week's practice can produce tears at will. If this be true, the 'hebdomadal conferrers of immortality' are indeed confounded.

Obviously, Dickens often meant to ridicule the idea that tears are indispensable adjuncts to true feeling; and no doubt much of his satire in this direction accomplished its purpose. What influence his writings alone had in moulding the character of the fiction of to-day it is impossible accurately to determine; but that influence was undoubtedly great, and the fashion in literature at present is certainly not the ultra-sentimental. Emphatically, then, tears 'have had their day.' We have now, it is true, the novel of sentiment, the novel of romance, and what Mr Justin M'Carthy calls the 'conundrum sort' of novel; but we are all 'realists' so far as sentiment is concerned, and 'shams and sickly sentimentalities' are not at all likely to achieve any great popularity whilst the public taste remains as it is at present.

THEN AND NOW.

I.

Dost thou remember, love, how pale and wan
This lakelet ere the wintry days were gone,
With one green isle of glistening lily-leaves?

Dost thou remember, love, that starless night
When the winds ceased their sighing, in affright,
And birds were silent under cottage eaves?

Remembering, strive a moment, love, to guess
The woe of hearts unloved, their loneliness,
Their deathless pain no hour of rest relieves.

II.

How gleams the lake now in the summer light,
While drifting lilies, golden-hued and white,
Fling back a kindred splendour to the sun!

Ere that great darkness awed us into fear,
The silver moon soared slowly, full and clear,
To skies where night was ended, just begun.

So mayst thou know how gladly I saw afar
Thy own sweet face shine like a splendid star;
What peace closed round me when the prize was won.

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BADGERS AND OTTERS.

HAZELHURST was a long line of woodland, on one side skirted by the sea, and on the other by a crumbling limestone escarpment. It was woodland with the deep impress of time upon it—a forest primeval. The branches and boles of the oaks were tortured out of all original conception. Save for colour, they might have been congealed water or duramen muscles. Down in the hollows there are deep moss, elastic and silent over all.

For centuries the pines had shed their needles undisturbed. These and the pine-trunks sent up a sweet savour from the earth, an odour that acted as a tonic to the whole being. There were sun-flashes in the grassy glades, where the jays chattered and the cushats cooed, and where ever and anon a rabbit rustled through. Often over these the kestrel hung and vibrated its shadow on the spot beneath; or the sparrow-hawk, with its clean-cut figure, stood with its foot on its prey on a dead pine bough. In the summer, red creatures that were bits of light gracefully glided among green tassels, and the chatter of squirrels was heard. The older trees attracted woodpeckers, and the nuthatch threw out fine fibres of rotten wood. Sometimes a pheasant or a partridge would startle, getting heavily up from its olive eggs by a log left by the charcoal-burners. Thus rudely disturbed, it has no time to scatter leaves over its nest, as is its wont. The shaggy and corrugated bark of the old trees was larvæ-haunted, and consequently mouse-like creepers abounded. These little creatures on every trunk showed conspicuously as they ran their marvellous adaptation to an end, and fulfilled it perfectly. All the wood-birds were there—the white-throat, the wood and the willow wren, the chiff-chaff and garden-warbler. These sang from the leafy boughs. But higher up towards the escarpment the floor of the wood was rugged and rock-strewn. Boulders had rolled from above, and among these dwelt weasels and ermines. There were at least a pair of martens,

and foxes from the fells had their tracks through the woods.

A primitive mansion had once stood in the wood, but now it was gone. It had been large; and green mounds, now laid low, marked out its dimensions. Old oak panellings, with long-gone dates, were sometimes dug up, and these were covered with carvings quaint and curious—‘all made out of the carver’s brain.’ Lying round this had been an extensive orchard, the rich though old trees of which remained. And now in this glorious summer-time the golden fruit fell unheeded to the ground. For Hazelhurst was long distant from town or nearest village. Brambles held their luscious fruit, and every species of ground-berry grew here. No wonder it was a paradise to mice and squirrels and birds. They revelled in nature’s ample provision, and were undisturbed.

Here, in the days of our immediate ancestors, badgers were plentiful. Now, where a ridge of rock ran through the wood there was a hole, the entrance to a somewhat spacious cavity. This could be seen for the seeking, not otherwise. Brambles protected it and ground-ivy. Black bryony and woodbine twisted up every available stem, and a knot of blackthorn grew over all. The spot was protected and dense. One day we invaded it; but after long crawling and sticking fast, had to return. In it lived the badgers—had done so time out of mind, and the few poachers who knew it called it ‘Brockholes.’ ‘Brock’ is the old north-country word for badger, and, as we have said, everything testified to its presence. In this wild-fruit paradise, at least two pairs of badgers bred. Each pair had more than one apartment—at least the young were not produced in that which formed the general abode. These were at the ends of the burrow, where were the beds, composed of roots and dried grass. The young were brought forth in April, and after about six weeks, might have been seen sitting about the mouth of their hole, or accompanying their dam to short distances when on her evening rambles. We always found the badgers un-

offending harmless creatures, unless first attacked. They fed almost entirely on roots, wild fruits, grain, and occasionally insects. They were, however, extremely shy and wary. Beautiful it was to see these creatures in summer searching for food among the bushes, occasionally giving a low grunt when some favourite root was turned up. When insects came within their reach they were snapped up somewhat after the manner of a dog catching flies.

The life of the badger is eminently that of a peaceful creature, harmless in all its ways, unoffending, interesting in its life-history, useful, and, above all, filled with a quiet contentment almost human. The body of the badger is long and heavy, and its legs short, which give it an awkward shambling appearance when running. Its beautifully shaped head has two long lines running from the snout to the tips of the ears. The upper parts of its body are light gray, becoming darker below; the under parts are quite black. The total length of a fully grown male badger is about thirty-six inches. Especially is the structure of the badger adapted to its mode of life, this being shown in the slender muzzle with movable snout which is employed in digging. It is when thus occupied, too, that the short stout limbs are seen fulfilling their end; and when no natural cavity exists, it is these limbs and snout that provide one. Both are brought into frequent requisition when digging for roots, of certain of which the badger is particularly fond.

Badgers are quite susceptible of domestication, and a friend had a pair which he led about in collars. They are possessed of great affection for their young, and rush blindly into danger, or even suffer themselves to be killed in attempting to rescue them.

We have stretched our length along a slab of rock which margins the bank and recedes far under it. The stream for the most part is rapid, but here narrows to slow black depth. Ever and ceaselessly does the water chafe and lap among the shelving rocks, and this, with the constant 'drip,' only makes the silence audible. Fungi and golden mosses light up our dark retreat. Never was green more green or lichen tracery more ravishing. Close-clinging and rock-loving is all life here. Water percolates through the bank and spreads its silver filament over all. Far out and beyond the deep wood it comes from the scaurs, and the limestone sends its carbonate to dome our retreat. Miniature stalactites hang from the roof, and bright bosses rise from the floor. Frail fern-fronds depend from the crevices; and as the light rushes in, masses of golden saxifrage gild all the chamber. The beams will not long stay, for the sun dips in the western woods.

From the mouth of our recess we take in a silent river-reach. It is thickly embowered and overhung. Long drooping racemes of green tree-flowers attract innumerable insects, especially those of the lime, and intent upon these, a fly-catcher sits lengthwise upon a branch. How beautiful in its short flights, the iridescence of its plumage, its white eye-lines, and barred forehead! Numerous small waterfalls, the gauze and film veils of which when the wind blows, and dripping moss, have attracted the dippers. Kingfishers too, in their green flight dash over the

still stream. The remote pines have lost their light, and stand black against the water. Sundown has come, and it is the hour of vesper hymns. The woods are loud-swelling volumes of sound. Behind us is a woodland enchanted, though with no sadder spirit than blackbirds and thrushes that whistle to cheer it. This loud evening hymn lasts for an hour, and then subsides, and the woods hush. The stem of the silver birch ceases to vibrate to the blackbird's whistle. The polyglot wood-thrush is dreaming of gilded fly and dewy morn, and finally that last far-off song has ceased. Silence—an intense holy calm—is over the woods. Chill comes, the dew rises, and twilight!—and the night-side of nature. How rich and varied is that of the stream-side! The fern-owls, with their soft plumage and noiseless flight, come out, as do the great moths and bustards.

This prevalence of life at the same time is as nature would have it—the one acting as food for the other. The beat of unseen pinions is heard above, but no object visible—some night-haunting bird flying off to its feeding-ground. Through the short summer night snipe whistle and wail. Newly arrived crakes call from the meadows, and a disturbed lapwing gets up crying from the green corn-stalks. Maybe the disturber was the hare, whose nearly human cry now comes from thorn-fence. For it, the corn-sprouts have come for the last time, and soon it will be in the poacher's wallet. A loud splash comes from the water, and a great black trout has sucked down its prey. This is a large-winged night-fly. The first splash is a token of more abundant night-food, and soon the reach boils. The crescent moon shows a bit of light at intervals; soon masses of cloud intervene. A faint whistle, unlike that of any bird, comes up stream, and although imperceptible, the dark still water is moved. The trout cease to rise. The whistle comes nearer, and then a rustle is heard. The osier beds are stirred, and some long dark object makes its way between the parted stems. It is an otter. He has been sent to reconnoitre, and all is safe. Then others come paddling down stream, and, arriving at the pool, stop, tumble and frolic, rolling over and over and round and round, and performing the most marvellous evolutions. They swing on the willow-spray, and dash with lightning velocity at a piece of floating bark, tumble with it, wrestle with it, and go through a hundred wonderful movements. They are motionless, then begin to play, and so continue for nearly an hour, when, as if suddenly alarmed, they rush down stream to their fishing-grounds, and leave us cold and benumbed. We plod through the meadow beneath the moon and stars, chilled to the marrow by the falling dew.

Otters are still abundant on the banks of most northern streams, as also among the rocks and boulders of the coast-line. Human invasion drives them from their haunts, although, where waters remain unpolluted, they not unfrequently pass up the rivers by towns and villages during the still night. Fitted for an aquatic existence, the structure of the otter beautifully exhibits the provisions suitable to its mode of life. On land it can travel swiftly, though the water is its best element. Immersed in this, its coat appears smooth and glassy. In pursuing its prey it performs the most graceful movements, doubling and

diving so rapidly that it is difficult to follow its movements. When fishing, its object is to get beneath the object pursued, as, from the construction of its eyes, which are placed high in the head, it is better enabled to follow its prey. This it seldom fails to secure. Its uniform dusky brown coat has, like all aquatic creatures, a soft underfur with long hair above.

The otter generally takes possession of a natural cavity, a drain, or a hole made by the inundation of the stream. The entrance is usually under water, and inclines towards the bank. Situations where the latter is overhung with bushes and with tall water-plants in the vicinity are generally chosen. From this, the young, when three or four weeks old, betake themselves to the water. If captured now, they may easily be domesticated. One of our friends has to-day a couple of young otters, which he leads about in a leash. At Bassenthwaite, a man and his son trained a pair of otters to fish in the lake. They would return when called upon, or follow their masters home when the fishing was over. The males in spring fight desperately; and once when hidden, we witnessed a fight which lasted two hours, and so engrossed did the combatants become, that we approached and, taking the part of the lesser, shot its aggressor.

And now a word as to the food of the otter. That it destroys fish we are not about to deny. But this liking for fish has become such a stereotyped 'fact' in natural history that it is glibly repeated, parrot-like, and so continues until most persons have come to accept it. The otter destroys but few fish, using the word in its popular acceptation. What it destroys are for food, and not out of love of killing. The greater part of its diet consists of fresh-water crayfish, thousands of which it destroys, and it is for these that long journeys are so frequently made. Many miles in a night are traversed for these crustaceans, the beds of mountain and moorland streams being tracked to their source, almost every stone on the way being examined. And at least upon two occasions have we found the remains of the water-hen after an otter's meal.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXIX.—ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN.

DURING the whole of the next week, the Squire and a strange artisan, whom he had specially imported by rail from London, went much about together by day and night through the grounds at Whitstrand. A certain air of mystery hung over their joint proceedings. The strange artisan was a skilled workman in the engineering line, he told the people at the *Fisherman's Rest*, where he had taken a bed for his stay in the village; and indeed sundry books in his kit bore out the statement—weird books of a scientific and diagrammatic character, chokefull of formulæ in Greek lettering, which seemed not unlikely to be connected with hydrostatics, dynamics, trigonometry, and mechanics, or any other equally abstruse and uncanny subject, not wholly alien to necromancy and witchcraft. It was held at Whitstrand by those best able to form an opinion in such dark questions, that the new importation was 'summat in the electric way;' and it was certainly matter

of plain fact, patent to all observers equally, that he did in very truth fix up an elaborate lightning-conductor of the latest pattern to the newly-thrown-out gable-end at what had once been Elsie's window. It was Elsie's window still to Hugh: let him twist it and turn it and alter it as he would, he feared it would never, never cease to be Elsie's window.

But in the domain at large, the intelligent artisan with the engineering air, who was surmised to be 'summat in the electric way,' carefully examined, under Hugh's directions, many parts of the grounds of Whitstrand. Squire was going to lay out the garden and terrace afresh, the servants conjectured in their own society: one or two of them, exceedingly modern in their views, even opined in an off-hand fashion that he must be bent on laying electric lights on. Conservative in most things to the backbone, the servants bestowed the meed of their hearty approval on the electric light: it saves so much in trimming and cleaning. Lamps are the bugbear of big country houses: electricity, on the other hand, needs no tending. It was near the poplar that Squire was going to put his installation, as they call the arrangement in our latter-day jargon; and he was going to drive it, rumour remarked, by a tidal outfall. What a tidal outfall might be, or how it could work in lighting the Hall, nobody knew; but the intelligent artisan had let the words drop casually in the course of conversation; and the *Fisherman's Rest* snapped them up at once, and retailed them freely with profound gusto to all after-comers.

Still, it was a curious fact in its own way that the installation appeared to progress most easily when nobody happened to be looking on, and that the skilled workman in the engineering line generally stood with his hands in his pockets, surveying his handicraft with languid interest, whenever anybody from the village or the Hall lounged up by his side to inspect or wonder at it.

More curious still was another small fact, known to nobody but the skilled workman *in propria persona*, that four small casks of petroleum from a London store were stowed away, by Hugh Massinger's orders, under the very roots of the big poplar; and that by their side lay a queer apparatus, connected apparently in some remote way with electric lighting.

The Squire himself, however, made no secret of his own personal and private intentions to the London workman. He paid the man well, and he exacted silence. That was all. But he explained precisely in plain terms what it was that he wanted done. The tree was an eyesore to him, he said, with his usual frankness—Hugh was always frank whenever possible—but his wife, for sentimental reasons, had a special fancy for it. He wanted to get rid of it, therefore, in the least obtrusive way he could easily manage. This was the least obtrusive way. So *this* was what he required done with it. The London workman nodded his head, pocketed his pay, looked unconcerned, and held his tongue with trained fidelity. It was none of his business to pry into any employer's motives. Enough for him to take his orders and to carry them out faithfully to the very letter. The job was odd: an odd job is always interesting. He hoped the experiment might prove successful.

The Whitestrand labourers, who passed by the poplar and the London workman, time and again, with a jerky nod and their pipes turned downward, never noticed a certain slender unobtrusive copper wire which the strange artisan fastened one evening, in the gray dusk, right up the stem and boles of the big tree to a round knob on the very summit. The wire, however, as its fixer knew, ran down to a large deal box well buried in the ground, which bore outside a green label, 'Ruhmkorff Induction Coil, Elliott's Patent.' The wire and coil terminated in a pile close to the four full petroleum barrels. When the London workman had securely laid the entire apparatus, undisturbed by loungers, he reported adversely, with great solemnity, on the tidal outfall and electric light scheme to Hugh Massinger. No sufficient power for the purpose existed in the river. This adverse report was orally delivered in the front vestibule of Whitestrand Hall; and it was also delivered with sedulous care—as per orders received—in Mrs Massinger's own presence. When the London workman went out again after making his carefully worded statement, he went out clinking a coin of the realm or two in his trousers' pocket, and with his tongue stuck, somewhat unbecomingly, in his right cheek, as who should pride himself on the successful outwitting of an innocent fellow-creature. He had done the work he was paid for, and he had done it well. But he thought to himself, as he went his way rejoicing, that the Squire of Whitestrand must be very well held in hand indeed by that small pale lady, if he had to take so many cunning precautions in secret beforehand when he wanted to get rid of a single tree that offended his eye in his own gardens.

The plot was all well laid now. Hugh had nothing further left to do but to possess his soul in patience against the next thunderstorm. He had not very long to wait. Before the month was out, a thunderstorm did indeed burst in full force over Whitestrand and its neighbourhood—one of those terrible and destructive east-coast electric displays which invariably leave their broad mark behind them. For along the low, flat, monotonous East Anglian shore, where hills are unknown and big trees rare, the lightning almost inevitably singles out for its onslaught some aspiring piece of man's handiwork—some church steeple, some castle keep, the turrets on some tall and isolated manor-house, the vane above some ancient castellated gateway.

The reason for this is not far to seek. In hilly countries the hills and trees act as natural lightning-conductors, or rather as decoys to draw aside the fire from heaven from the towns or farm-houses that nestle far below among the glens and valleys. But in wide level plains, where all alike is flat and low-lying, human architecture forms for the most part the one salient point in the landscape for lightning to attack: every church or tower with its battlements and lanterns stands in the place of the polished knobs on an electric machine, and draws down upon itself with unerring certainty the destructive bolt from the overcharged clouds. Owing to this cause, the thunderstorms of East Anglia are the most appalling and destructive in their concrete results of any in England. The laden clouds, big with electric energy, hang low and dark above one's very head,

and let loose their accumulated store of vivid flashes in the exact midst of towns and villages.

This particular thunderstorm, as chance would have it, came late at night, after three sultry days of close weather, when big black masses were just beginning to gather in vast battalions over the German Ocean; and it let loose at last its fierce artillery in terrible volleys right over the village and grounds of Whitestrand. Hugh Massinger was the first at the Hall to observe from afar the distant flash, before the thunder had made itself audible in their ears. A pale light to westward, in the direction of Snade, attracted, as he read, his passing attention. 'By Jove!' he cried, rising with a yawn from his chair, and laying down the manuscript of *A Life's Philosophy*, which he was languidly correcting in its later stanzas, 'that's something like lightning, Winifred! Over Snade way, apparently. I wonder if it's going to drift towards us?—Whew—what a clap! It's precious near. I expect we shall catch it ourselves shortly.'

The clouds rolled up with extraordinary rapidity, and the claps came fast and thick and nearer. Winifred cowered down on the sofa in terror. She dreaded thunder; but she was too proud to confess what she would nevertheless have given worlds to do—hide her frightened little head with sobs and tears in its old place upon Hugh's shoulder. 'It's coming this way,' she cried nervously after a while. 'That last flash must have been awfully near us.'

Even as she spoke, a terrific volley seemed to burst all at once right over their heads and shake the house with its irresistible majesty. Winifred buried her face deep in the cushions. 'O Hugh,' she cried in a terrified tone, 'this is awful—awful!'

Much as he longed to look out of the window, Hugh could not resist that unspoken appeal. He drew up the blind hastily to its full height, so that he might see out to watch the success of his deep-laid stratagem; then he hurried over with real tenderness to Winifred's side. He drew his arm round her and soothed her with his hand, and laid her poor throbbing aching head with a lover's caress upon his own broad bosom. Winifred nestled close to him with a sigh of relief. The nearness of danger, real or imagined, rouses all the most ingrained and profound of our virile feelings. The instinct of protection for the woman and the child comes over even bad men at such moments of doubt with irresistible might and majesty. Small differences or tiffs are forgotten and forgiven: the woman clings naturally in her feminine weakness to the strong man in his primary aspect as comforter and protector. Between Hugh and Winifred the estrangement as yet was but vague and unacknowledged. Had it yawned far wider, had it sunk far deeper, the awe and terror of that supreme moment would amply have sufficed to bridge it over, at least while the orgy of the thunderstorm lasted.

For next instant a sheet of liquid flame seemed to surround and engulf the whole house at once in its white embrace. The world became for the twinkling of an eye one surging flood of vivid fire, one roar and crash and sea of deafening tumult. Winifred buried her face deeper than ever on Hugh's shoulder, and put up both her small hands to her tingling ears, to crush if possible the

hideous roar out. But the light and sound seemed to penetrate everything: she was aware of them keenly through her very bones and nerves and marrow; her entire being appeared as if pervaded and overwhelmed with the horror of the lightning. In another moment all was over, and she was conscious only of an abiding awe, a deep-seated after-glow of alarm and terror. But Hugh had started up from the sofa now, both his hands clasped hard in front of his breast, and was gazing wildly out of the big bow-window, and lifting up his voice in a paroxysm of excitement. 'It's hit the poplar!' he cried. 'It's hit the poplar! It must be terribly near, Winnie! It's hit the poplar!'

Winifred opened her eyes with an effort, and saw him standing there, as if spellbound, by the window. She dared not get up and come any nearer the front of the room, but, raising her eyes, she saw from where she sat, or rather crouched, that the poplar stood out, one living mass of rampant flame, a flaring beacon, from top to bottom. The petroleum, ignited and raised to flashing-point by the fire which the induction coil had drawn down from heaven, gave off its blazing vapour in huge rolling sheets and forked tongues of flame, which licked up the crackling branches of the dry old tree from base to summit like so much touchwood. The poplar rose now one solid column of crimson fire. The red glow deepened and widened from moment to moment. Even the drenching rain that followed the thunder-clap seemed powerless to check that frantic onslaught. The fire leaped and danced through the tall straight boughs with mad exultation, hissing out its defiance to the big round drops which burst off into tiny balls of steam before they could reach the red-hot trunk and snapping branches. Even left to itself, the poplar, once ignited, would have burnt to the ground with startling rapidity; for its core was dry and light as tinder, its wood was eaten through by innumerable worm-holes, and the hollow centre of mouldering dry-rot, where children had loved to play at Hide-and-seek, acted now like a roaring chimney flue, with a fierce draught that carried up the circling eddies of smoke and flame in mad career to the topmost branches. But the fumes of the petroleum, rendered instantly gaseous by the electric heat, made the work of destruction still more instantaneous, terrible, and complete than it would have proved if left to unaided nature. The very atmosphere resolved itself into one rolling pillar of fluid flame. The tree seemed enveloped in a shroud of fire. All human effort must be powerless to resist it. The poplar dissolved almost as if by magic with a wild rapidity into its prime elements.

A man must be a man come what may. Hugh leaped towards the window and flung it open wildly. 'I must go!' he cried. 'Ring the bell for the servants.' The savage glee in his voice was well repressed. His enemy was low, laid prone at his feet, but he would at least pretend to some spark of magnanimity. 'We must get out the hose!' he exclaimed. 'We must try to save it!' Winifred clung to his arm in horror. 'Let it burn down, Hugh!' she cried. 'Who cares for the poplar? I'd sooner ten thousand poplars burned to the ground than that you should venture out on such an evening!'

Her hand on his arm thrilled through him with horror. Her words stung him with a sense of his meanness. Something very like a touch of remorse came over his spirit. He stooped down and kissed her tenderly. The next flash struck over towards the sandhills. The thunder was rolling gradually seaward.

Hugh slept but little that eventful night; his mind addressed itself with feverish eagerness to so many hard and doubtful questions. He tossed and turned and asked himself ten thousand times over—was the tree burnt through—burnt down to the ground? Were the roots and trunk consumed beyond hope—or rather beyond fear—of ultimate recovery? Was the hateful poplar really done for? Would any trace remain of the barrels that had held the tell-tale petroleum? any relic be left of the Ruhmkorff Induction Coil? What jot or tittle of the evidence of design would now survive to betray and convict him? What ground for reasonable suspicion would Winifred see that the fire was not wholly the result of accident?

But when next morning's light dawned and the sun arose upon the scene of conflagration, Hugh saw at a glance that all his fears had indeed been wholly and utterly groundless. The poplar was as though it had never existed. A bare black patch by the mouth of the Char, covered with ash and dust and cinder, alone marked the spot where the famous tree had once stood. The very roots were burned deep into the ground. The petroleum had done its duty bravely. Not a trace of design could be observed anywhere. The Ruhmkorff Induction Coil had melted into air. Nobody ever so much as dreamed that human handicraft had art or part in the burning of the celebrated Whitestrand poplar. The *Times* gave it a line of passing regret; and the Trinity House deleted it with pains as a lost landmark from their sailing directions.

Hugh set his workmen instantly to stub up the roots. And Winifred, gazing mournfully next day at the ruins, observed with a sigh: 'You never liked the dear old tree, Hugh; and it seems as if fate had interposed in your favour to destroy it. I'm sorry it's gone; but I'd sacrifice a hundred such trees any day to have you as kind to me as you were last evening.'

The saying smote Hugh's heart sore. He played nervously with the button of his coat. 'I wish you could have kept it, Winnie,' he said not unkindly. 'But it's not my fault.—And I bear no malice. I'll even forgive you for telling me I'd never make a poet; though that, you'll admit, was a hard saying. I think, my child, if you don't mind, I'll ask Hatherley down next week to visit us.—There's nothing like adverse opinion to improve one's work. Hatherley's opinion is more than adverse. I'd like his criticism on *A Life's Philosophy* before I rush into print at last with the greatest and deepest work of my lifetime.'

That same evening, as it was growing dusk, Warren Relf and Potts, navigating the *Mud-Turtle* around by sea from Yarmouth Roads, put in for the night to the Char at Whitestrand. They meant to lie by for a Sunday in the estuary, and walk across the fields, if the day proved fine, to service at Snade. As they approached the mouth they looked about in vain for the familiar landmark. At first they could hardly believe

their eyes: to men who knew the east coast well, the disappearance of the Whitestrand poplar from the world seemed almost as incredible as the sudden removal of the Bass Rock or the Pillars of Hercules. Nobody would ever dream of cutting down that glory of Suffolk, that time-honoured sea-mark. But as they strained their eyes through the deepening gloom, the stern logic of facts left them at last no further room for syllogistic reasoning or *a priori* scepticism. The Whitestrand poplar was really gone. Not a stump even remained as its relic or its monument.

They drove the yawl close under the shore. The current was setting out stronger than ever, and eddying back against the base of the roots with a fierce and eager swirling movement. Warren Relf looked over the bank in doubt at the charred and blackened soil beside it. He knew in a second exactly what had happened. 'Massinger has burned down the poplar, Potts,' he cried aloud. He did not add, 'because it stood upon the very spot where Elsie Challoner threw herself over.' But he knew it was so. They turned the yawl up stream once more. Then Warren Relf murmured in a low voice, more than half to himself, but in solemn accents: 'So much the worse in the end for Whitestrand.'

All the way up to the *Fisherman's Rest* he repeated again and again below his breath: 'So much the worse in the end for Whitestrand.'

(To be continued.)

THE LAND OF FIRE.

READERS of the recently published *Life of Charles Darwin* will remember that during his voyage in the *Beagle* the great naturalist saw something of Tierra del Fuego; and the account he gives of the country serves to remind us what an unimportant and little known part of the world it is. We have most of us a vague notion that it is a desolate region in the extreme south of South America, inhabited by savages; but few of us are prepared to commit ourselves to any more definite statements regarding it. Even geographical specialists have, until recently, known but little about the country, as, since its discovery by Magellan in 1520, it has remained almost unnoticed and unexplored, the occasional efforts which have been made in that direction having been partial and unsuccessful. For this, physical causes are largely responsible. Owing to the rough seas and persistent winds which during a great part of the year prevail along its shores, sailing vessels doubling Cape Horn have taken care not to approach the land too closely, and as a rule sight only some small islands off the south, which English sailors know as the Digarameries, a corruption of Diego Ramirez, the name bestowed on them by the Spaniards. The passage through the Strait of Magellan is, owing to currents and devious channels, only practicable for steamers, and even this class of vessels has only recently begun to make use of that route. It is not surprising, therefore, that Tierra del Fuego has hitherto attracted but little attention, and that the busy world has been content to let it alone. Of late, however, circumstances have arisen which give

the country interest and supply information about it.

Within the past five years it has been the subject of more thorough and scientific investigation than has ever been previously attempted. Lieutenant Bové, of the French navy, has, by permission of the Argentine government, and partly under its patronage, made an expedition to the south-east portion of Tierra del Fuego; and his labours have resulted in a valuable Report on the fauna, flora, and general characteristics of the country, and the condition and language of the people. Another even more valuable contribution to our knowledge on the subject has been made by the Rev. Thomas Brydges, a Church of England missionary, who has lived in the south-eastern part of Tierra del Fuego for over twenty-five years, and has during that long residence accumulated an important amount of information about the country and its inhabitants. Mr Julius Popper, a man of scientific antecedents, has also, on behalf of a Mining Company, recently made an expedition right across the country from Useless Bay on the west to San Sebastian on the east, and thence along the coast. Lastly, Don Ramon Lista, a well-known explorer, and a member of the Geographical Society of Buenos Ayres, has just returned from a scientific and geographical expedition to the east and south-east coasts, undertaken at the instance of the Argentine government. These combined sources of information have served to correct many errors hitherto current about the country, and to add to our knowledge in many important respects.

The group of islands which form the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego have an area of about eighty thousand square miles, nearly the same size as England and Scotland. Darwin describes the country as 'a mountainous land, partly submerged in the sea, so that deep inlets and bays occupy the place where the valleys should exist. To find an acre of level land in any part of the country is most rare.' Don Ramon Lista, however, who has had greater and more recent opportunities of investigation, thinks this description a mistaken one. He describes Argentine Tierra del Fuego as presenting two aspects: in the north, there are valleys more or less extensive, covered with splendid groves, and irrigated by large rivers, some of which are navigable; this region enjoying an agreeable temperature, with very little snow during the winter. South of this he reports that the appearance of the country changes, and extended forests appear, where the grass is not so abundant or the rivers so large. The face of the land is in this part something like Switzerland, with small lakes, elevated mountains, and valuable timber forests. He seems to think the country capable of great development, for he adds: 'On the plains there will yet be planted a great pastoral industry, while I believe the mountains will be found to contain valuable mineral deposits.'

The geological formation of Tierra del Fuego corresponds with that of Patagonia; its mountains are the continuation and southern extremity of the Andes; whilst the plains and uplands correspond to the Patagonian steppes. In some parts the formation is decidedly volcanic; pumice-stone is found in large quantities, and granite and quartz are abundant. On the other

hand, limestone, iron, and coal seem to be wanting. Gold has been found in considerable quantities in the north, and for a number of years the enterprising Chilians have been washing it at the foot of the chain of hills which forms the coasts of Useless and Future Bays. The climate is certainly not the best in the world, but its disadvantages seem to have been a good deal exaggerated by casual visitors, who have perhaps been unfortunate as to times and localities. Mr Brydges tells us that in the humid regions of the west, frosts are almost unknown; while in the central and eastern parts, where the sky is nearly always cloudless, there is intense cold during the four months from June to September. He adds, that the want of sufficient heat in summer is the great drawback to the climate, and is a greater inconvenience than the cold in winter, which has never been known to be lower than twelve degrees Fahrenheit, while the highest summer temperature is only seventy-five degrees. If it were not for the raw, damp winds, the climate of Tierra del Fuego would be much better than that of Canada. While there are probably few streams in the country which are of sufficient size ever to be utilised for navigation, there is a large number of small rivers and watercourses, which carry off the rains and melted snow from the mountains, and thus assist to irrigate the lower plains.

Travellers' reports as to the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego have been conflicting. Some visitors have reported the natives to be stalwart, fine-looking men, and others have described them as small and abject beings. Darwin, whose scientific investigations were confined to the south of the country, says that 'one can hardly believe them to be fellow-creatures and inhabitants of the same world.' On the other hand, other explorers in the north and north-west describe the Fuegians as powerful men of large stature and warlike instincts. This apparent discrepancy seems to be due to the fact that the land is inhabited by two very distinct races of Indians. Mr Brydges, whose long residence in the country enables him to speak with authority on this point, assures us that there are two separate and distinct tribes dwelling in Tierra del Fuego. He calls them, as they call themselves, Onas and Yahgans; the former living in the north, and the latter in the south. The Onas seem to be almost identical in character, manners, and language with the Tuelche Indians of Patagonia. Like them, they use bows and arrows in the chase, and are muscular, active, and well formed. Their number is now much reduced, an epidemic of measles having been very fatal among them a few years ago, and the whole tribe probably does not now number more than five hundred persons. They are nomadic, and live principally in portable tents, covered with guanaco skins. Mr Popper did not form a high opinion of their intellectual faculties, judging from the primitive nature of their implements. He describes their tools as consisting for the most part of pieces of iron, taken from some vessel cast on shore, and tied to pieces of wood by leather thongs. They have no canoes, and do not fish, though they pick up on the shore such fish as are left behind after heavy tides. Their only water-vessels are large shells; but they display some ingenuity in making arrows and baskets.

The Yahgans, who inhabit the southern portion of Tierra del Fuego, are an altogether different people from the Onas, and have with some reason been considered as the most miserable species of humanity in the western hemisphere. They are quarrelsome and treacherous, and are governed entirely by their desires and passions. Very dexterous in the management of canoes, they live largely by fishing, but are very destitute even of the simplest appliances for cooking and comfort. Some of the tribe are of fair size, but others are extremely diminutive and abject looking. Mr Brydges, however, who has lived among them nearly a quarter of a century, says they are not so degraded as they have been represented, and he particularly repudiates the charge of cannibalism which has been made against them. They have been found capable of some small measure of civilisation, but, like the Onas, have suffered severely from epidemics, especially from smallpox. Their number is now considerably below three thousand. Mr Brydges describes their language as 'soft, rich, and very full;' how rich and full, may be inferred from his almost incredible statement that he has accumulated a vocabulary of no fewer than thirty thousand words. To find such a wealthy language among so low a race is a curious circumstance, and one worthy of consideration by ethnologists.

Such are a few of the latest particulars about this little-known territory. Even the name by which it is known is a misnomer, it being a land of frost rather than a land of fire. It received the latter title from its discoverer, Magellan, who, when passing its northern coasts, noticed night after night a succession of small fires, which he supposed to be due to some mysterious natural causes. In reality, they were beacons lighted by the natives; but the original mistake has given a permanent name to the country, and is typical of many other mistakes which have since been made about it.

MIN:

A RAILROAD STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER V.—CONCLUSION.

It was towards the close of the afternoon, and Mr Ferris was preparing to leave his office for the day, when the door opened to admit a man who was rather 'seedy' in his appearance, and whose once handsome face bore unmistakable traces of recent dissipation. The Superintendent turned an inquiring glance at his visitor, whom he evidently did not recognise; but Min, who was the only other occupant of the room, felt sure that she had seen the fellow before. It was Sam Ripley, the discharged engineer of No. 404! Ripley was not actually intoxicated, but he had evidently reached that stage of chronic drunkenness when the brief intermissions of comparative sobriety are so nearly akin to intoxication, that steadiness of step and clearness of speech are impossible achievements. For some reason or other, the ex-engineer felt disposed to be insolent. Without removing his cap, he addressed Superintendent Ferris: 'How do, boss!'

'Well, my man, what is it?'

'Don't take a feller up so short, boss—don't sound well. My name's Ripley—Samuel J. Ripley. Don't 'pear to remember old acquaintances? Strange, too. You orter know me, 'cause you fired for me one night when I handled the throttle of old 404 an' took your special from 'Stan'ople to Prairie City. Good joke on you as well as on me, wasn't it?—Ah, I see you remember!'

'Yes, sir; decidedly I remember it all. I wonder that you have the consummate impudence to come into my office, when, if your deserts were dealt to you, a gaol should hold you. Doubtless, you have some extraordinary reason for intruding—let's hear it.'

'Very good, boss. I came for a pass to Prairie City.—Yes, sir, I said a *pass*. Write it out favour of Samuel J. Ripley, Chicago to Prairie City, Nebraska; an' if you feel like throwing in a five-dollar bill, so much the better.'

'Are you crazy, man?' inquired the official.

'No, mister, I am *not* crazy—not even "chuck" at the present moment; an' if you will listen to me for a minute, I think you will fill out the pass.'

Here Ripley winked in the direction of Min—in whom he had not recognised the prairie waif he had often seen at 44-mile—as much as to ask if he should speak out before the girl.

Ferris understood the gesture. 'You can speak before that young lady,' he said. 'She hears all my business, and can keep it to herself.'

'Very good, boss; it don't make no difference to me. Now, I'm bound to get down Prairie City way. You see, whisky's pretty nearly got the best o' me, an' before long I expect to turn up my toes to the daisies. Before that there melancholy time arrives, I've got a leetle bizness to transact with that darned meddlin' operator who spoiled my little game that night with the special.—Don't say a word, boss; I hain't got nothin' against *you* for that. You was the boss—it was your bizness to checkmate us, if you could. But that there sneakin' agent—bah! What bizness had he to interfere with us fellers? It was none o' *his* funeral! So I'm goin' to have a leetle bit of a reck'nin'. Mebbe I'll git the worst of it—mebbe I won't. He played his cards; now, I'll play mine; an' if I can take the odd trick, why, Sam Ripley'll be ahead of the game. Very well. I ain't strong enough to tramp over a thousand miles, and I've got no money; consequently, I must have a pass.'

'This is all idle talk and wasted breath, Ripley,' said the Superintendent. 'I care nothing about your private grudges, and in any case would not assist you in your evil designs against a man who did his duty, and perhaps saved my life.—No, sir; no pass.'

'Stop a minute, boss,' interrupted Ripley. 'So far my story hasn't interested you, and hasn't done me much good. You're a big man amongst railroaders, and you've got a big record all through the West for being a smart, shrewd, and conscientious manager. That's so, isn't it?'

Ferris nodded his head, in assent.

'Well, be careful you never lose that record. Listen! About twelve years ago I was working on a railroad in Indiana. There were a couple of clever boys, brothers, in the Train Despatcher's Office. The oldest was the Chief

Despatcher himself, and the younger was his assistant. One night there was a nasty collision.' Ripley paused as he noticed Robert Ferris's face grow deathly pale, while his hands trembled violently.

Ferris recovered his composure quickly, though his voice was rather unsteady as he asked: 'What is all this twaddle to me?'

'Oh, nothing, nothing, boss.—Shall I go on?'

'Yes; but cut it short.'

'Very good, boss.—I think you know that story pretty well. Perhaps you don't know that the young fellow is still alive, and sees you once in a while?—Oh, he's no friend of mine; curse him! and I shouldn't get the story into the newspapers to help *him*.—But if I should take it into my head to resurrect that little affair, and start some smart Chicago reporter investigating, it might prove rather embarrassing for that older brother, don't you think?'

But Robert Ferris was already filling out a blank trip pass, which he handed to Ripley together with a five-dollar bill. 'Be careful, my lad,' said the Superintendent, as the whisky-soaked rascal shambled out of the office.

Min had heard every word of this strange conversation, and it came to her as a painful two-fold revelation. She could not doubt that Ripley meant to harm Macpherson in some way; nor could she believe otherwise than that Robert Ferris was the elder brother for whom Arthur had given up name and fame. Either of these discoveries was sufficient to decide Min as to her future course. She must warn and assist Arthur, which she could only thoroughly do by at once proceeding to 44-mile; and her sense of pride, as well as loyalty to Arthur, would not permit her to retain a position in the office of such a man as Robert Ferris.

The Superintendent had left, having followed closely on the heels of Ripley. Min did not mind that, however, for she would not have accepted the favour of a pass at his hands, and she did not feel like bidding him a courteous farewell. So she left a note on Ferris's desk, telling him that she had left Chicago as well as his employ, and that she would write to him shortly, giving her reasons in detail. That night she bought a ticket, and boarded the Pacific Express on the C. R. M. & P.

About thirty-six hours later, the long and heavy train drew up at 44-mile, and agent Macpherson was greatly surprised to find that it became necessary for him to assist a young lady to alight. She was a very pretty and very graceful young lady, becomingly apparelled in a perfect-fitting dress and sacque, while upon her head she wore a hat that displayed the good taste of a graduate in the milliner's art. Arthur thought there must be some mistake, till he saw the well-remembered face. 'Min!'

'Dear old Arthur!'

They held each other's hands as the train steamed away across the prairie, from which the night-mists were rolling before the morning sunlight, and then, hand in hand, they walked into the little office. For several minutes neither spoke; but in those first moments, as they gazed each into the other's eyes, all secrets and all misunderstandings seemed to roll away and disappear with the prairie mists outside: they loved

with a deep, true, and lasting love that was intensely mutual—and both knew it.

‘I’ve come back, Arthur—to you.’

And for answer Arthur took her in his arms and kissed the fresh red lips which were to be his for evermore. The lonely life, that had been hungering and thirsting for love, was more than satisfied.

Of course there were many questions to ask and to answer, Min perhaps having the most to tell. ‘I know everything now, Arthur. I know who you are, and who Mr Ferris is. I know, too, that Sam Ripley will find it hard work to do you much harm, when he discovers that he has two to fight instead of one. Besides, forewarned is forearmed, and if I ever see Mr Ripley around this place, I shall let him know that it was I who sat in the Superintendent’s office and overheard the recital of his schemes.

Later in the day, Min disclosed a plan of her own. ‘Now, Arthur, you know I am not a “child of the plains” any longer. I am a Chicago young lady, who cannot plead ignorance of the proprieties. I want to stay right here, and never leave 44-mile again until we leave together. But to do that we must be married—you did ask me, didn’t you?—and I want the wedding to be in the dear old depot. The Atlantic Express still goes through at two o’clock in the morning, I believe? Very well. You take that train to New Constantinople, hunt up a minister, and bring him out here as soon as you can.—You might bring Ratty Sykes along as a witness. Isn’t that a good and practicable plan?’

‘It is splendid,’ said Arthur, highly delighted to find that the girl was so thoroughly in earnest. ‘Only you will have to take charge of the station while I am gone.’

‘Of course. From now, on, I resume my position as assistant-operator at 44-mile.’

So at two o’clock on the dark and chill October morning, Arthur took the train as a passenger for Constantinople. When he boarded the front coach he did not notice in the darkness a man who alighted from the rear car; nor did the passenger who disembarked see the agent as he stepped on to the train. The new arrival at 44-mile evidently wished to remain unnoticed, for, instead of entering the little depot, he ensconced himself behind a pile of firewood which stood perhaps a dozen yards from the shanty. The man bore a striking resemblance to the ex-engineer Sam Ripley, and he repeatedly muttered to himself as he eyed the little curtained window of the telegraph cabin, behind which the light was dimly burning.

Min stood just inside the doorway as she watched Arthur take his departure; then she stepped in and closed the door. The morning was very chilly, and the fire had burned quite low. Upon the wall she saw an old hat and coat of Arthur’s which she remembered well. She had often worn them in the days gone by; why not now? So she put them on, and somehow, the familiar dress of the man she loved seemed to make her less lonely. Then she sat down upon the worn kitchen-chair at the shabby ink-stained telegraph table, and with the finger of an expert rattled off a message to Constantinople, informing them that the Atlantic Express had left 44-mile. That done, she threw herself

into Arthur’s armchair, which stood exactly midway between the lamp and the low window on the west side of the room. Her back was toward the window, and the light threw the shadow of her head and shoulders upon the curtain. So she sat, and gave her fancies loose rein, as they carried her forward into the future—the future which would know her as Arthur Macpherson’s wife.

Outside, in the cold night, the man behind the woodpile muttered and cursed. He was shivering, and, as he shivered, his courage—such as it was—began to ooze away. ‘Curse him! why not? He spoiled my game, and lost me my job. He ruined me and sent me to the dogs. He might as well have killed me.—Ah, no better chance than this! This is luck, Sam, my boy!’ The villain spoke thus as the shadow of a man’s head and shoulders fell distinctly across the window. Ripley knew that hat; he had seen Macpherson wearing it many times. He pulled from his hip-pocket a loaded revolver; he cocked it, levelled it, and fired. With the crack of the report, there was the noise of shattered glass, but never a cry or a sound from the girl who had sat in that chair dreaming her happy day-dreams. The bullet had done its work well. Min was dead.

This was Min’s home-coming! Of Arthur’s, a few hours later, why should we write? Why prolong the details of this simple and sad record of a girl’s short life? To this day there is a station at 44-mile, and Arthur Macpherson, a broken-hearted man, is still the agent and operator. The mills of the gods have not yet brought Robert Ferris beneath their ponderous wheels; for Arthur’s silence will last till death, and the bones of the only other man who held the secret of the collision lie bleaching on the prairies.

The sweet breezes of summer and the howling blizzards of winter, as they sweep around the lonely cabin at 44-mile, also kiss—gently or fiercely—a white marble slab upon which is chiselled MIN.

THE SPONGE-FISHERIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

THE following interesting information as to the sponge-fisheries of the Mediterranean, which appeared in *The Board of Trade Journal*, is extracted from a paper contained in the Proceedings of the Constantinople Chamber of Commerce:

The principal places from which sponges are exported are situated in the eastern portion of the Mediterranean. The only exception is the Bahamas, in the West Indies. The Bahama sponges, however, are the poorest in quality which reach the market. The sponge of Tunis, from the extreme resistance of its tissue, is an article of general utility, for it can be put to the commonest uses. The most valuable sponges, however, are those which come from the coast of Syria and the Greek Archipelago.

The depth of the water beneath which it is found has a great influence on the quality of the sponge. That which is gathered on a rocky or sandy bottom is much superior to that which grows upon a muddy ground. The best Tunis sponges are of the former character, and are prin-

cipally found near Kerkeni and on the rocks of the little island of Kamontes. The inferior quality comes from the Gulf of Gabes, where the bottom is muddy, and these have unhealthy-looking red roots. In a natural condition, the Tunis sponge is black and covered with a viscous matter which forms the polyp of the sponge, and contains a considerable quantity of sand and mud.

In the Tunisian waters the sponge-fishery is carried on most actively and profitably during the months of December, January, and February. The late autumnal storms have by that time cleared the sponges of the seaweeds and other plants which concealed them, and the eye can easily detect them. It is considered, calm weather and a transparent sea being indispensable, that not more than forty-five days can be counted upon each season. The men employed in the Tunisian sponge-fishery are almost exclusively Greeks or Sicilians, and the former are found the more skilful. There are several modes of collecting sponges. They are plucked with the hand by help of a diving-bell, they are harpooned, or they are dragged up with an instrument which resembles the sort of drag used for fishing up oysters. The diving-bell can only be used where there is a hard bottom, and the harpoon is the instrument mainly employed by sponge-fishers.

The Arabs go out in parties of five, six, or seven persons in a small boat. One man holds the trident and watches the bottom of the sea, striking where he sees a sponge; but the Arabs are rarely successful in a depth of more than eight or ten metres. The method of the Sicilians is almost the same as that of the Arabs, except that their boats take only two men, one to row and the other to strike. The Sicilians fish in deeper water than the Arabs, and secure more sponges than they, and of a better quality. The Greeks, who for the most part come from Kalimno and Syria, are the chief employers of the drag. But the great majority of these also hold to the trident, which they use with extraordinary cleverness.

The island of Kalimno, on the south-western coast of Asia Minor, between Cos and Leros, contains a population of about twelve thousand, all the adult males being engaged in the sponge-fishery. They leave the island in May, and return in September at the latest. The islanders of Kalimno exercise their profession of sponge-fishers off the shores of the islands of the kingdom of Greece, of the Southern Sporades, and specially of Rhodes, of Crete, of the whole extent of Syria, of the island of Ruad, and finally of Tunis, where their vessels are so large and so well manned that they drive the Arabs and Sicilians completely out of the field. They take the sponges back to Kalimno, where they are sold, the council of the island constituting a court which decides all differences between fishermen, captains, proprietors, merchants, and retail purchasers. The Kalimniotes usually fish at a depth of from fifteen to twenty feet; below this there are no sponges which possess any commercial value. The divers have to be men of adult age and of great physical strength; they can in no case remain at the maximum depth of twenty feet for more than two minutes. They select the good from among the bad sponges by touch, tearing away those which seem to be the best, and place them in a pouch

fastened round the neck. Quite recently a new method has been adopted, the wearing of a water-tight diving-dress called a *scaphandro*, made of metal and provided with glass windows; in this dress men are able to remain at the bottom of the sea for two or three hours and collect the sponges at their ease.

The Kalimniote fishermen are in the habit of dividing the sponges which they sell into three classes—those of fine quality, those which are large in size, and those which are inferior in quality, which they call *tsimouches*. The island possesses two hundred vessels engaged in this industry. The Kalimniotes find that the largest and most delicate sponges are discovered on the coast of the little island of Stambalia, off Amorgo, and on one or two spots on the African littoral. The second quality are those of Crete, of Bengazi, of Rhodes, and of Syria. The sponges of the Kalimniotes find their way into almost all the markets of the world. England is the largest consumer; and France, Germany, Russia, Austria, and Italy follow.

An industry in artificial sponges is in process of creation. M. Oscar Schmidt, Professor at the University of Grätz, in Styria, has invented a method by which pieces of living sponge are broken off and planted in a favourable spot. From very small cuttings of this kind, Professor Schmidt has obtained large sponges in the course of three years and at a very small expense. One of his experiments gave the result that the cultivation of four thousand sponges had not cost more than two hundred and twenty-five francs, including the interest for three years on the capital expended. The Austro-Hungarian government has been so much struck with the importance of these experiments that it has officially authorised the protection of this new industry on the coast of Dalmatia.

A MILITARY MANŒUVRE.

CAPTAIN HUGH FLUKER was a quiet, unobtrusive man, upon whom certain youthful subalterns had bestowed the cognomen of 'the fossil.' Though he was steady and prosaic, nevertheless everybody in the Royal Slopshire Regiment voted him one of the best officers that ever held Her Majesty's commission. He was rather elderly, with iron-gray hair, a well-trained military moustache, and a pleasant expression; he dressed faultlessly, and was always the pink of politeness. Frequently he might have been seen walking along the shady side of the High Street at Blankford, where the regiment was quartered, and upon such occasions he peered a good deal under the bonnets of the pretty women; but there was a demure expression in his glance which withered any rising feeling of resentment. His age and his unmistakably sympathetic half-smile gave him an immunity which would not be extended to younger and bolder men.

At the mess of the Royal Slopshire the merits and demerits of the damsels of Blankford, marriageable and otherwise, were nightly discussed, and more than once had 'the fossil' been twitted with his apparent lack of interest in the fair sex. But he had shaken his head, and replied with a grave smile, almost of sadness, that his days of flirtation were over, that such

things must be left to the boys. His brother-officers had not failed to notice his gravity, and hence the popular belief that he had been crossed in love. Though Captain Fluker was a member of the Blankford Club—an institution where everybody knew everybody else, and where old fogies played whist for points not exceeding one penny—and his conduct in public was most exemplary, yet somehow he had but few friends. The men who ought to have been in his set—or of whose set he ought to have been—did not care for his company. Nor did the female leaders of Blankford society give him great countenance, for, if the truth must be told, he was 'horribly slow,' and it was generally admitted that there was something queer about Fluker. Though he led the almost idyllic life of a grave, sedate, old bachelor, yet somehow Blankfordians had an indefinable distrust in him which was utterly unaccountable.

The denizens of Blankford were a set of cheerful people who clubbed together their resources to make the time pass pleasantly, and who made no attempt to outshine one another. But on the arrival of the Royal Shropshire from Egyptian deserts, everything suddenly changed, and the residents—especially those possessed of the marketable commodities yclept 'marriageable daughters'—began to show off and give junketings upon the most approved principle, presumably in the hope of capturing some of the heroic officers. Those holding commission in the regiment thoroughly enjoyed themselves; but Captain Fluker held aloof from most of these pomps and vanities, and shunned the husband-huntresses.

This sort of thing went on for a year, when a whispered rumour caused much consternation in the garrison. It was, that 'the fossil' had actually entered for the matrimonial stakes. Such a proceeding was so unlikely, that it was considered a huge joke, until somebody at mess announced as a positive fact that the fair lady was none other than Miss Prudence Grimes. This was greeted by a good deal of laughter, for the lady in question was a rawboned spinster of fifty, who lived with her sister in a prim little cottage on the London Road.

'By Jove,' exclaimed the Honourable Bertie Oofington, an affected and moustacheless young sub, 'always thawt "the fossil" would go in for lucre and ugliness. But he's been confoundedly quiet over it.'

'Yes; they say he's been engaged to her for months, and that's why he don't mix with the gay element of ours,' remarked his neighbour.

'Engaged! is he?' echoed a dozen voices.

'Yes; going to marry her in a few weeks, if all I hear be true.'

'Suppose he'll retire on his wife's income,' observed Oofington. 'But I say, you Johnnies, I wish we could have a spree with him before he's spliced.'

A dozen voices assented to this proposal; and various modes of hoaxing 'the fossil' were at once suggested.

Whilst this conversation was in progress, Captain Fluker sat in the cosy little drawing-room at Yew Cottage. He had negotiated a *recherché* dinner just to his taste, and was now alone with his *fiancée*. Prudence Grimes was by no means a giddy young thing. She wore dresses of brocade

silk; and her hair was dressed in long corkscrew curls upon each side of her face. But before marriage, a multitude of faults are hidden, and Hugh Fluker considered her the only woman in the world that he could make his wife. Their courtship was always of the most formal character, and as they were sitting together she was saying: 'I vowed I would never marry, for, until I met you, Hugh, dear, I never saw a man whom I could trust.'

'And you trust me, Prudence?' he said.

'Yes,' she answered. 'It is because I trust you that I accepted your offer of marriage. But I wish to speak more seriously, more privately to you. You have told me that you possess no income beyond your pay, have you not?'

'That is true, alas!' he said.

'Well,' said she hesitatingly, 'my income is a good one; the expenses attending our marriage will be great, and therefore I want you to accept a small sum from me.'

He looked at her in astonishment, wondering what she could mean.

'Yes,' she continued; 'I am a woman of business, you know. Now, I want you to take Holly Lodge, furnish it properly, and have a wedding which cannot be sneered at all over the town. This, of course, cannot be done for nothing; so I have paid in one thousand pounds to a London bank in your name.'

'What!' he exclaimed. 'A thousand pounds for me?'

'Yes,' she replied, walking over to her davenport. 'Here's the pass-book and cheque-book. You can, if you like, for convenience, transfer the money to the Blankford Bank.' And she handed him the books.

'Well, really, Prudence, this is indeed very thoughtful of you,' replied the captain. 'I hardly like to accept the money, for'—

'But you must. I insist upon it. I want a costly and fashionable wedding, and I'll have it.'

'Why cannot I pay for it?'

'I will pay myself, because I do not wish to cripple your resources,' said she, smiling pleasantly as she added, 'of course you will not be offended?'

'No, no; not in the least, Prudence. It is awfully good of you, though, yet I suppose it will be all the same after we are married.'

Captain Hugh Fluker went to the bank on the following day, and negotiated the matter as Miss Prudence had suggested.

It is needless for us to dilate upon the manner in which his brother-officers greeted the news of his approaching marriage, how they chaffed him, or how good-humouredly he took it all. Of course the financial matter was a secret, though he told them he had taken Holly Lodge and was about to furnish it.

Preparations for the marriage were proceeding apace, and a month had already passed, when a very pretty young damsel arrived in Blankford and took up her duties as assistant to the local postmaster. Ethel Ellsworth was decidedly handsome; and within a week of her arrival, the golden youth, both military and civil, had lost their hearts to her. Never before was the post-office so well patronised, for during office hours the place was filled with the masher element,

who bought stamps and postal orders, sent telegrams, or required letters weighed, as an excuse for basking for a few seconds in the winning smiles of the siren behind the brass network. Chief amongst the worshippers at this shrine was young Bertie Oofington of the Slopshire, for he visited the post-office not less than a dozen times a day.

As may be imagined, this idolatry of a common post-office clerk caused the noses of many of the young ladies in the higher walks of life to be considerably elevated, as they waxed exceeding wrath that their attractions should be so totally eclipsed. At the officers' mess of the Slopshire she was the chief topic of conversation, and the subs one and all were exerting every effort to outdo each other in gaining her affection. Showers of presents in the form of fans, perfumes, flowers, and other trifles they poured in upon her, yet they could not fail to recognise the fact that she gave more encouragement to Oofington than to anybody else, and were very envious in consequence. They sorrowfully abandoned all hope of success, however, when it was made known that Bertie was her chosen admirer.

The Honourable Bertie Oofington, the pet of the Royal Slopshire, was the eldest son and heir of Lord Heaviswell, a rich old peer; and Blankford society was all agog when, within three weeks of her arrival, it was announced that he was actually engaged to be married to her. There was one man who remonstrated with him: it was Fluker.

'Look here, Bertie,' he said one evening as he was smoking with him in his quarters. 'The whole place is poking fun at you for flirting with that little girl at the post-office. What do you really mean to do?'

'Mean to do? Why, marry her, of course,' replied he.

'Well, my boy,' said Fluker gravely, 'I'm some years your senior, and my advice to you is, break the engagement before it goes too far.'

'I certainly shan't do that,' exclaimed the younger man; 'neither do I see any reason why you should interfere with my private affairs, even if you were my great-grandfather.'

'Forgive me. I advise you for the best.—What would his lordship say to such a *mésalliance*?'

'My father has nothing whatever to do with the matter. I love her, and by Jove, I'll marry her in spite of everything.'

'Very well,' replied Fluker, puffing vigorously at his cigar; 'but remember, I have given you my advice.' And the subject was allowed to drop.

The banns had been duly published between Hugh Fluker, bachelor, and Prudence Grimes, spinster, and no objection was made, although the parson requested all who might see any impediment to come forward and declare it.

One evening, Oofington went down to meet Ethel; but found, to his astonishment, that she had gone out half an hour earlier than usual. She had distinctly told him to meet her at eight o'clock, and yet she did not keep her appointment. Could she be playing him false, after all? The green-eyed monster rose within him, and he resolved to watch for her return. He had waited for nearly two hours in the shadow on the opposite side of the street, when he saw two

figures approaching. As they came nearer, he recognised his *fiancée* and Fluker! His first impulse was to rush across the road and confront them, but on a moment's reflection, he remained concealed. He saw Fluker speaking to her very earnestly, then he kissed her, shook hands, and she let herself in with a latchkey, whilst her companion strode away in the direction of the barracks. The Honourable Bertie muttered a curse, and soon overtook his rival. 'Now, Fluker,' stammered he, white with dismay and fury, 'what do you mean by daring to take Miss Ellworthy for a walk? I understand now why you were so anxious I should give her up. You wanted her yourself.'

The man addressed turned coolly round and said: 'I have advised you to have nothing more to do with her, and I fancy you'll find I'm right after all. But it's no use getting out of temper over it; so good-night.' And he walked away.

The young lieutenant, boiling over with indignation, turned on his heel, and muttering a savage threat, retraced his steps.

Next morning the gossips of Blankford had a titbit of scandal to relate, for Ethel Ellworthy had eloped with Captain Fluker. They had taken the early morning train to London.

When the news was broken to Miss Prudence, she had a fit of hysterics straight away; but she quickly recovered, and almost speechless with indignation, she cried: 'The monster! the swindler! He has robbed me of my heart, and swindled me out of my money. Oh, what a fool I was to part with that thousand pounds! But I'll bring an action for breach of promise, that I will.'

'Yes, to think that he should have lowered himself to run away with that minx only three days before his marriage,' said her sister. 'Long ago, I told you, Prudence, that these military men are all deceivers.'

'And well I know it,' moaned Miss Prudence. —'Oh, to think he should leave me in this manner.'

Later that day, she went down to the local bank in the hope of recovering some of the money she had given him, but found, to her dismay, that on the previous day it had all been drawn out. So she returned to Yew Cottage in a most unhappy frame of mind.

On the evening of the day previous to that fixed for the wedding, Hugh Fluker returned to Blankford alone, and at once sought his bride. He knocked, and was admitted to the drawing-room to await her.

In a few minutes she appeared. Her face wore an unutterable look of disgust, and she drew herself up to her full height as she said: 'Captain Fluker, I consider it the greatest presumption on your part to come here after your scandalous conduct.'

'Scandalous conduct!' he exclaimed in amazement. 'I'm at a loss to understand what you mean, my dear.'

'Don't address me in that manner, sir. Do you think I am not fully aware of your journey to London, and of your, your—companion?'

'Yes, that is true. I have been to London upon some business connected with our marriage; but as for my companion, I don't think you need have any cause to be jealous of her.'

'Indeed, and why not?'

'Well, merely because she is my sister,' replied the captain with a smile.

'Your sister!'

'Yes, my sister, by my mother's second husband. I did not tell you before, as I was not anxious that the fellows of ours should know that I had a sister in a post-office.'

'Oh, Hugh dear!' exclaimed Miss Prudence, 'I judged you harshly. Pray, forgive me; but I really thought you had eloped with her.'

'Well, there isn't much harm in taking one's sister up to town,' said Fluker; 'but the fact is, young Oofington is in love with her, and I'm trying to save him from making an ass of himself without his father's consent. I have seen his father Lord Heaviswell, and informed him of the facts. Ethel will be back to-morrow in time for our wedding.'

Blankford was never so puzzled as on the following morning, when the marriage took place at the parish church. There was a crowded assembly to witness the ceremony, and the arrangements were upon the most costly and fashionable scale.

Next day, Bertie Oofington received a letter from Scarborough, whither the happy couple had gone to spend their honeymoon, giving a full explanation, but asking that it might be kept secret. The young lieutenant laughed heartily, and vowed that 'the fossil' was a brick after all.

Upon their return to Blankford, Ethel took up her abode with them, and resigned her duties at the post-office. Six months afterwards, through the death of his lordship, the Honourable Bertie succeeded to the title and estates. He at once sent in his papers, and as soon as decorum would allow, made Ethel Lady Heaviswell.

But the good people of Blankford are still puzzled. They cannot make out what relation she is to Captain Fluker, though they feel certain there must be some family connection.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

RELICS of old London are getting scarcer and scarcer as the modern builder clears the ground for new houses. Roman London lies about fifteen feet below the present level of the City streets, and yields up occasionally a tribute of coins, tessellated pavement, or a few Roman ornaments. Antiquaries are just now much exercised about the preservation of a fine piece of Roman work which has recently been unearthed near the General Post Office, consisting of about one hundred feet of the veritable wall of London. As this discovery has been made on government property, it is to be hoped that arrangements will be made to preserve such an interesting memorial of olden times.

Professor Lintner, of New York, a well-known entomologist, has expressed the opinion that if fruit-growers wish to be successful they should study the habits of insects and the nature of their food, so that they may be competent to tell friends from foes, and may be able to use insecticides to the best advantage. The Professor affirms that there are in the world three hundred and twenty

thousand species of insects, and that from seven to eight thousand may be considered as fruit-pests.

Mr William A. Gibbs, of Chingford, Essex, whose hay-drying and tea-drying machines were noticed by us some years ago at the time of their invention, has recently constructed a machine by which pure hot air is derived direct from the combustion of coal. The operation is brought about partly by chemical agency and partly by mechanical appliances, and is said to be so effectual that all trace of smoke disappears, and the products of combustion, instead of consisting of irrespirable gases, take the form of hot air which can be inhaled without danger or inconvenience. We have not at present any details of the construction of the machine; but if it prove as successful as it is stated to be, its application to the arts and to domestic use will cause a revolution in the present methods of burning fuel, and should settle the smoke-abatement question.

Woodhall Spa, in Lincolnshire, contains a mineral spring which is unusually rich in bromine and iodine, resembling in its composition the waters of the celebrated *Bad* at Kreuznach. This spa has been acquired by a syndicate, who hope to induce their countrymen to avail themselves of the benefits it affords, instead of seeking the same remedy in Germany. The baths are fitted with the orthodox 'Pump-room,' and every convenience for patients and visitors.

A writer in the *Century* magazine recently gave some curious statistics referring to the chances of being hit by bullet or shell in modern warfare. He quotes an old saying to the effect that 'it takes a man's weight in lead to kill him,' and he shows by the returns from more than one battle-field that the axiom is literally true. As a case in point, he alludes to the battle of Stone's River, one of the greatest during the American War. In the official Report of this battle it is stated that the artillery fired 20,307 rounds of ammunition, representing a weight of 225,000 pounds. The infantry fired two million rounds, being a weight of lead which exceeded 150,000 pounds. These two weights combined are fully equal to the weight of the men killed or mortally wounded—who numbered 2319. Another calculation with regard to this battle takes note of the wounded, and is given in another form. Here it is stated that 20,000 rounds of artillery hit 728 men, and that the two million infantry rounds hit 13,832 men; averaging 27.4 cannon-shots to hit one man, and 145 musket-shots to hit one man. The old adage which states that 'every bullet has its billet' would seem, therefore, to require some qualification. It is at anyrate a comfort to consider that the modern soldier has so many chances against being shot, for, according to these figures, for every bullet which finds its billet, exactly one gross go astray.

Mr Pritchard Morgan, the proprietor of the gold mine at Dolgelly, has at length so far satisfied the claims of the government that work has been resumed. The quartz still produces a high average of gold per ton, and Mr Morgan is strongly of belief that there is untold wealth in the district. He states that the gold-field extends over a range of country from sixty to one hundred miles in length, by forty miles in breadth. It is said, however, that this mine is likely to be eclipsed in importance by another one which

has just been discovered at Festiniog. This discovery was made by accident, some men being engaged in quarrying, when they came upon some quartz sprinkled with brilliant specks of metal. Specimens of the ore were forwarded to Mr Lowe, the public analyst of Chester, who immediately detected the metal to be gold. Later on, Mr Lowe was invited to visit the place and to make a general survey of it. His geological knowledge quickly enabled him to direct the miners to open the reef at a certain point, and they soon unearthed some very fine specimens of gold quartz. On analysis, the ore yields the large amount of five ounces of gold to the ton.

It has long been known that fish, like birds and insects, are attracted by and will swarm round any source of illumination. Birds are killed in thousands by flying against the thick glass which protects lighthouse lanterns, and various insects are caught with the help of a light. The difficulty of maintaining a subaqueous light has hitherto prevented the application of the same principle to fishing. But now that we have at command an electric illuminant which is quite independent of oxygen, and which will therefore give light in a closed chamber, the difficulty is at an end. With lamps arranged for the purpose, the United States steamship *Albatross* has been catching multitudes of the finny tribes, the lamps being enclosed in wire-netting to obviate risks of breakage. It is curious to note that if this method of fishing is found to be advantageous enough to become common, it will have a distinct bearing upon the disputes which have arisen between the American and Canadian fisher-folk, for the former will have no longer any need of troubling the latter for bait.

It is to be hoped that the recent agitation with regard to England's weakness from a military point of view will not have the effect of unduly hurrying on the adoption of the new Magazine rifle, for, according to the recent Report of General Wasmund, of the Russian army, who has been making a continental tour for the purpose of studying the magazine guns used by various powers, the new arm possesses certain disadvantages which might not at first be apparent. The soldier, he says, regards the many cartridges in his gun as so much reserve power, and is therefore apt to neglect those precautions which he would naturally take when his piece must be reloaded after each discharge. He found, too, that after a long march those men who were armed with the old-fashioned rifle made far better target practice than those who carried the new weapon. One reason for this would be that in the case of the first, the weight and poise are constant, whereas in the latter they must vary as the contents of the magazine are discharged.

There is a touch of romance in a true story recently published concerning the discovery of a sunken rock in the Red Sea. During the year 1887, two ships struck on a submerged rock in these historic waters, and soon afterwards foundered. A search was at once made for the dangerous obstruction, but without success. A second and more careful search was then made, again unsuccessfully. At last a surveying vessel was sent out for a six weeks' cruise for the sole purpose of finding this hidden rock; but the search was fruitless. But a fourth expedition by H.M.S.

Stork has been at last successful, and the rock has been found. It consists of a patch of coral only fifteen feet beneath the surface of the water; and although it is out of the direct line of vessels traversing the sea, it would be quite possible for them, by strong currents, to be carried in the direction of the obstacle. Bearing in view the enormous tonnage that navigates this sea in modern times, the discovery is a very important one.

All visitors to country districts know full well that in some places farmyards are kept in the most filthy condition, the animals therein often being left to drink from some pond which by its colour and smell at once proclaims its foul condition. It would seem impossible that the milk from cows so badly provided for should constitute healthy food, and according to certain experiments recently made by Professor Law at Cornell University, such milk is contaminated with living organisms to an alarming extent. This gentleman caused some cows to drink for several days from one of these stagnant pools, and when he afterwards examined the milk from them, microscopically, he found it full of living organisms of an identical character to those contained in the pond. The cows were then examined, and found to be in a feverish condition, their blood being charged with the same minute creatures. Some pure milk was then mixed with some of the pond-water, when it was found that they multiplied to a surprising extent in the liquid. The lesson to be obtained from these experiments is obvious.

It is well known that a large proportion of colliery explosions are either directly due to or are much aggravated in intensity by the presence of suspended coal-dust in the air of the workings. To avoid this danger, Messrs Martin & Turnbull, of Dowlais, Glamorgan, have invented a method by which the air in mines can be kept constantly damp. Water is forced by compressed air into spray, both agents being carried by pipes to any part of the mines where danger is supposed to lurk. This fine spray is quickly diffused by the air-currents in the workings, and effectually damps the dust with which it comes into contact.

Whilst the use of alcoholic beverages of all kinds is rigidly condemned by a certain section of the community, 'the cup that cheers but not inebriates' is often charged with various ill doings. The last indictment brought against the pleasant cup of tea is that of destroying the teeth. Surgeon W. T. Black, writing to the *British Medical Journal*, informs us that when on duty at certain recruiting stations in the north of England he made observations on the great amount of disease and loss of teeth existing among the men who offered themselves for service. In a great many instances individuals were rejected on the score of the state of their teeth; and he was led to trace this disease to the excessive tea-drinking commonly indulged in by the working classes in the manufacturing towns. He asserts that tea seems to have a peculiar effect upon the teeth, leading to inflammation, and eventually abscess of the fang. It would be useful to know whether these observations can be corroborated by other medical men.

According to the *Electrician*, a magnetic crane is employed at some steel-works at Cleveland, Ohio, for lifting steel ingots and heavy masses of iron. The magnet is of the electric form,

consisting of two rods of soft iron covered with insulated coils of wire, and receiving a current from a battery or dynamo-machine. It will lift a weight of eight hundred pounds without difficulty.

M. Bone has brought forward a plan for dealing with the rabbit pest in Australia, which he believes would be found more economical than the methods suggested by M. Pasteur, and better in every way than the present methods of extermination adopted by the Australian government. He suggests that a poisonous gas should be introduced into the burrows of the animals; and he names carbonic oxide, the vapour of carbonic disulphide, and carbonic acid gas as those which would be cheap and effectual. The apparatus for the ready generation of these gases is not described; and upon that part of the scheme would we should think depend its practicability.

This rabbit pest in Australia seems to have its counterpart in a plague of rats in China, which latter forms the subject of a memorial to the Emperor which is published in the *Pekin Gazette*. This memorial comes from the governor of a district in outer Mongolia, who testifies to the presence of swarms of rats, which for some two years past have destroyed all the grass in the land, and have so undermined the ground with their burrows that mounted men are exposed to serious risks. For this reason it has become necessary to alter the routes of the government courier service in several of the postal lines. The old story of Dick Whittington and his cat seems more worthy of credence after reading this account.

A new and terrible era in the science of warfare is foreshadowed by a torpedo shell, which has lately been manufactured at Waterbury, Connecticut, for the dynamite gun invented by Captain Zalinski. This shell is made of seamless three-sixteenth-inch brass, and has been drawn out cold by means of hydraulic pressure. It represents a cylinder nearly seven feet long, with a conical end, with an inside diameter of fourteen inches, and it weighs two hundred pounds. This metal case is destined for the reception of six hundred pounds of explosive gelatine. The complete projectile will form an explosive mass of awful power, and one which no ship afloat or fortification on shore could possibly withstand.

The great engineering feat of moving a large hotel bodily by means of haulage, to which we recently devoted a brief notice, has now been successfully accomplished at Coney Island, New York. The building was first raised in sections by means of hydraulic jacks, and was placed on cars, wheeled on rails, under it. The distance traversed was nearly five hundred feet; and the weight of the building, a wooden structure, together with the trucks or cars on which it was placed, was estimated to amount to six thousand tons. The whole operation was carried through without accident or hitch of any kind. Its success will certainly turn renewed attention to the feasibility of Captain Eads' scheme of a ship railway, which was thought at one time to be a formidable rival to the Panama Canal. It is now argued, and with reason, that if a large house can be safely moved by such means, a ship, built to resist strains of every kind, could be far more easily dealt with.

The *Indian Daily News*, which is published in Calcutta, tells of the successful treatment of a case of snake-bite. Dr Vincent Richards was engaged in a number of experiments with some cobras; and while he was holding one of the reptiles with the object of procuring some of its poison in a watch-glass, the snake bit him severely in the left hand. The doctor immediately killed the snake, laid the wound in his finger open to the bone, and applied to it permanganate of potash, at the same time applying a ligature to the finger, and another below the elbow. He then sought medical help. His confrères reopened the wound; and after cauterising with nitric acid, it was dressed in the ordinary manner. Dr Richards gradually recovered from the accident, and is reported to feel no ill effects from it.

Owing chiefly to the enterprise of several traders, the fiftieth year of Queen Victoria's reign is likely to be well impressed on our memories, the word Jubilee having been attached to goods of the most opposite descriptions. Mr Ashton Smith is determined that the event shall be recorded in a very prominent way. He has caused to be planted on the side of a mountain in Wales, Moel Rhimen by name, a plantation of nearly seven thousand trees, which will be so arranged as to represent the words 'Jubilee, 1887.' The letters each measure two hundred yards long, by twenty-five feet wide; and two hundred men, it is said, have found constant employment in planting the trees since Jubilee day, when the work was commenced.

There is nothing new under the sun, not even type-writers. It has just been discovered that as early as the year 1829 the type-writing machine, under the name of Typographer, was invented, drawings and specifications of which were deposited at the United States' Patent Office at that date. It is said that these drawings closely resemble the machines now in use.

According to the *Lancet*, in certain districts in the north of Ireland ether is largely used as an intoxicant. A special kind of ether is prepared for drinking purposes, and its success in supplanting whisky appears to be owing to its cheapness; for a person can obtain for a penny sufficient of the potent fluid to intoxicate him. It may be here mentioned that the so-called chloric ether, which, under its newer name of spirits of chloroform, is prescribed to give a pleasant flavour to nauseous draughts, has often been used as a stimulant by inebriates who have had access to it. It is not ether, but consists of a solution of chloroform diluted in nineteen parts of rectified spirit. With regard to the ether sold for drinking purposes, it is asserted that the Excise authorities have been applied to, but that they have no power to control its sale.

A widespread belief has arisen within the last few months to the effect that modern stained glass windows do not possess that permanence which distinguishes those of medieval date. Mr Phillip Newman recently read an interesting paper before the members of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts upon this subject. In this paper he fully describes the process of glass-staining, and dwells upon the destructive effect which the bad air of ill-ventilated churches will often have upon stained windows. He believes that the colours produced by modern workers are

quite as good as those of older times, while at the same time they present a far greater variety of tint. In certain cases, the colours have undoubtedly faded, but only where the glass has been painted with colours containing soft fluxes. Where the glass has been carefully fired and proper silicated flux has been used, the pigments will defy time and the destructive effects of bad air.

THE NEW EXPLOSIVE:

CARBO-DYNAMITE.

To the already long list of so-called high explosives—of which there are about thirty—used in industrial pursuits or for war purposes, another very powerful explosive agent has just been added. As its name, carbo-dynamite, implies, carbon forms part of its constitution. It should be stated that in ordinary dynamite seventy-five per cent. of nitro-glycerine is absorbed by twenty-five per cent. of Kieselguhr, an earthy mineral specially suitable for the manufacture of dynamite on account of its absorbent property; but Kieselguhr has this disadvantage, that it is incombustible. In carbo-dynamite, ninety parts by weight of nitro-glycerine are taken up by ten parts of a specially prepared carbon of a very porous nature. As carbon is combustible, it adds to the explosive effect of the whole mass; and in this respect, it will be seen, carbo-dynamite is superior to ordinary dynamite.

But it possesses other advantages, which were demonstrated at recent trials carried out at Treherbert, Rhondda Valley, South Wales. In the first experiment, an eighty-pound double-headed steel rail, placed on its side, was smashed through by an ounce and a half of carbo-dynamite, about nine inches of the rail being blown clean away. In the next, a large boulder of hard sandstone, weighing about two tons, was broken up by a two-ounce charge of carbo-dynamite. Equal charges of a quarter-ounce of carbo-dynamite and ordinary dynamite were also exploded inside two thick lead cylinders of a capacity of four and three-fourth cubic inches, with the result that this capacity was expanded to nearly thirty-six cubic inches with carbo-dynamite, but to only twenty-one inches with ordinary dynamite. Similar charges of the two explosives were then placed inside two thick steel tubes each one foot long. The ordinary dynamite burst its tube well; but the carbo-dynamite charge did its work much better, bending the tube as well as bursting it, and sending it flying some fifteen yards from the point of explosion. The last experiment in the open consisted in placing one ounce each of carbo-dynamite and ordinary dynamite on flat steel discs, three inches in diameter and five-sixteenths of an inch thick, and supported on rings or collars. After the explosion, it was found that the ordinary dynamite had indented its disc a quarter of an inch; while the carbo-dynamite had caused a concavity seven-sixteenths of an inch deep, or three-sixteenths of an inch deeper than the other, besides driving its supporting ring deeply into the ground.

In order to show that, in using carbo-dynamite in underground work, no noxious fumes arise, an experiment was made in a tunnel, half a mile

long, constructing for the Rhondda and Swansea Bay Railway. When a shot had been fired in the rock at the heading of the tunnel with one pound of carbo-dynamite, no deleterious fumes could be detected. When, however, subsequently, a shot was fired with one pound of ordinary dynamite, noxious vapours were plainly discernible. Carbo-dynamite, consequently, will enable miners to pursue their arduous work without injury to health, and the advantage claimed for it, that no injurious fumes are generated in its explosion, seems to be well established. As carbo-dynamite is not affected by moisture, not exuding or parting with its nitro-glycerine when exposed to damp or water, it may safely be mixed with that liquid in any required proportion, and, thus treated, used in fiery mines, the large volume of steam generated at the moment of explosion not only extinguishing any flame which might have been produced, but also adding considerably to the effect of the shot. It is further stated that the manufacture of carbo-dynamite is simple and inexpensive, and that its cost to the user will not exceed that of ordinary dynamite. These latter points remain, of course, to be proved; but from what has been said of its use and effect, there can be no doubt that a very formidable rival has arisen to ordinary dynamite, and that the introduction of carbo-dynamite in mining or tunnelling work is only a question of time.

A SEA IDYLL.

Last night I saw the mermaids ride

On shore-bounded waves with music wild,
And watched them where, against the cliffs,
Their bowers of snowy foam they piled.

All night they worked; but when the dawn
Came blushing rosy o'er the deep,
The sea, grown weary of the toil,
Recalled his waves, and sank to sleep.

The mermaids wept, and combed their hair,
Melted were all their foam-wreathed bowers,
Till one sweet mermaid sang, 'Let's make
New harbours of the white sea-flowers.'

'Yes, yes,' they cried; and hand in hand,
Sank through the blue depths joyously;
And now, I ween, they're gathering flowers
In the bright gardens of the sea.

ALICE STAPLES CARTER.

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MORNING IN THE WOODS.

IN some respects the early dawn of one summer morning is much like another; and save now and then when Jupiter Pluvius is in a watery temper, the charm and beauty and fragrance of early morning in the country are unvaried. It may be the opening of a day of soft gray cloud, or of splendid unbroken sunshine; but the first coming of the light is always a mystery of gracious and tender peace to all who have eyes and ears to discover and enjoy it.

See, the day begins to break,
And the light shoots like a streak
Of subtle fire; the wind blows cold,
As the morning doth unfold.
Now the birds begin to rouse,
And the squirrel from the boughs
Leaps, to get him nuts and fruit;
The early lark, that erst was mute,
Hails the dawning of the day
With many a trill and many a lay.

So sings an old and almost forgotten English poet, in a dainty little stanza as true to life as it is full of poetic and sparkling grace.

It is barely five o'clock on a fine August morning; come with me for half an hour, and ramble down this hillside, and see how true to life is the poet's picture. Once clear of the garden, we are out in the open road, great and busy enough in the old coaching days, but lonely now as a track through a New Zealand clearing. Far away on the dim horizon under that veil of silver mist is the cathedral city. Away to the left stretches mile after mile of rich green pasture and waving yellow corn; while all down the slope to the right runs a full league of tangled and shady woodland, into the hundred grassy roads of which it is easy enough to find a pleasant entrance, and often just as difficult to find your way out. Along the edge of the wood is a field of sainfoin still glowing here and there, after the sickle, with patches of crimson blossom. As we follow the winding path to the brow of the hill, we get the first taste of the keen crisp air, like a draught of

sparkling vintage. The dew lies thickly on the long rough grass and on the nut-bushes along the edge of the wood; and wavy streamers of shining gossamer are floating here and there in the soft sunshine, as if in search of a resting-place. All is very still as yet, the only sound being a faint whispering murmur from the clump of Scotch firs by the roadside, and the first joyous song of the lark which has just started up from her nest among the streaming grass. Watch her as she mounts up towards the sky, 'and ever singing wins her liquid way,' higher and higher still, by a series of rapid and irregular short ascents, until she dwindles to a mere speck, or is lost to sight. Presently, the whole air will be full of sweet sounds, as scattered over the wide fields other happy singers speed their flight to join in the happy chorus.

Meanwhile, here close at hand the partridge is calling to her young with a soft low whistle; blackbirds and thrushes are darting in and out of the thick hedgerow, now and then uttering a short quick cry of alarm; or, after a few notes of broken song, suddenly dashing down to the ground to seize on the hapless worm—which pays dearly for not going home till morning—and hurry back to their favourite bough. All at once, up start the whole covey of partridges with a loud whirring noise, not thoroughly frightened, but only to settle down again among some tangled grass and bramble a hundred yards away. There are fourteen of them altogether; most likely from the very nest which the keeper showed me a month or two ago just inside the fence of the next meadow; and a curious nest it was, in a snug corner under the shelter of the hedge. 'There!' said the keeper. 'Not much like a nest, is it?' I looked, and saw nothing but a roundish heap of tangled dry grass and leaves. This, however, he carefully lifted up, and underneath showed me a slight hollow scratched away in the earth, with a dozen or more of goodly eggs, snugly covered with grass. Both the old birds were away feeding, leaving their nursery for a short time so cleverly concealed that you might pass it a score of times without a

suspicion of what lay hidden under the pile of withered grass.

But now, we are on the very brow of the hill, and get a glimpse of the whole horizon. Far off to the south, above the faint blue distance, runs a broad band of amber light; above it, a long smooth layer of dark gray cloud; and above that a longer, keen shaft of delicate sea-green, which runs away into the extreme east, and is lost in a blaze of lemon, orange, and gold, amid a pile of dusky clouds, through which splinters of rosy light are stealing up over the broad expanse. In a few moments the sun himself will be fairly up, and hill and valley, mead, woodland, and stream will be crowned with touches of fiery splendour to welcome the golden dawn.

Turn aside by this winding path, and in two minutes we shall be in the deep shade of a grass road through the heart of the wood; with a thick growth of hazel, ash, spindle, and bramble on both sides of us, and here and there arching overhead. Here and there, too, among the thick underwood towers up a gnarled and twisted oak; or a still nobler beech, round which a goodly space has been cleared; for my lord, though mindful of pheasants, has an eye to solid timber, and in the next mile you may count a hundred forest trees of royal dimensions. After the fresh breeze of the hillside, the air seems cold and damp; and the moss under your feet is so thick that not a footstep can be heard. Tiny shafts of sunlight are stealing in here and there among the green leaves; a robin is in full song on the topmost bough of a copper beech; swarms of small birds, finches, tits, and fly-catchers, are all awake, and busily in search of breakfast. Far away, there is a faint sound of lowing kine, and the still fainter claron of chanticler, just let loose with his clucking wives into the lonely farmyard. Every now and then we stumble over the furrow of fresh brown earth, where Master Mole has been busy hours ago; and still oftener the burrow of a rabbit, outside the entrance of which Madam Bunny has carelessly left tufts of downy fur, of which some villainous stoat will not be slow to take advantage. And here, all at once in the green pathway we come upon a strange and unexpected find in the shape of a nut-brown Squirrel's Tail tipped with white. How, whence, and why it is there is a puzzle; but there it is, as you may see and feel for yourself. Our woods fairly swarm with these nimble mischievous imps, and I have often seen four or five of them at high-jinks round a single beech-tree, racing up the trunk, or flying from branch to branch with a mad haste and daring fun that must be seen to be credited.

But our green road suddenly ends in the open woodland, where half-a-dozen pathways branch away in every direction, and you may wander for an hour before you find your way home. The sun is fully out by this time, and the swallows are skimming swiftly across and across among clouds of flies, and specially round the old barn, on the door of which the keeper has nailed up a perfect host of what he calls 'varment': sparrow-hawks, weasels, crows, jays, magpies, and, alas and alack,

a splendid brown owl* with outspread wings—in *terrorem* for all poaching marauders that crawl, creep, and fly. And as good luck will have it, here comes the keeper himself, with brown leather gaiters half-way up his legs, a gun over his shoulder, and a grim sort of a smile on his ruddy sunburnt face as he sees us gazing at his museum.

'We were looking,' said I, 'at poor old Tu-whit, Tu-whoo! and wondering how he came to get here among the robbers.'

'He?' replies Gaiters. 'Why, he's as big a rogue as any one of 'em. Just you look now at his beak! Tell me that there bill weren't a-made to tear a bird's breast to bits? See!—all crooked, and sharp as a knife, just like an eagle he be. It stands to reason as he must be up to mischief. Reg'lar varment, I say, sir.'

After such a terrible indictment as this, it was useless to say a word in the prisoner's defence; but, as for 'standing to reason,' that was just where the sentence would not stand. If his name had been Corvus, the crow, the verdict would have been unanimous; it would be hard to find a craftier or greedier assassin. Nothing alive comes amiss to him—from the tiny callow fledgling that has tumbled out of the thrush's nest, to a partridge, or a dainty young rabbit, a young pheasant straying from the coop, or a chicken in a lonely farmyard, down to a tiny mouse in the furrow—no small creature is safe against that terrible pointed beak.

'You've been down through Blackwood, I see, gentlemen,' says the keeper. 'I know'd that squirl's tail in a jiffy. As I come home last night, sir, me and my boy, I knocked that squirl over up under the beech-tree; and when Sam went to pick him up, what does he do but nip his finger right into the bone! The boy lets go; and then, when he catches him by the tail, blest if it didn't come right off! and away goes Jack up the tree like a shot. But I shall mark him yet, some day, the nasty varment!'

'Poor wretch,' said I; 'he's marked enough already; and must be counted a regular Guy among his friends and relations—without a tail, and his jacket riddled with small-shot.'

But we must say good-morning to Mr Gaiters, and stroll slowly back through the grass road, which by this time is fairly checkered with patches of bright sun and shade. There are not many flowers in this dainty nook; but bees are out and busy among the wild thyme, which somehow or other has found its way in from the hedge; and still busier among the snowy blossom of the bramble, and the wild raspberry, which grows here in abundance. It is but six o'clock as we get back to the old dry sandy coach-road and stroll into the kitchen garden. Here, again, as you see, the whole place is alive with birds, among which, in spite of my love for them, I am bound to say there are many thieves, and chief among them all the impudent blackbird with his glossy coat and yellow beak. As a good rough wild songster, he is pleasant enough at early dawn, or at gray twilight in the hedgerow.

* Nothing will convince a keeper that poor old *Strix flammea* (the Barn Owl) is not a deadly foe to all game. Tell him that the owl lives almost entirely on mice—which eat the crops—that he kills mice and beetles by the hundred; his one answer is 'varment.'

But as a plunderer of gooseberries, currants, and cherries, his greediness is without bound, even when other food is abundant. In a single July morning a whole row of gooseberry bushes and our only cherry-tree (*Morellas*, too) were stripped bare by a couple of these sable rogues, in spite of all that could be done to warn them off. In a similar fashion, two noble mountain-ash trees in front of the house were stripped bare of their crimson glory in a few hours. The thrush is bad enough; but, hearken for one moment, and you will hear her in the very next pathway, beyond the raspberry bed. There is a favourite flint-stone there, half-buried in the gravel, to which she always comes at this time, after hunting for snails among the cabbages. The smaller ones she swallows whole, shells and all; the big ones she brings up to this stone, against which she nimbly dashes them, and soon makes a hearty breakfast, as a pile of broken shells clearly proves.

Of the blackbird one must say: 'Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.' Keep him out of your fruit-garden—if you can; and it is not easy. But let your thrushes sing on in joyful peace. Their song is worth many a score of raspberries. Net all your fruit-trees; and don't grumble if a few choice bunches now and then disappear in spite of all nettings and of all gardeners' boys employed as scarecrows—perhaps because of these latter plagues. Never make war on the finches—chaf, green, or gold; nor against the merry tit-mouse big or little. Against every dozen morsels of ripe fruit or green young shoots which they carry off, must be set millions of the garden and flower-beds' worst plagues—slugs, worms, caterpillars, insects, grubs, and the eggs of a myriad of other pests, which, however lovely under the lens of a microscope, are simply detestable anywhere else but in a bird's mouth.

Whether the owner of a country garden shoots sparrows or not, seems to be a matter of little consequence; they increase and multiply at such a prolific rate, that, whether destroyed wholesale or simply let alone, their number seems unchanged.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.—THE BARD IN HARNESS.

'I NEVER felt more astonished in my life,' Hatherley remarked one day some weeks later to a chosen circle at the Cheyne Row Club, 'than I felt on the very first morning of my visit to Whitestrand. Talk about being driven by a lady, indeed! Why, that frail little woman's got the Bard in harness, as right and as tight as if he were a respectable cheesemonger. It's too surprising. The Bard's done for. His life is finished. There the Man stops. The Husband and Father may drag out a wretched domestic existence yet for another twenty years. But the Man is dead, hopelessly dead. Julius Cæsar himself's not more utterly defunct. That girl has extinguished him.'

'Are there any children, then?' one of the chosen circle put in casually.

'Children! No. There was a child born just after old Mrs Meysey's death, I believe; but it died, and left the mother a poor wreck, her own miserable faded photograph. She was a nice little girl enough, in her small way, when she was here in town; amusing and sprightly; but the Bard has done for her, as she's done for the Bard. The fact is, this is a case of incompatibility of disposition. You can't stop three days at Whitestrand without feeling there's a skeleton in the house somewhere!'

The skeleton in the house, long carefully confined to its native cupboard, had indeed begun to perambulate the Hall in open daylight during the brief period of Hatherley's visit. He reached the newly remodelled home just in time to dress for dinner. When he descended to the ill-lighted drawing-room, five minutes late—Whitestrand could boast no native gas-supply, and candles are expensive—he gave his arm with a sense of solemn obligation to poor dark-clad Winifred. Mrs Massinger was indeed altered—sadly altered. Three painful losses in quick succession had told upon that slender pale young wife. She showed her paleness in her deep black dress: colours suited Winifred: in mourning, she was hardly even pretty. The little 'arrangement in pink and white' had faded almost into white alone: the pinkness had proved a fleeting pigment: she was not warranted fast colours. But Hatherley did his best with innate gallantry not to notice the change. Fresh from town, crammed with the last good things of the Cheyne Row and Mrs Bouverie Barton's Wednesday evenings, he tried hard with conscientious efforts to keep the conversation from flagging visibly. At first he succeeded with creditable skill; and Hugh, looking across at his wife with a curious smile, said in a tone of genuine pleasure: 'How delightful it is, after all, Winnie, to get a hold of somebody, direct from the real live world of London, in the midst of our fossilised antediluvian Whitestrand society!—I declare, Hatherley, it does one's heart good, like champagne, to listen to you. A breath of Bohemia blows across Suffolk the moment you arrive. Poor drowsy, somnolent, petrified Suffolk! "Silly Suffolk," even the aborigines themselves call it. It's catching, too. I'm almost beginning to fall asleep myself, by force of example.'

At the words, Winifred fired up in defence of her native county. 'I'm sure, Hugh,' she said with some asperity, 'I don't know why you're always trying to run down Suffolk! If you didn't like us, you should have avoided the shire; you should have carried your respected presence elsewhere. Suffolk never invited you to honour it with your suffrages. You came and settled here of your own free will. And who could be nicer or more cultivated, if it comes to that, than some of our Suffolk aborigines, as you call them? Dear old Mrs Walpole at the vicarage, for example.'

Hugh balanced an olive on the end of his fork. 'An amiable old Hecuba,' he answered provokingly. 'What's Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba? Her latest dates are about the period of the siege of Troy, or, to be more precisely accurate, the year 1850.—My dear Hatherley, when you come down, I feel like a man who has breathed fresh air on some high mountain—'

stimulated and invigorated. You palpitate with actuality. Down here, we stagnate in the seventeenth century.'

Winifred bit her lip with vexation, but said nothing. It was evident the subject was an unpleasant one to her. But *she* at least would not trot out the skeleton.

Next morning Hugh showed Hatherley round the Whitestrand estate. Hatherley himself was not, to say the truth, in the best of humours. Mrs Massinger was dull and not what she used to be: she obviously resented his bright London gossip, as throwing into stronger and clearer relief the innate stupidity of her ancestral Suffolk. The breakfast was bad; the coffee sloppy; and the dishes suggested too obvious reminiscences of the joints and entrées at last night's dinner. Clearly, the Massingers were struggling hard to keep up appearances on an insufficient income. They were stretching their means much too thin. The Morris drawing-room was all very well in its way, of course; but tulip-pattern curtains and De Morgan pottery don't quite make up for a *réchauffé* of kidneys. Hatherley was an epicure, like most club-bred men, and his converse for the day took a colour from the breakfast table for good or for evil. So he started out that morning in a dormant ill-humour, prepared to tease and 'draw' Massinger, who had had the bad taste to desert Bohemia for dull respectability and ill-paid Squiredom in the wilds of Suffolk.

Hugh showed him first the region of the sandhills. The sandhills were a decent bit to begin with. 'Æolian sands!' Hatherley murmured contemplatively as Hugh mentioned the name. 'How very pretty! How very poetical! You can hardly regret it yourself, Massinger, this overwhelming of your salt marshes by the shifting sands, when you reflect at leisure it was really done by anything with so sweet an epithet as Æolian.'

'I thought so once,' Hugh answered dryly, with obvious distaste, 'when it was the property of my late respected father-in-law. But circumstances alter cases, you know, as somebody once remarked with luminous platitude; and since I came into the estate myself, to tell you the truth, I can't forgive the beastly sands, even though they happen to be called Æolian.'

They walked along in silence for a while, each absorbed in his own thoughts—Hatherley ruminating upon this melancholy spectacle of a degenerate son of dear old Cheyne Row gone wrong for ever: Massinger reflecting in his own mind upon the closer insight into the facts of life which property, with its cares and responsibilities, gives one—when he suddenly halted with a short sharp whistle at a turn of the path. 'Whew!' he cried; 'why, what the dickens is this? The poplar's disappeared—at least, its place, I mean.'

'Ah, yes! Mrs Massinger told me all about that unlucky poplar when you were gone last night,' Hatherley answered cheerfully. 'The only good object in the view, she said—and I can easily believe her, to judge by the remainder. It got struck by lightning one stormy night, and disappeared then and there entirely!'

'This is strange—very strange!' Hugh went on to himself, never heeding the babbling interruption. 'The sand's clearly collected on this side of late. There's a distinct hummock here, like

the ones at Grimes's.—I wonder what on earth these waves and mounds of sand can mean?—The wind's not going to attack this side of the river, too, is it?'

'Ah, Squire,' a man at work in the field put in, coming up to join them, and leaning upon his pitchfork—'ah 'm glad yo've come to see it yourself, naow. That's jest what it be. The sand's a-driftin'. Ah said to Tom, the night the thunderbolt took th' owd poplar—ah said: "Tom," says ah, "that there poplar were the only bar as stopped the river an' the sand from shifting. It's shifted all along till it's reached the poplar; an' naow it'll shift an' shift an' shift till it gets to Lowestoft or mayhap to Norwich."—An' if yo'll look, Squire, yo'll see for yourself—the river's acshally runnin' zackly where the tree had used to stand; an' the sand's a-driftin' an' a-driftin', same as it allays drift down yonner at Grimes's. An' it's my belief it'll never stop till it's swallowed up the Hall and the whole o' Whitestrand.'

Hugh Massinger gazed in silence at the spot where the Whitestrand poplar had once stood with an utter feeling of sinking helplessness taking possession at once of his heart and bosom. A single glance told him beyond doubt the man was right. The poplar had stood as the one frail barrier to the winds and waves of the German Ocean. He had burnt it down, by wile and guile, of deliberate intent, that night of the thunderstorm, to get rid of the single mute witness to Elsie's suicide. And now, his Nemesis had worked itself out. The sea was advancing, inch by inch, with irresistible march, against doomed Whitestrand.

Inch by inch! Nay, yard by yard. Gazing across to the opposite bank, and roughly measuring the distance with his eye, Hugh saw the river had been diverted northward many feet since he last visited the site of the poplar. He always avoided that hateful spot: the very interval that had elapsed since his last visit enabled him all the better to gauge at sight the distance the river had advanced meanwhile in its silent invasion.

'I must get an engineer to come down and see to this,' he said shortly. 'We must put up a breakwater ourselves, I suppose, since a supine administration refuses to help us.—I wonder who's the proper man to go to for breakwaters? I'd wire to town to-night, if I knew whom to wire to, and check the thing before it runs any farther.'

'What's that Swinburne says?' Hatherley asked musingly. 'I forget the exact run of the particular lines, but they occur somewhere in the *Hymn to Proserpine*:

Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins? will ye chasten
the high sea with rods?
Will ye take her to chain her with chains who is
older than all, ye gods?

I don't expect, my dear boy, your engineer will do much for you. Man's but a pigmy before these natural powers. A breakwater's helpless against the ceaseless dashing of the eternal sea.'

Hugh Massinger almost lost his temper—especially when he reflected with bitter self-abasement that those were the very lines he had quoted to Elsie—in his foolish pre-territorial days—about Mr Meysey's sensible proposals for obtaining an

injunction against the German Ocean. 'Eternal sea! Eternal fiddlesticks!' he answered testily. 'It's all very well for you to talk; but it's a matter of life and death to me.—We've got to build a breakwater, that's what it comes to. And a breakwater'll run into a pot of money.'

'Pity the old tree ever got burnt down, anyhow, to begin with,' Hatherley murmured low, endeavouring, now he had fairly drawn his man, to assume a sympathetic expression of countenance.

They walked back slowly to the Hall in silence, passing through the village out of pure habit. Hugh was evidently very much put out. Hatherley considered him even rude and bearish. A man should restrain himself before the faces of his guests. At the door, Hatherley strolled off round the garden walks and lit a cigar. Hugh went up to his own dressing-room.

The rest Hatherley never knew; he only knew that at dinner that night Mrs Massinger's eyes were red and sore with crying. For when Hugh reached his own room—that pretty little dressing-room with the pomegranate wall-paper and the pale blue Lahore hangings—he found Winifred fiddling at his private desk, a new tall black-walnut desk with endless drawers and niches and pigeon-holes. A sudden something rose in his throat as he saw her fumbling at the doors of the cabinet. Where had she found that carefully guarded key?—Aha, he knew! That fellow Hatherley!—Hatherley had taken a cigar from his case as they went out for their stroll together that luckless morning; and instead of returning the case to its owner, had laid it down in his careless way on the study table. He always kept the key concealed in the case.—Winifred must accidentally have found it, and tried to worm out her husband's secrets.—He hated such meanness in other people. How much, he wondered, had she found out now after all for her trouble?

Ah!

They both cried out in one voice together; for Winifred had opened a pigeon-hole box with the special key, and was looking intently with rigid eyes at—a small gold watch and a bundle of letters.

With a wild dart forward, Hugh tore them from her grasp and crunched them in his hand; but not before Winifred had seen two things: first, that the watch was a counterpart of her own—the very watch Hugh had given to Elsie Challoner; second, that the letters were in a familiar hand—no other hand than Elsie Challoner's.

She fronted him long with a pale cold face. Hugh took the watch and letters before her very eyes, and locked them up again in their pigeon-hole, angrily. 'So this is how you play the spy upon me!' he cried at last with supreme contempt in his voice and manner.

But Winifred simply answered nothing. She burst into a fierce wild flood of tears. 'I knew it!' she moaned in an agony of slighted affection. 'I knew it! I knew it!'

So, after all, in spite of her flight and her pretended coolness, Elsie was corresponding still with her husband! Cruel, cruel Elsie! Yet why had she given him back his watch again? That was more than Winifred could ever explain

in her simple philosophy. She could only cry and cry her eyes out.

CHAPTER XXXI.—COMING ROUND.

When Warren Relf steered back his barque to San Remo and Elsie that next autumn, he had not yet exactly been 'boomed,' as Edie had predicted; but his artistic or rather his business prospects had improved considerably through the intervening summer. Hatherley's persistent friendly notices of his work in the *Charing Cross Review*, and Mitchison's constant flow of rhapsodies about his 'charming morbidezza' in West-end drawing-rooms, had begun to bring his sea-pieces at last more prominently into notice. The skipper of the *Mud-Turtle* had gone up one. It was the mode to speak of him now in artistic coteries, no longer as a melancholy instance of well-meaning failure, but as a young man of rising though misunderstood talent. His knowledge of 'values' was allowed to be profound. To be sure, he didn't yet sell; but it was understood in astute buying circles that people who could pick up an early Relf dirt cheap and were prepared to hang on long enough to their purchase, would be sure in the end to see the colour of their money.

That winter at San Remo was the happiest Warren had yet passed there; for he began to perceive that Elsie was relenting. In a timid, tremulous, shamefaced, unacknowledged sort of way, she was learning little by little to love him. She would not confess it at first, even to herself. Elsie was too much of a woman to admit in the intimacy of her own heart, far less in the ear of any outside confidante, that having once loved Hugh she could now veer round and love Warren. The sense of personal consistency runs deep in women. They can't bear to turn their backs upon their dead selves, even though it be in order to rise to higher and ever higher planes of affection and devotion. Still, in spite of everything, Elsie Challoner grew by degrees dimly aware that she did actually love the quiet young marine painter. She had a hard struggle with herself, to be sure, before she could quite recognise the fact; but she recognised it at last, and in her own heart frankly admitted it. Warren was not indeed externally brilliant and vivid, like Hugh; he didn't sparkle with epigram and repartee. But while Hugh scintillated, Warren Relf's nature burned rather with a clear and steady flame. It was easy enough for anybody to admire Hugh; his strong points glittered in the eye of day: only those who dip a little below the surface ever reached the profounder depths of good and beauty that lay hid in such a mind as Warren's. Yet Elsie felt in her own soul it was a truer thing after all to love Warren than to love Hugh; a greater triumph to have won Warren's deep and earnest regard than to have impressed Hugh's fancy once with a selfish passion. She felt all that; but being a woman, of course she never acknowledged it. She went on fighting hard against her own heart, on behalf of the old dead worse love, and to the detriment of the new and living better one; and all the while she pretended to herself she was thereby displaying her profound affection and her noble consistency. She must never marry

Warren, whom she truly loved, and who truly loved her, for the sake of that Hugh who had never loved her, and whom she herself could never have loved had she only known him as he really was in all his mean and selfish inner nature. That may be foolish, but it's intensely womanly. We must take women as they are. They were made so at first, and all our philosophy will never mend it.

She couldn't endure that any one should imagine she had forgotten her love and her sorrow for Hugh. She couldn't endure, after her experience with Hugh, that any man should take her, thus helpless and penniless. If she'd been an heiress like Winifred, now, things might perhaps have been a little different; but to burden his struggling life still further, when she knew how little his art brought him, and how much he longed to earn an income for his mother and Edie to retire upon—that she couldn't bear to face for a moment. She would dismiss the subject; she would make him feel she could never be his; it was only tantalising poor kind-hearted Warren to keep him dangling about any longer.

'Elsie,' he said to her one day on the hills, as they strolled together, by olive and pinewood, among the asphodels and anemones, 'I had another letter from London this morning. The market's looking up. Benson has sold the "Rade de Villefranche."'

'I'm so glad, Warren,' Elsie answered warmly. 'It's a sweet picture—one of your loveliest. Did you get a good price for it?'

'Forty guineas. That's not so bad as prices go. So I'm going to buy Edie that new dinner dress you and I were talking about. I know you won't mind running over to Mentone and choosing some nice stuff at the draper's there for me. Things are looking up. There's no doubt I'm rising in the English market. My current quotations improve daily. Benson says he sold that bit to a rich American. Americans, if you can once manage to catch them, are capital customers—"patrons," I suppose, one ought to say; but I decline to be patronised by a rich American. I think "customer," after all, a much truer and sincerer word—ten thousand times as manly and independent.'

'So I think too. I hate Patronage. It savours of flunkeydom; betrays the toadyism of fashionable art—the "Portrait-of-a-Gentleman" style of painting.—But oh, Warren, I'm so sorry the Rade's to be transported to America. It's such a graceful, delicate, dainty little picture. I quite loved it. To me that seems the most terrible part of all an artist's trials and troubles. After you've learned to know and to love it tenderly—after it's become to you something like your own child—an offspring of your inmost and deepest nature—you sell it away for prompt cash to a rich American, who'll hang it up in his brand-new drawing-room at St Louis or Chicago between two horrid daubs by fashionable London or Paris painters, and who'll say to his friends with a smile after dinner: "Yes, that's a pretty little thing enough in its way, that tiny sea-piece there. I gave forty guineas in England for that: it's by Relf of London.—But observe this splendid "Cleopatra" over here, just above the sideboard: she's a real So-and-so"—torture itself will not induce the present chronicler to name the particular painter

of fashionable nudities whom Elsie thus pilloried on the scaffold of her high disdain—"I paid for that, sir, a cool twenty thousand dollars!"'

Warren smiled a smile of thrilling pleasure, and investigated his boots with shy timidity. Such sympathy from her outweighed a round dozen of American purchasers. 'Thank you, Elsie,' he said simply. 'That's quite true. I've felt it myself.—But still, in the end, all good work, if it's really good, will appeal somehow, at some time, to somebody, somewhere. I confess I often envy authors in that. Their finished work is impressed upon a thousand copies, and scattered broadcast over all the world. Sooner or later it's pretty sure to meet the eyes of most among those who are capable of appreciating it.—But a painting is a much more monopolist product. If the wrong man happens at first to buy it and to carry it into the wholly wrong society, the painter may feel for the moment his work is lost, and his time thrown away, so far as any direct appreciation or loving sympathy with his idea is concerned.—Still, Elsie, it gets its reward in due time. When we're all dead and gone, some soul will look upon the picture and be glad. And it's a great thing to have sold the Rade, anyway, because of the dear old Mater and Edie.—I'm able to do a great deal more for them now; I hope I shall soon be in a position to keep them comfortably.—And do you know, somehow, these last few years—I'm ashamed to say it, but it's the fact none the less—I've begun to feel a sort of nascent desire to be successful, Elsie.'

Elsie dropped her voice a tone lower. 'I'm sorry for that, Warren,' she answered shyly.

'Why so?'

Elsie dissimulated. 'Because one of the things I most admired about you when I first knew you was your sturdy desire to do good work for its own sake, and to leave success to take care of itself in the dim background.'

'But, Elsie, I've many more reasons now to wish for success.—You know why—I've never told you, but I begin to hope—I've ventured to hope the last few months—I know it's presumptuous of me, but still I hope—that when I can earn enough to make a wife happy'—

Elsie stopped dead short at once on the narrow path that wound in and out among the clambering pine-woods, and fronting him full, with her parasol planted firmly on the ground, cut him off in a desperately resolute tone: 'Warren, if I wouldn't marry you unsuccessful, you may be quite sure success at anyrate would never, never induce me to marry you.'

It was the first time in all her life she had said a single word about marriage before him, and Warren therefore at once accepted it, paradoxically but rightly, as a good omen. 'Then you love me, Elsie?' he cried, all trembling.

Elsie's heart fluttered with painful tremors. 'Don't ask me, Warren!' she murmured, thrilling. 'Don't make me say so.—Don't worm it out of me!—Dear Warren, you know I like you dearly. I feel and have always felt towards you like a sister. After all I've suffered, don't torture me more.—I can never, never, never marry you!'

'But you do love me, Elsie?'

Elsie's eyes fell irresolute to the ground. It was a hard fight between love and pride. But

Warren's pleading face conquered in the end. 'I do love you, Warren,' she answered simply.

'Then I don't mind the rest,' Warren cried with a joyous burst, seizing her hand in his. 'If you love me, Elsie, I can wait for ever. Success or no success, marriage or no marriage, I can wait for ever. I only want to know you love me.'

'You will have to wait for ever,' Elsie answered low. 'You have made me say the word, and in spite of myself I have said it. I love you, Warren, but I can never, never marry you!'

'And I say,' Edie Relf remarked with much incisiveness, when Elsie told her bit by bit the whole story that same evening at the Villa Rossa, 'that you treated him very shabbily indeed, and that Warren's a great deal too good and kind and sweet to you. Some girls don't know when they're well off. Warren's a brick—that's what I call him.'

'That's what I call him too,' Elsie answered, half tearful. 'At least I would, if brick was a word I ever applied to anybody anywhere. But still—I can never marry him!'

'Thank goodness,' Edie said, with a jerk of her head, 'I wasn't born romantic and hysterical. Whenever any nice good fellow that I can really like swims into my ken and asks *me* to marry him—which unfortunately none of the nice good fellows of my acquaintance show the slightest inclination at present to do—I shall answer him promptly, like a bird—Arthur, or Thomas, or Guy, or Walter, or Reginald, or whatever else his nice good name may happen to be—Mr Hatherley's is Arthur—and proceed at once to make him happy for ever. But some people seem to prefer tantalising them. For my own part, my dear, I've a distinct preference for making men happy whenever possible. I was born to make a good man happy, and I'd make him happy with the greatest pleasure in life, if only the good man would recognise my abilities for the production of happiness, and give me the desired opportunity for translating my benevolent wishes towards him into actual practice. But good men are painfully scarce nowadays. They don't swarm. They retire bashfully. Very few of them seem to float by accident in their gay shallows towards the port of San Remo.'

SCOTCH BANKING AS A PROFESSION.

OFFICIALS.

THE ordinary definition of an official, as understood by the banks, is an officer who is authorised to sign official documents on behalf of the bank with which he is connected. Before entering into the official domain, it may be proper to state that there is a sort of intermediate class who occupy a position midway between clerks and officials. These are the Inspectors. When an inspecting bank officer is on his rounds overhauling branch-work, he is an official representing his bank; but when he returns to the head office, his rôle of representative ceases, and he then partakes more of the character of a clerk. There is no department of the bank more important than this audit or inspecting department, which takes account of the whole *personnel* and *matériel* of every

branch of the bank. Nothing is out of its purview, and it sees that the policy of the bank is given effect to; for it is policy, as Lord Beaconsfield once observed, that shapes expenditure. The inspecting officers are the *corps d'élite* of the bank's staff; and no better field for training bankers can be found than in that department. A single statement will suffice to show this. Within the past twenty years no fewer than five managers of Scotch and English banks have been furnished by the inspecting officers of one bank alone, irrespective of the agencies and other posts which have been supplied from the same source. This will give some idea of the value of an inspector's experience in fitting and qualifying him for filling the higher posts of the bank.

Coming now to the subject of officials, it will give some idea of the number engaged in Scotch banks if we state that at present there are nine hundred and sixty-four offices connected with these banks, including their London offices. This number implies a corresponding number of agents, the title 'manager' being usually confined to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London offices, or to places where the title has been acquired through the absorption of another and a smaller bank. The next numerous class of officials are the accountants, who rank as a rule next to the agent, and, like him, subscribe documents on behalf of the bank. Then follow the officials at the large branches, and the head-office official staff, of whom the General Manager is the head.

As the branch Accountants form the lowest grade in the official organisation, we shall first speak of them. Their function is that of taking care of the book-keeping at the branch and seeing that all the entries are correctly made. In addition, they are held responsible for the accuracy of the branch returns, which are designed to keep a branch *en rapport* with its head office. The accountant has also charge of the pass-books, which record the dealings of a bank with its customers. When any mistake in the books arises, it is his duty to find it out and rectify it. One of the banks has adopted the system of having accountants at its various offices; while the other banks have but a handful in the entire establishment. The number of these officials might be computed at under two hundred in all.

Advancing to a higher grade, we shall now deal with the most numerous class—the Agents—by defining their duties. These are necessarily determined by the demands of the district in which their office is situated; for the places range from a population of seven hundred and seventy-one—where, it may be mentioned, there are two bank offices—to cities of the magnitude of Glasgow and London. The variety is not only as to the extent of a district, but also as to its productive powers and commercial and agricultural value.

It is always an object of ambition with a bank clerk to become an agent, no matter how small the place. Bank agents have, however, no sinecure in the matter of responsibility, as they are held liable for a certain proportion of the losses which they make on advances, this obligation being defined in the bond which each signs as agent. These losses are sometimes

exacted from agents; but everything depends on the attendant circumstances and the view which is taken by the management of the case. The liability therefor is held *in terrorem* over them. If an agent persists in extending accommodation to his customers contrary to the bank's express instructions, he would be a likely subject for coming within the scope of this rule.

Agents, from their position, have much public trust reposed in them. This leads to their being frequently consulted on matters of business unconnected with the bank, such as investments and the like. Some agents have given advice on such topics, telling what investments should be cultivated, the result being that money has often been lost, particularly in new concerns which have come to grief. It is flattering to have one's opinion asked and to be regarded as an authority, but experience demonstrates the danger of giving advice in money matters, on the issue of which so much depends, and over which so much proverbial uncertainty hangs. It is more prudent to give information only of facts within one's knowledge, and allow the questioner to judge what course should thereafter be followed.

The qualities demanded of an agent are caution, shrewdness, honesty, tact, and attention to duty. Brilliant cleverness is not needed; only a certain amount of knowledge in dealing with figures and with men. An old Highlandman, who was alike provost of a town and agent for a bank, was noted for his pawky tact in disposing of needy applicants for the bank's money. One day a worthy, in whose company he had passed some convivial hours the night preceding, called on him and presented for discount a bill for a small amount, on the strength of the previous evening's conviviality. The pawky Celt coolly regarded the document, and handed it back with the words: 'I canna do't, Charles.—How's your father?' On another occasion, the provost had a bill handed to him by an equally impecunious party. Taking the instrument of debt in his hands, he observed that it was dated a month back, this date being intended to convey the idea that the bill had been kept a whole month without the holder's being necessitated to turn it into cash. Turning to the intending discounteer, he said: 'The ink's no dry, man, and'—*poor!* (blowing the bill away)—'it's a' wind thegither.' A wind-bill means a bill for which no value has been given.

These illustrations serve to show how prompt an agent should be to say no. He must also learn to say it agreeably, for the manner in which a refusal is given goes a long way towards mitigating its severity and breaking its force. He is a real banking diplomatist who can succeed in this.

Agents have to report to their head office on the standing and sufficiency of obligants to the bank, and great firmness is frequently required in dealing with unsecured or doubtful advances. Many individuals consider they are entitled to get from a bank whatever they demand; and that, as there are many partners in a bank, the loss to each must be infinitesimal so far as these individuals' losses are concerned. Some also hold it to be no sin to rob a corporation; and it undoubtedly adds to the difficulties of an agent when he has to deal with persons who have not

the moral perception to see that even a corporation should have the sums it lends refunded to it.

In the appointment of agents, a bank has regard to the wants of each district. A local residenter often obtains a new agency where there is no sufficiently established business, or where a bank must work up from a connection that can only be formed by one who knows the district thoroughly. Hence we see bank agencies filled occasionally by lawyers and factors, or other equally influential members of society who are possessed of interest which they can exert in favour of the bank. It is reckoned that between one-third and one-fourth of the agencies in the banks are filled by agents drawn from the non-banking classes, of whom lawyers form by far the greatest part. These agencies, which require so much fostering local care, are mainly of the smaller order, for untrained bankers could not well carry on the business of the larger branches.

As regards the remuneration of agents, it has been the practice in many cases to allow a commission on the increase in the percentage of deposits over a certain amount, in addition to a fixed salary. This is intended to act as an incentive to the ingathering of deposits, and with a view to quicken the agent's personal zeal for the welfare of the bank. At some branches, payment is made in a fixed salary alone. Agents are allowed house accommodation with minor allowances as may be agreed on, and they have to furnish a guarantee of several thousands for their intromissions.

Promotion from one agency to another depends on the success which attends an agent in his branch management. Some agencies are more easily managed than others, from their being reservoirs for deposits rather than outlets for loans; but as to this much depends on the district. The advances, too, are in some places normal and safe in character, while in others they are precarious from the nature of things. For example, the weather is so uncertain, that the agricultural and fishing industries cannot work so steadily as those which move under less precarious conditions. Foreign prices intervene too; and being factors in the case, affect adversely, as a rule, home interests. There have been cases, happily not common, in which bankers have had to confront forgeries. These occur sometimes when strong pressure is put on obligants to find security for their advances.

There are agents who have been taken into the service owing to the business ability they have displayed in other lines of life. An agent, again, who possesses what is termed a good manner, and who has a pleasing way with ladies, may obtain promotion for these reasons, being thus well adapted for the management of a large deposit business. Glancing at two large agents, or managers as they are called—one in London, the other in Glasgow—we shall find them safeguarding interests represented by several millions of pounds; in fact, between them the greater part of the bank's disposable means. These branch managers enjoy ample discretion in the conduct of the bank's business, tempered by careful supervision. Each sways what is practically an *imperium in imperio*. What tests the discernment and power of decision of agents and managers is the demands

made on them at short notice for temporary unsecured advances. Although these requests are made by men reputed to be wealthy, yet circumstances so change, that it is always a matter of risk to give such advances, which are, moreover, against rule. Yet to every rule there are exceptions, and so a banker must run some risk or lose his customer. Or his clients may be solvent, but may become involved in losses through the bills they have drawn on other people not being met, and thus be compelled to suspend payment. Although a bank is supposed to exact security for the loans it makes, it reckons with loss, and takes it into account in all its calculations, as it has not yet reached the standard of an exact science.

We shall now consider the various offices connected with the body who constitute the official staff of a bank's Head Office. First, the Accountant. His duties are to supervise the work of the staff in his department, and to be responsible for the book-keeping of the bank as expressed in the branch bank returns and the books of the head office. He prepares the statement of the assets and liabilities, and performs the feat called striking profits. In former days, the accountant, or accountant as he was then designated, held office next to the manager of the bank; but the secretary gradually dislodged him from his post, and thus their relative positions have been reversed. The office of accountant is a very onerous one, for the accuracy of all the books and of the staff over whom he presides is dependent on him. The importance of his position was established recently during a notable banking trial. It was then shown that the secretary knew nothing of the concocted statements of the bank's affairs, while the accountant was entirely cognisant of them, he having been a party to the fraudulent alteration of the figures which appeared in the published balance sheets of the bank.

The Cashier's duties lie almost entirely with the cash. He is responsible for the accuracy of the cash in the tellers' hands and in the cash-safe of the bank. He counts all the reserve money, and acts as custodian of the main portion of the keys of the bank's coffers. The safeguarding of the note circulation to meet the requirements of the Peel Act with respect to providing coin for all excess over the authorised issue, is also entrusted to him. The cashier has likewise under his care all the securities and articles of value deposited with his bank for safe keeping. His is the duty, also, of occupying the premises above the bank, so that he shall be within call in any case of emergency. Some cashiers feel the burden of this duty weigh heavily upon them. It is told of a cashier that, on hearing the least noise at night, he would get up out of bed and perambulate the long corridors of the bank house, clad in his night garment, a naked sword in the one hand, and a lantern in the other. He could not sleep until he had reassured himself that the noise he had heard proceeded from satisfactory and explicable causes.

The office of Inspector or Superintendent of Branches is a very important one, if we bear in mind that he is also the head of the inspecting department, to which allusion has already been made. He has the care of all the members of the branch staff, and full reports of the capabilities of each are sent to him. He has the power of

recommending changes and nominating subordinates for the different vacancies that arise from time to time at the branches. Reports on obligants also reach him; and the history of all loans and borrowers' circumstances are carefully laid aside in his pigeon-holes. It is he who sets the machinery at work for overtaking the inspection of the head office and branches, the work of which is done with much more celerity now than in the olden times, when a week or ten days were devoted to the inspection of a single small branch. So thorough was the inspection, that an inspector was once, it is said, called back 'to count the wafers!' Inspections are meant to descend now on branches like bolts from the blue, or like an eagle's sudden swoop, and they are thus more numerous than formerly.

The Secretary of a bank ranks in dignity next to the manager. His duties are varied, and one of them is to act occasionally in room of the manager during the absence of the latter. He carries on that part of the bank's correspondence which is of special value, and is other than routine. It was once stated in a civil case by a secretary that his duty was to submit to his Directors applications for advances, and that he only placed before them those which had any chance of being granted. He attends all meetings of the Board of Directors, prepares the minutes recording the business done, and aids the Directors generally in their deliberations.

We now come to the principal banking functionary, variously termed Treasurer, Cashier, General Manager, and Manager. Of the Scotch bank managers, two only are not trained bankers, one having been a lawyer, and the other an accountant. This circumstance has been no bar to their banking success, and they are also both able literary exponents of banking theory and practice. It would not be easy to define all the duties of a bank manager, but an attempt may be made to state at least the most important of them. He has, subject always to the will of the Directors, the supreme control over the lending and investing of the entire bank's means. All appointments may be said to emanate from him; he judges what is for the best interests of the bank, and decides accordingly. Some managers abide by the recommendations of their departmental chiefs; others prefer to act autocratically in all the appointments they make.

The manager is the real inspirer of the bank's policy, and it must be admitted that he occupies an unexceptionable position for obtaining knowledge of everything which he had needs know. Loaded as he is with so much responsibility in the disposing of interests so vast, there is this in his favour, that he does not incur one farthing of personal liability, such as agents have to bear, by any act of his when he is lending out to the best of his ability the bank's disposable means. The manager has to receive many persons every day, one of his duties being to listen to applications of all kinds, sometimes on the part of officers for additional salary, for vacant posts, &c. He has also to attend to complaints, and when necessary, administer rebukes to subordinates in connection with matters of discipline. He has to keep himself abreast of everything in the world of finance, in markets, stocks, prices, trade operations, and commercial and agricultural doings. The reports

of his inspectors form a fitting study for his evening leisure hours, and furnish him with food for reflection in observing the progress or declension of a branch. He has also to meet periodically with the managers of the other banks, to fix bank rates of interest, and to arrive at an agreement upon disputed or doubtful points in banking practice.

The last matter which we need touch on is the important one of estimating losses, with a view to arriving at honestly earned profits. It is of course impossible to know what tax is thus placed on the powers of casuistry of bank managers; but they seem to perform their part well, if we may judge by the confidence which the public repose in them. The post of bank manager is an extremely important one, and the holder of it is eminently in a situation from which he can exercise an important and salutary influence on the trade and commerce of the country.

THE SILVER STREAM.

AN IDYL OF THE WYE.

By FRED. M. WHITE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

As the shadows began to lengthen over Belmont—for the cathedral chimes floating along the bosom of the waters proclaimed the seventh hour—a long outrigger gig pair flashed round the point into the level stretch of dead pool reaching right away to the Wye Bridge. There was a pleasant smell of flowers lying upon the sweet August air, a lowing of cattle, a reflection of many boats in the track as the gig, propelled by four muscular arms, slid on towards the town. There were only two men in the narrow craft; and as they were double sculling, with long clean sweep, making a musical click of oars in the rowlocks, there was not much opportunity for conversation. The 'stroke,' a young fellow with clear gray eyes and pleasant face, was clad in a suit of plain white flannels; and perched upon the back of his head was a light-blue cap—the badge of distinction sacred to those only who have fought for the honour of the 'Varsity against their rivals from the twin seat of learning, Oxford. Egbert—or as his familiars called him—Bertie Trevor, the stroke in question, had rowed 'four' in that year's Cambridge boat, and now, with his friend Frederick Denton, was making a Wye boating tour from Hay to Chepstow. Denton, a somewhat older man, sported the light-blue and black of Caius College. He was not a blue, for two reasons: first, because the severe training was not to his taste; and secondly, a restless ambition and the result dependent upon a successful university career had left him no time for such a serious and practical business. A hard-working college tutor has no time for the toil of pleasure.

They pulled on with regular sweeping rhythm till they were almost within the bridge-shadows. An arrowy craft bearing a town four rushed by with clean sweep and swirl up-stream, a little knot of admirers running along the bank in the wake of a flannel-clad youth who was bent upon exer-

cising an extraordinary ingenuity for giving each of the unhappy crew the most apparently contradictory directions. As they sped swiftly by, Denton paused in his stroke and looked over his shoulder at the thin line, like a gigantic spider, fading in the golden track.

'That is what some people call pleasure,' he observed—'sacrificing a perfect summer evening for the satisfaction of sitting in a confined space for two hours to be bullied by an implacable miscreant called a coach. Depend upon it, if it was called work, they wouldn't get a man to turn out.'

'I like their stroke,' Trevor replied. 'Well marked and lively, and the last ounce pulled out.—What a grand stretch of water this is, Denton!—two miles without a curve, and room for at least five eights. If we only had such a river at Cambridge!'

A few more strokes and the landing-stage was reached. A bronzed waterman, with visage tanned to the colour of Spanish mahogany, awaited them on the barge: old 'Dick' Jordan, with his solitary keen eye and everlasting pipe, best of men and bravest of watermen, as every rowing man on the Wye can tell. He looked up into the fading blue sky and prophesied, after the manner of his kind, a fair day on the morrow.

'What time be you gentlemen going to start in the morning?' he asked, addressing Trevor, whose light-blue cap he had immediately spotted.

Trevor turned to his friend and asked what hour it was to be.

'It depends altogether upon Phil, you know. He may get here to-night, or not till to-morrow afternoon.—We must leave it open, Dick. Only, you had better have everything ready by ten o'clock.'

The two friends strolled together over the old stone bridge, below which lay the cathedral and bishop's palace, with the trim cloister gardens sloping down to the water-side. The clean city lay very quiet in the evening. As they passed through the close, under an avenue of ancient elms, there was a clamour of rooks in the feathery branches, clear cut against the sky. Turning into Castle Street, Denton came to a house at length, the door of which he opened with a latchkey; for the twain had deemed it best to take a lodging, instead of availing themselves of the accommodation of the *Green Dragon*. In the hall were two small portmanteaus, bearing the monogram P. D. in neat black letters. Denton's face lighted with pleasure. In the joint sitting-room up-stairs there were the remains of a meal, as if some one had recently partaken of refreshment; and on the table a card, upon which were written the words, 'Back in half an hour.'

But the appointed time went on, and the expected guest had not reappeared. Tea had been disposed of; the windows were thrown open, and our friends sat over their pipes, looking out upon the Castle Green, where the world of Hereford was taking its pleasure in the cool summer evening.

'I wonder what has become of Decie?' Trevor observed. 'It's nearly nine o'clock.'

'I hope he isn't going to make an ass of himself as he did in the Easter "Vac,"' Denton said practically. 'You never saw such a wet blanket; and a fellow who had just come into a clear

three thousand a year, too! And twelve months ago there wasn't a cheerier, happier man in the 'Varsity.'

Trevor pulled at his pipe a few moments in reflective silence. 'I noticed the change when we were at Cookham together at the commencement of this "long." Colden had a houseboat there with a lot of people in the party; and when Dixon and I agreed to join, Phil cut it. After agreeing to join, too! Miss Rashleigh was one of them; and, between ourselves, Decie would have jumped at the chance of meeting her once.'

'Oh, Miss Rashleigh was there!' Denton replied reflectively. 'My dear Bertie, did it ever strike you that that was the very reason why Phil threw over Colden at the last moment? I daresay you won't believe me, but it is the fact nevertheless.'

'We used to think Phil would have married her.'

'We were not the only people who thought so: anyway, there was something between them. She is a nice girl; and I dare swear that if anything was wrong, it wasn't her fault. Phil was poor enough then; but she liked him better than any of us, all the same. Everything seemed to go smoothly enough, till that unpleasant affair over the diamond bracelet.'

'I never heard of it,' said Trevor. 'Where was that?'

'Well, perhaps I ought not to mention it; but I was under the impression you knew. It was during the May races last year—you didn't keep that term I recollect now. And they were all up there—Colonel Scobell and his family, with Miss Rashleigh, who is his niece, you know.—I was all the more put out because the affair happened in my rooms. The Scobells had been very kind to Decie the "long" before, and nothing would do but he must give them a lunch; and my rooms, being some of the best in the college, were borrowed for the purpose. Miss Rashleigh's diamond bracelet, the last thing her mother gave her before she died, was lost.'

'Seems strange to lose a thing like that in a man's rooms.'

'Precisely—that is the most unpleasant part of it. It was only laid down for a moment in an inner apartment; and when Miss Rashleigh went in, it was gone. No servant had been there—no one but Decie and Gerard Rashleigh, her brother, you know.—Anyway, it was never found.'

'What do you make of it?' Trevor asked cautiously. 'Valuable trinkets like that don't disappear without aid. Still, at the same time, it would be absurd to dream of Phil having a hand in it.'

Denton watched the smoke curling round his head for a few minutes. His next words startled Bertie out of his philosophic calm: 'We shouldn't; but there is no doubt Miss Rashleigh did—and does.'

'My dear Fred, you rave! Philip Decie would cut off his right hand first. Besides, with all his money'—

'Now, see how rash youth rushes to conclusions.—How long is it since Philip's uncle died and left him a fortune?—Five months. And up to that time, if you had searched the university

of Cambridge through, you would not have found a poorer undergraduate than Decie.'

'But surely you don't think'—

'Of course I don't; and if you suggest such a thing, I shall assault and batter you in the first degree. But I know a little more about women than you; and, to put it harshly, I have a strong suspicion that Miss Rashleigh entertains the enlightened idea that Phil stole her bracelet.'

'Only shows the sagacity of some women,' returned the enlightened philosopher of twenty-three saptiently.—'Why, I would trust my life to old Phil.—Great Scott! Denton, fancy any one—any one being idiot enough to believe that Decie could do such a blackguardly thing!'

Bertie laid aside his pipe in disgust, and regarded Hereford's innocent citizens below as if they, with the rest of mankind, had done him a personal and irretrievable injury. But any reply of Denton's was prevented by the entrance of the maligned hero in question. There was nothing in either air or manner to denote the blighted swain. Decie presented a picture of the typical Englishman of twenty-five as he appears under the advantages conferred upon most young men by a liberal education, and an acquaintance with the refinements and amenities of life in the upper middle classes. Like the others, he was clad in flannels and boating jacket, the distinguishing badge of a Trinity man. With the exception of a half-melancholy smile and a certain sombre light in the dark eyes, sorrow or care had laid a light hand upon him.

'I am sorry to have kept you waiting,' said he, after the first greeting; 'but the fact is I strolled into the *Dragon* billiard-room, and the first man I saw there was Du Maurier.'

Denton coughed dryly, a sternutation which might have meant anything, but which, as both Decie and Trevor were aware, simply denoted Denton's dislike of the individual in question. 'What brings that desirable youth in these parts?' he asked. 'I thought he usually spent his vacation at Monaco or Monte Carlo, where fools with more money than brains most do congregate.'

'Appears he is staying in the neighbourhood,' Decie answered briefly. 'Some friend who has taken a house down the river. The Frenchman is not communicative, and I didn't press him, you may be sure.'

'Well, it doesn't matter.—And now, anent to-morrow. I suppose there is no reason why we shouldn't start at nine o'clock?'

Phil nodded, without taking his pipe from his mouth. It was all one to him what time they started, for, sooth to say, his first enthusiasm in the trip had vanished, and he felt in no mood for discussing details which once upon a time would have been a source of interest and pleasure. Moreover, the meeting with Du Maurier—a fascinating Gaul, who had, for certain diplomatic reasons, deemed it advisable to become a Cambridge undergraduate—had aroused within him the rankling soreness of an old wound, which he flattered himself had long since entirely healed. In spite of Denton's brusqueness and apparent want of feeling, he was naturally of a tender sympathetic disposition, and refrained from rallying Phil upon his preoccupation, a want of attention for which the latter was truly grateful.

So, upon the whole, the long-expected meeting could not be pronounced a brilliant success.

But when morning dawned, with a fair blue sky and a gentle breeze rippling in the immemorial elms, it was not in the elastic and buoyant nature of youth in the twenties to preserve the grave decorum of misanthropy. The gig, provided with a pair of long light oars, and short pole for stream-work, lay alongside the barge, her bows filled with multitudinous packages, and covered with a waterproof sheet calculated to afford a haven of shelter at nights. A few minutes past ten they swung round, shooting the pointed stone arches, floating past the palace and cloister gardens, down the rippling stream, with the fair meadows sloping towards the valley lying in the bosom of a ring of purple hills. Gradually they slid down in the beautiful morning, along by fair homesteads and quaint gabled farmhouses, through silent pools where the blue flash of the kingfishers darted in zigzag flight, or over broad rippling streams where the salmon nets hung drying on the willows. Decie and Trevor were rowing; Denton lounging in the sternsheets, smoking lazily, or making humorous remarks upon the fishermen as they passed.

'Every man has a vocation in life,' he observed sententiously, 'though fate so often ordains a round peg for a square hole. If I hadn't been a hard-working university coach, I should have made a perfect loafer.'

'To see you now, any one would think you were the idlest man under the sun,' Bertie returned between the strokes; 'and yet you profess to despise affectation. There isn't a more ambitious fellow in Cambridge than you.'

'I don't know about that, though. It runs in too many grooves. There is Barton, of Jesus, with a sole ambition to get his boat head of the river again; Moffat, my old tutor, who is wild to become Professor of some ology at Trinity; or young Rashleigh, the cleverest pupil I ever had, whose ambition seems to be to get to the dogs in the shortest possible space of time.—You remember him, Phil?'

Phil, pulling bow-oar, with his face hidden from the speaker, flushed with something more than the exertion he was undergoing, replied through his set teeth that he did. And, considering that the youth in question was only brother to the particular star of poor Phil's slighted devotion, it is only too palpable that he spoke the truth.

'I have not seen him for a long while,' he continued, fearful, with all the painful self-consciousness of a lover, that his silence would be read and misconstrued. 'We—we used to be rather thick, you know. I—I have rather fancied that for the last term or two he has fought shy of me.'

'He seemed to have drifted into a precious bad set,' said Bertie, with all an athlete's contempt for the venial sins of college life—'Everton and Leslie, and the card-playing, tandem-driving division. Of course, it is no business of mine; but knowing a little of Rashleigh's financial affairs, I don't see how it can last.'

'It won't last,' Denton returned. 'There will be a scandal some of these days, and exit Gerard Rashleigh and a few others who shall be nameless. And yet,' continued the speaker regretfully, 'it's a pity, a great pity—a lad like that with good feelings and generous instincts, only wanting

a kind, firm guide to turn out a credit to himself and his college.'

'You are altogether mistaken, Denton. Young as he is, Rashleigh is a hardened, unscrupulous scoundrel.'

Denton propped himself upon his elbow so that he could get a better glance at the speaker's face. Phil's eyes were glowing with passion, every feature blazing with indignation. As his glance fell upon Denton's amazed countenance, he checked himself with a visible effort and bit his lip.

'Now, that is the sort of house I should like to call mine,' said the steersman, with an abrupt change in the conversation, as he indicated a noble-looking residence rising out of a belt of trees upon an abrupt eminence. 'If I have a weakness, it is for a half-timbered house. I could close my eyes and dream æsthetic dreams of future bliss, were I the owner of yon paradise.'

He closed his eyes as he spoke; while Trevor laughed at this simulated ecstasy. It was not a particularly brilliant or humorous remark, but anything was better than the awkward silence caused by Decie's impulsive words. But in reality the wily Denton was lost in no earthly paradise; he was racking his brains to discover the mystery underlying Phil's emphatic utterance. The spectacle presented at this point by an elderly gentleman in a tweed shooting-cap and waders wielding a salmon rod at the head of a broad stream was hailed by all three as a positive relief to the feeling of constraint which had fallen upon them.

'If I was a betting man,' Bertie cried with suppressed excitement, 'I should make a small wager that is Colonel Scobell.'

Decie turned his eyes in the direction of the fisherman. A few powerful strokes brought them nearer. 'It is the Colonel. What brings him here?' he said.

'Any sport, Colonel?' cried Trevor in his audacious style.—'How do they die?'

Colonel Scobell, in the act of making a cast, paused, and got his 'butcher' hopelessly entangled in the willows behind. Denton steered the boat to the side; and the old Crimean hero stood knee deep in the rushing stream, offering a sinewy brown hand to each of the watermen in turn.

'You are a nice lot of fellows to come into my neighbourhood without letting me know,' he exclaimed. 'Explain yourselves.'

'Now, mark the pride of the man!' said Denton oracularly. 'His neighbourhood! Think of it! And only last year he had the audacity to use the same expression, which—correct me if I am wrong—included the whole of the Thames valley.'

The Colonel explained that he had taken for the summer months the mansion which had so excited the last speaker's envy. It struck the kind-hearted warrior, directly he had heard the wanderers' plans, that it would be a good joke to take them all up to Pencraig, as the house was termed, and keep them there for a few days. And knowing from old experience that any argument with one of the grandest of nature's gentlemen would be so much wasted time, they accepted the offer with something akin to gratitude.

Without waiting for his rod, the Colonel led the way up the rocky path, leaving Phil to arrange some little matters connected with the boat. Ten minutes later, as he turned to follow,

the bushes parted, and a figure with nether limbs clad in knickerbockers and a straw hat perched upon his head stood before him. The new-comer eyed Decie with a peculiar glance, in which fear and deference, defiance and mistrust, were strangely mingled. Phil recoiled as one does instinctively from a noxious animal, though the individual before him was neither unpleasant nor repulsive to the view.

'What, in the name of all that's evil, brings you here?' he cried.—'Look here, Rashleigh: I don't want to do anything unpleasant, for the sake'—

'Oh, drop that,' cried the other doggedly. 'The fact is I am staying here with Scobell; and when I met the other fellows, I thought I would run down and warn you I was here. You needn't make it unpleasant for Beatrice, if you do for me.'

'Beatrice! Is she here too?'

'That's just what I came to tell you. If you mind'—

'Of course I mind,' said Phil, with a deep sternness which would have astonished Denton had he but seen it. 'Do you think I would have come, had I known? If you had a spark of manliness, you could put a stop to all this misery and trouble.'

NEW MOTIVE POWER FOR SHIPS.

THE steady progress which is being made in mechanical science has received another illustration by a novel method of propelling ships which has just been submitted to the naval profession. The representative of this new type of vessel is the *Zephyr*, the second of its kind, which has been constructed from the designs of Mr A. F. Yarrow, of Messrs Yarrow & Company, the well-known firm of torpedo-boat builders of Poplar, London, and which was brought under the notice of the Institution of Naval Architects at its recent meeting.

The construction of the vessel differs very little from steam-launches, except that the machinery is placed right at her stern, whilst the fuel is carried in a tank in her bows, the intervening space being reserved for passengers, cargo, &c. It is in connection with the propulsion of the boat that a new departure has been taken, the fuel used being a highly volatile hydrocarbon, one of the early products in the distillation of petroleum, having a specific gravity of from 0.725 to 0.73. This liquid is an article of commerce in the United States, and can be purchased there at the rate of fivepence per gallon. The novelty of its application is that the vapour of this hydrocarbon is made to serve at the same time as the fuel and propelling agent. As to the *Zephyr*, this vessel is thirty-six feet in length by six feet beam, and is built of steel. The hull weighs fourteen hundredweight and the machinery six hundredweight, making a weight of one ton. There is nothing in the construction of the hull which calls for special remark; nor is the propelling machinery—an ordinary direct-acting inverted engine provided with the usual link-motion, feed-pumps, &c.—of an exceptional type.

It is the mode of feeding and actuating the engine alone which strikes us as novel. It is fed by a vapour-generator situated immediately aft of the engine. The generator is a copper coil

enclosed within a double sheet-iron casing, the intermediate space between these two casings being filled with asbestos. Below the coil is an iron pipe, bent into the form of a ring, perforated with holes, and arranged, as in a Bunsen burner, in such a manner that a mixture of hydrocarbon and air can be forced into it, and ignited on issuing through the holes. As has been stated, the tank for holding the liquid fuel is placed in the bow compartment of the boat. It is of copper, air-tight, and of forty gallons capacity. Care is taken that the bulkhead aft of it is perfectly water-tight, so as to avoid any possibility of the liquid finding its way into the central portion of the boat. This tank is placed in communication with the feed-pumps of the engine by means of a pipe passing outside the boat near to the keel; the feed-pumps delivering into the bottom of the vapour-generator. There are two hand-pumps, one on the port and the other on the starboard side. By working the port pump, which has its suction in connection with the tank, its delivery joining the delivery-pipe from the pumps on the engine, the hydrocarbon is drawn from the tank and forced into the bottom of the coil. The starboard pump forces air into the top of the tank; the air becomes charged with vapour, and passes back through a pipe carried along the gunwale to a supplementary burner placed below the vapour-generator, and arranged to ignite the main burner immediately it comes into operation.

In order to start the launch, the air-pump on the starboard side is first worked by hand; and as soon as the air charged with vapour finds its way to the supplementary burner, it is ignited by means of a taper, and heats the copper coil. The air-pump is maintained steadily working for from two to six minutes, according to the temperature of the coil and its surroundings. When the copper coil has in this manner been warmed up, a few smart strokes are made with the hand-pump on the port side, and the liquid from the tank is forced into the coil. The gauge indicating the pressure within the coil immediately rises rapidly, and then a communication is made by opening a valve in a pipe connecting the upper part of the coil with the main burner, allowing a small quantity of the vapour to pass into the burner, together with a requisite amount of air, which is drawn in with it, and on issuing from the holes is immediately ignited.

When this has been fairly started, the air-pump is not further needed, and so long as the pressure is maintained in the coil the flame will continue. The engine can now be started, the main feed-pumps at once taking the place of the hand feed-pump, which can be stopped. From this moment, the action throughout is automatic, and continues as long as the supply of liquid in the tank lasts, which is stated to be about thirty hours, the consumption being about a gallon and a quarter per hour. When once started, neither engine nor what is described as the boiler requires any further attention. Experience has shown that the launch can be run at a speed of from seven to eight miles an hour for several hours without any attention whatever being required, excepting occasionally lubricating the bearings. The working pressure can be easily maintained at about seventy pounds per square inch. On leaving the engine, the exhaust-vapour passes into two con-

densing pipes, placed one on each side of the keel, where it is condensed, and forced by the engine back into the tank, where it arrives in its original fluid form.

It will be seen from this brief description that there are several important points in which this system—which, we understand, is the invention of a foreign engineer, and has been worked into practical shape by Mr A. F. Yarrow—is superior to steam. The fuel-supply requires no attention until that stored in the tank is used up, being perfectly self-acting, all hand-firing being abolished. Owing to the absence of coal, the whole arrangement is very cleanly. Moreover, one person, with ease and comfort, can take charge both of the arrangement of the machinery and steering. To stop the boat, all that is necessary is to cut off the supply of vapour, and no further attention is required. As will further be seen from the description given, the vapour consumed is practically that which goes to the burner, since that which performs work in the engine is exhausted into the condensing pipes running along the bottom of the boat, and is forced back to the tank, to be used over and over again, the only consumption taking place at the burner heating the coil. There are, however, other important advantages attaching to the system. It has been found that on an average, in this climate, the time required to start the launch at full speed, from lighting up, does not exceed five minutes. Owing to the comparatively small space occupied by fuel, generator, and machinery, the central portion of the vessel is available for carrying purposes, and may be roughly estimated as not far from being doubled, as compared with steam. There is a very large saving in weight of machinery, owing to the small size of the vapour-generator, which is so light that two men can easily lift it. This reduction in weight renders lighter scantling of hull admissible, which is apparent from the fact that the launch (thirty-six feet long) with machinery complete weighs only one ton. All the points mentioned will make it evident that in the *Zephyr* we have a new type of vessel which promises well.

It is the intention, we understand, to apply the principle first to launches, torpedo-boats, and other small craft; but as experience ripens, its application to large vessels is a contingency which may be looked forward to. Whatever its ultimate measure of success may be, we may be sure that, in the hands of an experienced shipbuilder like Mr Yarrow, the invention bids fair to cause a revolution in marine propulsion.

THE HUMOURS OF GASOPOLIS.

'Now, in the reign of Victoria, Queen over Britannia, there were in that city which is called Gasopolis many great and mighty scribes.' So runs the Chronicle of Gasopolis as published in its official organ, *The Lighthouse*.

It matters little where Gasopolis is situated: suffice it to say it is in the Emerald Isle, and that the function of its inhabitants, as described in the Chronicle, is 'to enlighten the habitation of the people and keep their lamps burning.' As for *The Lighthouse*, few outside the city have heard of

it; not on account of its inferiority to other journals, but on account of its publication in manuscript form, and therefore never exceeding a circulation of one. Thinking that a smattering of its contents might be appreciated by a larger circle of readers, its editor has put together a few of its 'official anecdotes' in a connective form; and he gives the result to the public with the assurance that whatever he may state is the 'plain unvarnished' truth.

A scribe in Gasopolis has many opportunities of studying his fellow-mortals. All sorts and conditions of men pass before him daily; and, to a person who can appreciate unconscious humour, the study of the working-classes affords an endless source of pleasure. I say 'working-classes' advisedly; for it is only among such that I have found unconscious humour. Education has done and is doing much for mankind; but it destroys that delightful blundering—that 'touch of nature' which 'makes the whole world kin;' and it is surely a wise arrangement of Providence that all men cannot be scholars, else our earth would lose that 'boundless laughter' which brightens life.

To describe the official machinery of Gasopolis is not within the province of this article; but to give connection to my remarks it will be necessary to mention some of the functions of the various officials. And first, there is the scribe who receives the application for gas, or notice to stop the supply, and attends to all complaints in reference to bad lighting, defective meters, and the like.

In taking an application, we require the signature of the applicant; and the apostles of compulsory education would have a strong point in favour of their system, if they had an opportunity of entering Gasopolis and witnessing a few *His Mark* applications. I believe there is not a class of greater hypocrites under the sun than the persons who can't write. I have witnessed a good many signatures in my time; and I can confidently state that the majority of *His* or *Her Mark* individuals, rather than confess their ignorance, resort to mean excuses; such as: 'Ah, just do it yourself; I came away and forgot my glasses, and I can't see a thing without them;' or: 'You can write for me; my hands are so cold I couldn't hold the pen.' I remember accidentally testing an applicant who made the latter excuse, by touching his hand with my little finger as he made his mark, and his hand was quite hot.

It was while attempting to sign his name to an application form that a man uttered a statement which, if it became generally applicable, would considerably affect the sale of soap; and would tax Messrs Pears's ingenuity to the utmost to invent an advertisement which would have the desired effect on the wearers of eye-glasses. The man referred to, before signing his name, endeavoured to fix a somewhat ponderous black-rimmed eyeglass on his right eye;

but each time he bent his head to write the glass fell. Being accompanied by a woman, who was watching him with evident interest, and feeling that some explanation was necessary, he turned to her and remarked in a confidential manner: 'As sure as ivir I wash my face, I can't get the glass to stick on.'

Remarks on our personal appearance are sometimes made by kindly disposed persons. One old gentleman, a tailor by trade, once gave us a short history of a knight who was at that time in a high position in the town. 'I remember him,' he said, 'coming to town a pale, sickly youth, just like that young man'—and he pointed to me—'and look what he is now! How did he rise to such a position?—By passiverence!—And what I say to you, young man, is, passivere! and there's nothing to hinder you from becomin' as great as he is.' I hope he spoke the truth.

There are some humorous mistakes made in giving notice to take the indication of the meter and stop the supply. Mrs Malaprop herself never said anything better than the anxious-looking little fellow who remarked: 'Please, sir, my da sent me down to see if you wud send a man up to take the indignation of the meter.'

Complaints are numerous in Gasopolis as well as other places; and some individuals have a very graphic way of describing what is wrong. 'Bad light' is one of the most frequent causes of complaint; and women are the most eloquent complainers. A strong-minded-looking female once marched over to me and remarked: 'I dunno what we're goin' to do wi' thon gas of ours! No sooner do we put a light to it than it jist pluffs out among our hands.'—On another occasion, one of the same sex, though cast in a gentler mould, remarked: 'I came to tell you that there's somethin' wrong with our gas. It flutters, you know; blinks a kine o' way.'—But the best and fullest description of 'bad light' was given by a determined-looking woman who uttered something like the following: 'The leadin' main-pipe comin' in from the leadin' street is corrupted. We have no light satisfaction. The pipe's corrupted, the gas-fitter says. It doesn't do, you know, when you're shavin' or hair-dressin', to have the gas jumpin' up and down. You needn't send a man to blow down the pipe, for there was three very respectable men up the last time, and they blowed down the pipe; but it didn't do any better. The pipe's corrupted.' And with the reiteration of the pipe's 'corruption' she stopped, and I was not sorry, for it takes a great deal of self-command to avoid smiling in a case like that.

Thus far I have dealt with one department of the business; but the humour is not all confined to it. At the 'place for the receipt of custom' (*vide* Chronicle) many a remark is made worthy of record; and again the gentler sex have rather the best of it. One middle-aged woman who was paying an account got a three-penny piece with a hole in it in her change. She ferreted it out and returned it with the remark: 'That's a very scrupolous thrupenny bit. I'm afraid they won't take it, they're so scrupolous.'

The misuse of a word is again illustrated by the complaint of a woman about the amount of her husband's account. She said she couldn't understand how his account was so large. 'It's

a small shop, that shuts at seven o'clock; and if you look back, you'll not find such an account either summer or winter.' The scribe in attendance tried to reason with her, but he was completely vanquished when she exclaimed: 'It must be too large; for the equalisation of last quarter was the same.'

There is nothing makes a man look so ridiculous as a 'dhrup too much of the crathur'; and there is nothing makes a man so vehement in the expression of his loyalty to Queen and country as this same beverage, if there is any outward occurrence to give him a starting-point. It happened that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was visiting a city not a thousand miles from Gasopolis; his movements were attracting a great deal of attention in the local press; and no doubt the man who uttered the following sentiments was well read in all the news. He was pretty 'far gone' as he marched into the office and made straight for one of the 'receivers of custom.' When he had got in front of him, he drew his right hand up to his face, and placing his forefinger on his nose, remarked: 'The Prince of Wales is as dacent a subject as ivir you travelled under!' This emphatic way of opening the conversation took the scribe a good deal by surprise; but his surprise gradually changed to amusement as the impressive stranger continued: 'Queen Victoria's as good as goold! I'll bate you my life the Prince is a gentleman iviry inch of him! I'll stand on principle he's travellin' on his ma's business!'—and so on; stopping a little between each statement to help it out with an extra pressure on his nose; till he wound up his loyal sentiments by declaring, 'The Old Woman's the best of the lot of them!'

But we needn't go outside Gasopolis for unconscious humour. We have a labourer with a name which no one, least of all himself, knows how to spell. He was doing something against the law of the land one day, and a policeman collared him. His offence was not of such a heinous nature as to lodge him in prison, but the keeper of the peace decided that his name should be taken. So he produced his note-book and pencil and asked the man his name. The man gave it to him, and the policeman looked doubtful. 'How do you spell it?' he asked.—'You don't spell it at all,' replied the man; 'you jist put it down.' And as the policeman found a difficulty in doing so, the man was let off.

Another character about the place is 'Gentleman James,' the window-cleaner. How he got the name, I don't know, but it may have arisen from his fondness for talking about the time he was servant to the 'beeship.' We never could find out where he lived; and if we wanted him particularly, we were 'jist to send word to the corner-house,' which happens to be a public-house; and therein lies the weak point of 'Gentleman James's' life. His conversation is at all times most interesting and amusing; and he has a sly cynical way of giving a dig, which rarely fails to provoke a laugh. The scribes were in the habit of playing tricks on him by hiding his cloths, &c.; and when he had succeeded in finding the lost articles, he would make such remarks as: 'A man's position in life is no guarantee: if he's a thief in his heart, he'll steal;' at the same time drawing attention to the supposed

culprit. At another time he would say: 'Presbyterians are as a rule uncivilised; but'—(naming the offending scribe, who happens to belong to that body) 'is the worst case ivir I saw.'

OUR LEGAL FUTURE.

No doubt shortly the public will have the opinions of some of the highest legal authorities on both sides of a question which is of such great importance to the community at large—namely, the fusion of the two branches of the law; and considering the interest which is shown every day as to its desirability, we think that it may not be out of place to analyse what the proposed change really means. Lawyers' bills have always been a bone of contention to those who are unfortunate enough to have to pay them. We have all heard of the client who, when asked by his lawyer to name any particular item in his bill to which he took objection, replied, that 'he could not discuss items, but that it was the *whole* which was objectionable;' and certainly we can understand the reason of his reply. If by fusion the interests of the public are preserved, whilst their pockets are saved, no reasonable person ought, from any sentimental feelings of conservatism, to oppose such a desirable change.

The examinations which have to be passed by those who wish to enter upon a legal career are very different. Those for solicitors are the harder of the two; and the apprenticeship is not only longer, but more expensive. Why this is so, it is difficult at first sight to understand; but the reason may perhaps be gathered from the fact that a barrister who has neither ability nor industry never rises beyond a certain position, whatever interest he may have to push him forward. He therefore owes his success not to the knowledge which he gains by passing an examination, but to his individual efforts. If the proposed fusion takes place, there will doubtless be one examination for all; and the prizes and scholarships will be more equally distributed. This, however, is not of much importance; but there is another change which might be more seriously felt—we allude to the manufacture of legal literature. It is well known that the majority of law-books are written by barristers, who have not only more leisure, but greater opportunities, for the production of such works. Scores of young men at the bar have too much time on their hands; and they are only too glad to occupy themselves, whether profitably or not, with work which may be of use to them in the future. Law-books are more often written for fame than gain, and there are several instances in which young men owe their reputation to the choice of a lucky subject and a well-written book; whereas solicitors, having no such opportunities, owing to the different nature of their duties, cannot give up their time to such a purpose; and it is hard to conceive who, under the proposed system, will be found to write books of such a nature. Moreover, the circulation of law-books is extremely limited, as opposed to other kinds of literature; and few would be found who could make a living by writing them, even in the case of the most successful law-book writers of the present day.

The all-important advantage, however, to the

public will be, that clients will be able to see and consult their solicitor-advocates about their cases. We will give an instance of how matters stand at the present day. A client goes to his solicitor and states his case, for which he is charged a fee; the solicitor then goes to a barrister and has a 'conference' with him, for which a second fee is charged; then, if there is a 'leader' in the case, a 'consultation' is required, and for this a third fee is charged. If the client were enabled to see his advocate direct, one, if not two, of these fees would be saved. Again, before the case comes on for hearing in court, it is necessary for the barrister to be furnished with a full copy of the pleadings, proofs of witnesses, and facts of the case. This constitutes his 'brief,' without which he would be hopelessly at sea. All this means expense, an expense which is often grudged by the client, and which under the fusion would not practically be required. The solicitor-advocate, having gone through the case from its commencement, ought to be in full possession of the facts, and would not require anything for his guidance beyond his own notes whilst arguing the case in court. Of course, if a 'leader' were engaged, a brief would still be necessary; and this luxury would be solely for the client's consideration.

Another result of the change would be that legal partnerships would probably contain many more members than they do at present. The leading firms of London solicitors are usually composed as follows: one partner and his clerks do the Conveyancing work; a second undertakes the Chancery work; whilst a third takes in hand the Common Law. Moreover, there are other special subjects which might require special partners; for instance, Patent, Admiralty, and Ecclesiastical cases, without mentioning more. It will not be very easy to guess which branch of the profession will suffer or gain most by the proposed change: but at all events, the future of a junior barrister is becoming year by year so much less hopeful, that this fact alone will render him less averse to the contemplation of an attack upon his vested interests.

T W I L I G H T.

TO L. L. D.

DREAM-HALLOWED hour! when drifting dusk and shade
Roll from the dying glory of the west;
And shadows woven in the caverned breast
Of yonder beacon, lengthen down the glade!
From beck and mere the mirror'd glories fade;
And mother-souls, secure in fold and nest,
Gather their sleepy murmurers into rest
Of yielded limbs and silence. Dimly arrayed
In dusk and silver of the night, and fair
With lily-stars, the daughter of the day—
Trails of the sunlight in her floating hair,
And tender gleam of reverie, in gray
Of limpid eyes—has borne our fevered care
For one brief hour of dream and shadow-sway.

C. A. DAWSON.

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RANNOCH MEMORIES.

IN the centre of the great Grampian range, and to the north-west of Perthshire, lies Loch Rannoch, a splendid sheet of water, nearly ten miles in length, by one half-mile to a mile in breadth. The river Tummel carries off its surplus waters into the Tay. The village of Kinloch-Rannoch stands at the eastern end. On the north side is the hamlet of Killiechonan; and on the south side, almost opposite, is that of Camgouran. The loch, the Black Wood—a natural pine forest—the birchwoods, the great mountain masses rising in wild confusion, have peculiar charms for a romantic mind. Brawling streams of delightful beauty, broken here and there with what, by a little stretch of imagination, becomes a magnificent cataract, flow wildly down the mountain gorges into the loch. Stretching for twenty miles away to the west is the great expanse of Rannoch Moor, a dreary desolate waste of heather, bog, and loch, traversed by no road, and no house in all its extent.

When a lad of eighteen, my lot cast me into the midst of this wondrous scene. For some time I settled at Camgouran to impart what little store of knowledge I possessed to the children of the servants, crofters, and others on the estate of Dall. About two miles behind the hamlet is one hill which it was my delight to climb, because of the glorious view its summit afforded in the clear morning air. To the south and east, grotesque jagged peaks rise in stern grandeur, overtopped by Ben Lawers, Ben Cruachan, Ben A-chony, Schiehallion, and other neted giants; to the west, the wild rugged hills about Glencoe; to the north, Ben Alder (famous in the wanderings of Prince Charlie) and the Lochaber hills. At the base of Ben Alder the eye catches a glimpse of the southern part of Loch Erich; a little farther to the right is the clear sheen of Loch Garry; and beneath, the pure placid waters of Loch Rannoch are reflecting the grandly wooded hills, and the hamlet of Killiechonan almost opposite. Such scenes as these made so deep and

lasting impressions on my memory, that now, after the lapse of a full quarter of a century, the splendid panorama appears vividly before my eyes.

Camgouran was divided by a burn into Easter and Wester. 'The Burn' was the only name by which I ever heard it called, though its size entitled it to a nobler appellation. By far the greater part of the arable land was in the Wester. This was divided into twelve lots or crofts. The westernmost being made up of several lots whose occupiers had emigrated, was by general consent known as 'The Farm.' The people were in what appeared to me very comfortable circumstances. Almost every crofter had a horse, two or three milch cows, several stirks (young bullocks or heifers), and from one to three score of sheep. These fed in common on the rising grounds behind, and were in charge of a shepherd. Each crofter boarded the shepherd a fixed number of days in succession, and contributed a certain sum towards his yearly wage in proportion to the number of sheep attached to the croft. A similar arrangement was entered into with a boy or girl to take charge of the cows and stirks.

The houses were built of rough stones bedded with clay and pointed with coarse mortar, and were thatched with heather, ferns, or straw. The windows were generally small; very often several of the panes were cracked, and some others patched up with pieces of glass or paper. At one end there was a barn, and a byre for the cows, but completely partitioned off from the dwelling of the family. This had at least always a *but*—the common room where the family cooked and ate their food—and a *ben*, a better-class apartment, kept for the reception of strangers. None of the *buts* had a fireplace or a chimney, in our sense of the word: a raised flat stone at the far end held the blazing peat and birchwood fire; while the smoke escaped by a great open wooden funnel, narrowing towards the top, and surmounted by a barrel-like erection, often bound together with straw ropes. The *ben*

had a fireplace with a grate built in, and a regular chimney up through the gable. In the *ben* were generally placed, end to end along the wall, two box-beds. Here, too, the *caillaich*, or guidwife, expended her taste for ornamentation. A few framed common prints, such as the Queen and Prince Albert, or a number of Scripture scenes, adorned the walls, which were either whitewashed, or so treated as to give the appearance of plaster. A very few had paper-hangings. On the mantel-shelf were arranged one or more coarse china dogs, vases, jugs, and the like. The chairs and tables were all home-made, of native wood. In most cases everything was extremely clean and tidy. In the *but*-end, from the almost constant presence of peat and birch smoke, the wood had assumed the appearance of polished ebony; while the mutton hams dangling from the rafters gave it a somewhat fantastic look.

The home-life was simple. Every morning, porridge and new milk—better than the best Edinburgh cream. The porridge was poured into a big earthenware basin and set on the centre of the *but*-table. A great jug of milk was placed opposite the *caillaich*. Horn spoons and small bowls or jugs for each member of the family were laid down. All sat around. Grace having been said, each received a supply of milk in bowl or jug. Spoons were at once plunged into the mess; then it was who should sup fastest. The slow had a poor chance of a full meal. Dinner consisted of, one day, mutton-kail or broth. A big potful of potatoes was boiled in their jackets to eat with the kail. The boiled mutton came in at the finish. Next day, beaten or whole potatoes, with a plentiful supply of milk and cheese. So on it went, alternating day by day. Roast or stew was never thought of. A few good trout sometimes proved a pleasing variety. Tea was used, to which there was always an abundance of oat-cake, barley-meal and flour scones, and no stint of both fresh and salted butter. 'Loaf-bread,' as it was called—that is, wheaten bread—was a rarity. The Highland Railway was not then opened, and even now the nearest station is Struan, twenty miles off.

It may be interesting to know how the long winter evenings were passed. Two or three logs were laid along the hearth, peats placed against them, and soon there *was* a fire. The guidwife and a few others sat at one side carding and spinning wool. The remaining women were either knitting or sewing. The men were engaged in some sort of work, such as making baskets for carrying peats. Light was supplied as follows, a lamp or candle being used only on special occasions. The natural pine forest had at one time covered a much greater extent of country; the roots, fat and full of resin, still remained in the ground. The *boiteach*, or guidman, had at leisure times during the summer months dug up, with spade and mattock, a quantity of these, carried them home, split them into small pieces (*speilachs*), and placed them to dry. On the left-hand side of the ingle, at a convenient height, was hung up a sort of griddle; several of the *speilachs* were laid on this crosswise above each other. These were kindled, and one person was deputed to keep up the flame

—a duty which required no small amount of skill and attention.

Talk was vigorously carried on; the events of the day were discussed, and plans laid for the future. There was little tittle-tattle, but a good deal of story-telling. In every house it was an understood thing that in my presence, out of courtesy, English alone should be spoken. The stories of spunkies, water-kelpies, spectre-funerals, ghosts, &c., mixed up with wild legend of daring deed or weird romance, were often frightful enough, especially if one had to go home alone any distance in the dark. I remember how, one very dark night, after hearing a ghost recital at a house three miles from my lodging, a feeling of fear and great uneasiness seized me on the way homewards. Two miles of the road ran through the Black Wood, and it *was* black that night. Suddenly I recollected that I had to pass a spot where, a few years before, a pedlar had been found dead, sitting against a tree. He was buried on the spot. What if I should see the pedlar beside that tree, enveloped in phosphorescent light! I knew I was nearing the place. My eyes were straining through the darkness; the sound of my own footsteps alarmed me, and great beads of perspiration were trickling over me. Suddenly, I heard the patter of feet approaching; but I could see nothing. For a moment I stood listening—hesitating. Instantly there was a gentle touch of something cold and moist on the back of my hand. I ran on like a mad creature. The Thing kept pace with me; I could hear it in close pursuit. I rushed along at a great pace. In the midst of my terror I remembered that we kept a tame fallow-deer at the house, which knew me, and followed me like a dog. The animal might have got loose. I stopped suddenly, and, in excited tones, jerked out 'Flora.' She answered by rubbing her cold moist nose against my hand. It took me some time to still the tumultuous beating of my heart; and then I laughed at the idea of being frightened by the touch of a fallow-deer's nose.

The loch afforded excellent fishing, but I took more to the burn. The wild broken chasms with potholes abounding in trout, the sounding waters, the birch and the heather, the excitement born of danger, had more attractions for me than monotonously casting the line from a boat and watching for a fin. The tramp upwards, the bracing morning air, and the general grandeur of the scene, well repaid the exertion, even though there had not been the prospect of a few dozen splendid trout. There was always good sport; I never came back with an empty basket.

One pool I had never attempted to fish. From its high precipitous rocky sides, feathered with birch shrubs and crowned with hoary pines, I deemed it inaccessible. The approach to this gorge was by a kind of stair, composed of broad smooth steps, over which the water leaped merrily, forming a series of beautiful cascades. More than once I had climbed laboriously and waded up to the entrance, where the water, confined in a space not over two yards wide, came boiling furiously from the tempting pot beyond. Approach down stream was impossible. One Saturday, elated with success, I determined to have another look away back into that pot. When I got on to the last step, I began to peer on both sides. I noticed

on my left what looked like a shelf in the rock, running inwards, and disappearing round a corner seven or eight yards in. If I could get on to that shelf, I could easily crawl forward on hands and knees into such a position as would enable me to get at that pot. The rod could be drawn along between my legs; the basket was deposited carefully in a cranny.

Collecting stones, I soon had a pile sufficiently high to allow me to catch the ledge. I pulled myself up. The shelf was wet and slippery, about two feet broad, and afforded good hope of gratifying my ambition. Pressing close to the rocky side, I began to advance slowly and painfully. When about half way, I looked down. I might be about ten feet above the stream. For a moment, the wild, tumultuous eddying and the boiling, furious, rushing waters made me giddy. I closed my eyes to keep out the sight. I would go back. But no! Thus far and baffled! I must have a trout out of that pot, to show as a trophy. Again I advanced. The shelf now narrowed so much that there was barely room for my knees. One false movement, and over I must go, to be mutilated, drowned, and tossed hither and thither. At last, I reached the corner. Right before me was the great dark circular pot, of unknown depth. But my shelf had now become so narrow that to advance was impossible. To attempt to fish was impracticable. The return, I began to feel, was to be perilous. I could gaze on the pot's placid surface, but I dared not ruffle its bosom. A trout leaped up. My heart gave a bound, and I very nearly lost my balance.

The return, however dangerous, must be tried. Down went the rod. Glancing upwards, I saw that the rocks projected over me. I was in a horizontal fissure, whose upper part seemed gradually descending to crush me. My hands and knees were bleeding. I began to try to back out, which I required to do with extreme caution. I found I must move back the knee next the rock before I could move the other, pressing my body at the same time firmly on the side. My joints were getting stiff, and I felt fatigued; but desperation gave me strength. After much slow toilsome effort, I reached the spot where I had ascended. How was I to get down? My hands, elbows, and knees—my whole body—were so sore that to turn off the shelf meant a fall among the stones and a roll into the water, from which, with a few extra bruises—probably broken bones—I felt I would be unable to extricate myself. I gave a shout; and, to my great relief, I immediately heard the well-known voice of the shepherd of the hamlet calling to me from the top of the opposite bank to hold on quietly and steadily, and he would come to my assistance. I knew it would be ten minutes before he could reach me, for he had to go a considerable distance down the stream to get in to the channel, and then climb over the shelves. These ten minutes seemed to prolong themselves to an age. I suppose he lifted me down, for I found myself in a half-sitting posture among the stones, and the shepherd bathing my temples. By-and-by he put his plaid under me, and, taking an end in each hand, he got me on his back and carried me out carefully. When I was laid upon a heathery mound, I presented a sorry appearance, my clothes all soiled and torn, and covered with blood. I soon

recovered so far as to be able to walk a little; and on reaching the peat-road, we fortunately found a cart going for a load of peats. I was lifted in, and the horse's head turned homewards, which, when we reached, all sorts of wild rumours were sent abroad. I was confined to bed for a week. The rod and basket were afterwards delivered to me by the good shepherd, who had gone to the spot in search of them.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXXII.—ON TRIAL.

MATTERS at Whitestrand had been going meanwhile from bad to worse. Winifred never spoke another word to Hugh about Elsie's watch; her pride prevented her. She would not stoop to demand an explanation. And Hugh had no explanation of his own to volunteer. No ready lie rose spontaneous to his lips. He dropped the subject then and for ever.

But the question of the encroachments could not be quite so cavalierly dropped: it pressed itself insidiously and silently upon Hugh's attention. An eminent engineer came down from London to inspect the sand-drifts, shortly after Hatherley's visit. He stroked his chin and remarked cheerfully with a demonstrative smile that currents were very ticklish things to deal with on their own ground: that when you interfered with the natural course of a current, you never could tell which way it would go next; and that diverting it was much like taking a leap in the dark, as far as probable consequences to the shore were concerned. After which reassuring vaticinations, the eminent engineer proceeded at once with perfect confidence to erect an expensive and ingenious breakwater off the site of the poplar, which strained the slender balloon of Hugh's remaining credit to the very verge of its utmost bursting-point. A year passed by in the work of building and throwing out the breakwater; and as soon as it was finished, with much acclamation, a scour set in just round its sides which ate away the grounds behind even faster than ever.

The estate, in fact, was simply doomed. Æolian, Pactolian, indeed: ah me, the irony of it! Those Æolian sands were overwhelming Whitestrand. The poplar had formed its one frail support. In destroying the poplar, Hugh had simply outwitted himself. No earthly science could now repair that fatal step. Physicians were in vain. Engineers and breakwaters were of no avail. The cruel crawling sea had begun remorselessly to claim its own, and day after day it claimed it piecemeal.

Nor was that all. Hugh's affairs were getting more and more involved in other ways also. Those were the days of the decline of Squiredom. Agricultural depression had told upon the rents. Turnips were a failure; mangolds were feeble; Hessian fly had made waste straw of old Grimes's wheat-crops; barley had never done so badly for years. Foot-and-mouth disease and pleuro-pneumonia had combined with American competition and Australian mutton to lower prices and to starve landlords. Rents came in worse and worse at each successive Whitestrand audit. The interest on the mortgage was hard to raise; and the servants' wages at the Hall, it was whispered about, had fallen into arrears for a whole quarter.

Clearly the young Squire must be short of funds ; and nothing was afloat to help his exchequer into safer waters.

But drowning men cling to the proverbial straw. For his own part, Hugh had high hopes at first of his *Life's Philosophy*. He had trimmed his little bark most cunningly, he thought, to tempt the stormy sea of popular approbation. There was the big long poem for heavy ballast, and the ballades and occasional pieces in his lightest vein for cork belts to redress the balance. Sooner or later the world must surely catch glimpses of the truth, that it still enclosed a great unknown Poet ! He waited for the storm of applause to begin ; the critics would doubtless soon set up their concerted pean. But one day, a few weeks after the volume was published, he took up a copy of the *Bystander*, that most superior review—the special organ of his own special clique—and read in it with hushed breath—a hostile notice of his new and hopeful volume. His heart sank as he read and read. Line after line, the sickening sense of failure deepened upon him. It had not been so in the old days ; then, the critics had hastened to bring him butter in a lordly dish. But now, all that was utterly changed. He read with a cheek flushed with indignation. At last, the review touched bottom.

‘Mr Massinger,’ said his critic in concluding his notice, ‘has long since retired, we all know, into Lowther Arcadia. There, among the mimic ranges of the Suffolk sandhills—a doll’s paradise of dale and mountain—he has betaken himself with his pretty little pipe to the green side of a pretty little knoll, and has tuned his throat to a pretty little lay, all about a series of pretty little ladies, of the usual insipid Lowther-Arcadian style of beauty. These waxen-faced damsels somehow fail to interest us. Their cheeks are all most becomingly red ; their eyes are all most liquidly blue ; their locks are all of the yellowest ; and their philosophy is a cheap and ineffective mixture of the *Elegant Extracts* with the choicest old crusted English morals of immemorial proverbial wisdom. In short, they are unfortunately stuffed with sawdust. The long poem which gives a title to the volume, on the other hand, though molluscoid in its flabbiness, is as ambitious as it is feeble, and as dull as it is involved. Here, for example, selected from some five hundred equally inflated stanzas, are the modest views Mr Massinger now holds on his own position in the material Cosmos : the scene, we ought to explain, is laid in Oxford ; the time, midnight or a little later ; and the Bard speaks in *propria persona*.

The city lies below me wrapped in slumber :

Mute and unmoved in all her streets she lies :

Mid rapid thoughts that throng me without number

Flashes the phantom of an old surmise.

Her hopes and fears and griefs are all suspended :

Ten thousand souls throughout her precincts take

Sleep, in whose bosom life and death are blended,

And I alone awake.

Am I alone the solitary centre

Of all the seeming universe around,

With mocking senses, through whose portals enter

Unmeaning phantasies of sight and sound ?

Are all the countless minds wherewith I people

The empty forms that float before my eyes

Vain as the cloud that girds the distant steeple

With snowy canopies ?

Yet though the world be but myself unfolded—

Soul bent again on soul in mystic play—

No less each sense and thought and act is moulded

By dead necessities I may not sway.

Some mightier power against my will can move me :

Some potent nothing force and overawe :

Though I be all that is, I feel above me

The godhead of blind law !

‘Seven or eight pages of this hysterical, cartilaginous, invertebrate nonsense have failed to convince us that Mr Massinger is really, as he seems implicitly to believe, the hub of the universe, and the sole intelligent or sentient being within the entire circle of organic creation. Many other poets, indeed, have thought the same, but few have been so candid as to express their opinion.’

Hugh crushed the *Bystander* in his hand with a burning sense of wrong and indignation. The measure he himself had often meted to others, therewithal had it been meted to him ; and he realised now in his own person the bitterness of the stings he had often inflicted out of pure wantonness on endless young and anonymous authors. Cheyne Row had clearly cast off her recalcitrant son. He was to it now an outcast and a pariah, a wicked deserter to the camp of the Philistines.

Winifred was seated on the sofa opposite, but he did not pass the paper to her. He flung it from him. He was too vain to ask for her sympathy ; and perhaps he was not quite sure that he had any claim upon it. They were leading a life of mutual avoidance, as far as possible ; communicating only on strictly practical topics, when occasion demanded, and not even then in the most amicable spirit. They were not in touch with each other ; but who was to blame ? Not surely Hugh—the wise, the brilliant, the immaculate ! And yet—and yet—how little he understood a woman’s heart. While he had been reading in bitterness of spirit what the *Bystander* said of him, Winifred was also reading—in the *Charing Cross Review*, and the subject was that same volume of her husband’s. The criticism here was ten times more galling and bitter than that under which Massinger had just been wincing, and she knew how it would pain him were he to read it. Had she been as heartless as her husband, she would have passed the paper to him and enjoyed his humiliation and discomfiture. But she was not as her husband was—in many ways. She was as many another woman, with a proud and selfish and unsympathetic husband, has been. She had loved him once, and in a measure loved him still, and therefore would not pain him by inflicting another wound, as it were, with her own hand. She buried the paper deep beneath the sofa cushions ; and Hugh never knew the bitter things which the *Charing Cross Review* had said about him. It would have been all the more galling to his wounded spirit had he known further that that review was signed with the initials A. H.—Arthur Hatherley.

Winifred lifted the paper which Hugh had flung from him, and skimmed the *Bystander* review in haste. But she said never a word in any way about it. ‘Shall I accept Lady Mortmayne’s invitation ?’ she asked with chilly unconcern.

Bohemia had clearly turned against them ; but

Philistia at least, Philistia was left to console their bosoms. If one can't be a poet, one can at any rate be a snob. In the bitterness of his heart, Hugh answered: 'Yes. Go anywhere on earth to a body with a handle.' Then he tried to rouse himself, to put on a cheerful and unconcerned manner. 'I like to patronise art,' he went on with a hard smile, 'and as a work of art I consider Lady Mortmayne almost perfect.'

Winifred laid down her paper on the table. 'What shall I say to her?' she asked glassily. She was a timid letter-writer. Even since their estrangement, Hugh most often dictated her society notes for her.

'Dear Lady Mortmayne, we shall have great pleasure'—Hugh began with vigour.

'Isn't "we have great pleasure" better English, Hugh?' Winifred asked quietly, as she examined her nib with close attention.

'No,' Hugh blurted back; 'certainly not. Shall have great pleasure's quite good enough for me, so I suppose it's good enough for you too; isn't it?' He was getting positively cruel now. 'If you can write so well,' he muttered between his clenched teeth, 'write it yourself. "Great pleasure in accepting your kind invitation for Thursday next."'

'Thanks. I think I'll put it my own way. "And will bring the dahlias she promised"'

'Who promised?—Lady Mortmayne?'

'Oh, bother! I mean, "the dahlias I promised, which I would have brought before; but I was unfortunately prevented by my gardener having quite inadvertently"'

'For Heaven's sake, split it up into short sentences,' Hugh cried, on tenter-hooks. 'I couldn't let such a note as that go out of my house—I mean, our house, Winifred—if my life depended upon it. A man of letters allow his wife to make such an exhibition of impossible English!'

'I wish I was clever,' Winifred said, growing red, 'and then I could write my own letters without you.'

'Be good, my child, and let who will be clever.' 'Charles Kingsley,' Hugh answered provokingly. '"An honest man's the noblest work of God." Alexander Pope. (I think it was Pope; or was it Sam Johnson?) A placid woman runs him close, ecod: Hugh Massinger. Ecod's a powerful weak rhyme, I admit, but what can you expect from a mere impromptu? I only wish all women were placid. Well, the moral of these three immortal lines, selected from the works of three poets in three different ages born (Dryden), is simply this—you do very well as you are, Winifred. Don't seek to be clever. It doesn't suit you. Take my advice. Leave it alone.—For if you do, you'll find it in the end a complete failure.'

'Hugh! You insult me.'

'Very well then, my dear. You will be able to exercise Christian patience and resignation in pocketing the insult—as I have to do from you very often.'

Winifred shut down her writing-case with a bang and burst, not into tears, but into an uncontrollable fit of violent coughing. She coughed and coughed till her face was purple and livid with the effort. Hugh watched her silently, as hard as adamant. She had often coughed this way of late. The habit was growing on her.

Hugh thought she ought to cure herself of it.

'I shall go up next week again to consult Sir Anthony Wraxall,' she said at last, when she recovered her breath, gasping and choking. 'Will you go with me, Hugh?'

'We've no cash now to waste on junketing and gadding about in town,' Hugh answered gloomily. 'A pretty time to talk about riotous living, with the servants' wages all overdue, and duns bothering at the door for their wretched money! My presence could hardly give you any appreciable pleasure. You can stop at the dingy old lodgings in Albert Row, and Mrs Bouverie Barton will help gad about with you. You can traipes together over half London.'

Winifred bowed her poor head down in silence. Her heart was sick. It was full to bursting. This was all she had bought with the fee-simple of Whitestrand.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—AN ARTISTIC EVENT.

'Mr Warren Relf,' said the daintily etched invitation card, 'requests the pleasure of a visit from Mr and Mrs Bouverie Barton and friends to a Private View of his Paintings and Water-colour Sketches, on Saturday, October the 3d, from 2.30 to 6 p.m., at 128 Bletchingley Road, South Kensington.'

Such a graceful little invitation card never was seen, neatly designed by the artist himself, with a bold flight of sea-gulls engaged in winging their way across the upper left-hand corner; and a stretch of stormy waves bestridden by a fishing-smack in full career before the brisk breeze occupying the larger part of its broad face in very delicate and exquisite outline. When Winifred Massinger saw it carelessly stuck aside among a heap of others on Mrs Bouverie Barton's occasional table in South Audley Street, she took it up with a start and examined it closely. 'Mr Warren Relf!' she cried, in a tone of some surprise. 'Then you know him, Mrs Barton? I didn't remember he was one of your circle. But there, of course you know everybody.—What a sweet little etching!'

'What? Mr Warren Relf?—O yes, I know him. Not, I'm afraid, a very successful artist, as yet; but they say he has merit—in his own way, merit. I'm going to see these new pictures of his on Saturday, if I can sandwich him in edgewise between the Society for the Higher Education of Women and the Richter concert or tea at the MacKinnons'. I've only five engagements for Saturday. Quite an empty day.—Have you got a card for the private view yourself, dear?'

'No,' Winifred answered with a slight blush.

'Well, then, would you like to go with us, dear?' Mrs Bouverie Barton asked kindly.

Winifred turned over the card with a wistful look. 'It says, "Mr and Mrs Bouverie Barton and friends,"' she repeated with emphasis. 'So of course you can take whoever you like with you, can't you, Mrs Barton?—Saturday the 3d from 2.30 to 6 p.m.—I think I might.—I'll risk it anyhow.—That'd suit me admirably. My appointment with Sir Anthony's for two precisely.'

'Your appointment with Sir Anthony?' Mrs Barton echoed in a grieved undertone.

Winifred coughed—such a nasty dry little hacking cough. 'Why, yes, Sir Anthony Wraxall,' she answered, checking herself with some difficulty from a brief paroxysm of her usual trouble. 'I've come up this week, in fact, on purpose to consult him. Hugh made me come, my lungs have been so awfully odd lately.'

'My dear,' Mrs Bouverie Barton put in tenderly—everybody knows Mrs Bouverie Barton, the most charming and sympathetic hostess in literary London—'you hardly seem fit to go running about town sight-seeing at present.—Does Mr Massinger seriously realise how extremely weak and ill you are?—It scarcely seems to me you ought to be troubling your poor little head about private views or anything of the sort with a cough like that upon you.'

'Oh, it isn't much, I assure you, dear Mrs Barton,' Winifred answered, the tears coming up into her eyes as she spoke at the touch of sympathy. 'Hugh doesn't think it's at all serious.'

At 128 Bletchingley Road, the ancestral home of all the Relfs—for one generation—a tiny eight-roomed London house in a side-street of intense South Kensington—all was bustle and flutter and feverish excitement. Edie Relf to-day was absolutely in her element. It was her joy in life, indeed, to compass the Impossible. And the Impossible now stared her frankly in the face in the concrete shape of a geometrical absurdity. She had undertaken to make the less contain the greater, all the axioms of Euclid to the contrary notwithstanding. What are space and time to a clever woman? Of no more importance in her scheme of things than to Emmanuel Kant or to Shadworth Hodgson. The Relfs had issued no fewer than three hundred and twenty separate invitation cards, each with that extensible india-rubber clause, 'and friends,' so capable of indefinite and incalculable expansion. Now, the little front drawing-room at Bletchingley Road could just be induced, when the furniture was abolished by Act of Parliament, and the piano removed up-stairs to the back bedroom, to accommodate at a pinch some thirty-five persons, mostly chairless. 'My dear Edie,' Mrs Relf cried in a voice of despair, 'we can never, never, never pack them in anyhow.'

'Herrings in a box would find themselves comparatively roomy and comfortable,' Warren murmured, with a glance of black despondency round the four scanty walls of the tiny drawing-room. 'How on earth could you ever think of asking so many?'

'Nonsense, my dears!' Edie answered with a confident smile that presaged victory. 'Leave that to me. It's my proper business. I see it all. The commanding officer should never be hampered by futile predictions of defeat and dishonour. Of course they won't come, the greater part of them. They never do rush, I regret to say, to inspect your immortal works, Warren. But still we must arrange, for all that, as if we expected the whole united British people—in case of a rush, don't you know, mother. Let me see. We've only sent out cards, I think, for a poor trifles of three hundred and twenty.'

'No,' Warren corrected very gravely. 'Three

hundred and twenty cards, you mean, for six hundred and forty wives and husbands.'

'Some of them are bachelors, my dear,' Edie answered with a sagacious nod; 'and some old maids, who never by any chance buy anything. And what's two hundred? A mere trifle! I declare it affords no scope at all for a girl's ingenuity. Like our respected ancestor, Warren Hastings, I stand aghast at my own moderation.—I really wish, mother, now I come to think of it, we'd sent out invitations for a thousand.'

'Six hundred's quite enough for me, I'm sure,' Warren replied, glancing round the room once more in palpable doubt. 'How do you mean to arrange for them, Edie?'

'Oh, easy enough. Nothing could be simpler. I'll tell you how. First of all, you throw open the folding-doors—or rather, to save the room at the sides, you lift them bodily off their hinges, and stick them out of the dining-room window into the back garden.'

'They won't go through,' Warren objected, measuring with his eye.

'Rubbish, my dear! Won't go through, indeed! You men have no imagination and no invention. You manufacture difficulties out of pure obstructiveness. If they won't go through whole, why, just take out the panels and unglue the wood-work, that's all.—Very well, then; that throws the drawing-room and dining-room into one good big reception-room, from which of course we remove all the furniture. Next, we range the chairs in a long row round the sides for the old ladies—the old ladies are very important; keep 'em down-stairs, or else they'll prevent their husbands from buying—and let the men and the able-bodied girls stand up and group themselves in picturesque clusters here and there about the vacant centre. What could be easier, simpler, or more effective? A room treated so furnishes itself automatically with human properties. With tact and care, we could easily squeeze in some seventy or eighty.'

'We could,' Warren answered, after a mental calculation of square area.—'But how about the pictures?'

'Hear him, mother! Oh, but men are helpless! Where should the pictures be but up in the studio, stupid! We wouldn't take all the people up to see them at once, of course. You and I would go around, looking very affable, with a professional smile—so, you know—perpetually playing about the corners of our mouths, and carry off the men with the most purchasing faces in constant relays up to admire the immortal master-pieces. Meanwhile, mother and Mr Hatherley, down below here, would do the polite to the old ladies and undertake the deportment business. Or perhaps Mr Hatherley'd better be stationed on guard up-stairs, to fire off some of his gushing critical remarks from time to time about the aerial perspective and the middle distances. Mr Hatherley always knows just what to say to weigh down the balance for a hesitating purchaser.'

'Edie,' Warren cried, flinging himself down with a disgusted face upon the dining-room sofa, 'I hate all this horrid advertising and touting, for all the world as if one were the catchpenny proprietor of a patent medicine, instead of an honest hard-working British artist!'

'I know you do, my dear boy,' Edie answered imperturbably; 'and that's all the more reason why those who have the charge of you should undertake to push you and tout for you against your will, till they positively make you achieve the success you yourself will never have the meanness to try for.—But, thank goodness, I don't mind puffing. I'm intriguer enough myself for the whole family. If it hadn't been for my egging you on, and pestering you and bullying you and keeping you up to it, we should never have got up this private view of your things at all.—And now, having started and arranged the entire show, I mean to work it my own way without interference. If there's anything on earth I love, it's a jolly good muddle.'

And jolly as the muddle undoubtedly was, Edie Relf did pull them through in the end with triumphant strategy. Saturday the 3d was a brilliant success. Blotchingley Road, that mere suburban byway, had never before in its checkered career beheld so many real live carriages together. The six hundred, or at least a very fair proportion of them, boldly they drove and well, down that narrow side street. All the world wondered. The neighbours looked on and admired with vicarious pride. They felt themselves raised in the social scale by their close proximity to so fashionable a gathering. Number 128 itself was a changed character; it hardly knew its own ground-plan. Edie alone had reigned supreme. And as two of the clock chimed from Kensington church tower on that eventful afternoon, she murmured aside to her mother, with an enraptured gaze at the scarlet and green *kakemonos* on the wall of the staircase: 'My dear, there's not a speck of dust in this house, nor a bone in my body that isn't aching.'

FIGHTING THE ARABS AT LAKE NYASSA.

BY ALFRED SHARPE.

On the 2d of November 1887 I left Bandawé on the western shore of Lake Nyassa, on an elephant-hunting trip through the hills to the west. I reached the Kafusi River that night, and camped on the bank of the stream some twenty-five miles from Bandawé. I had intended to have followed up the valley of the Kafusi to the north-west, where elephants are always to be met with; but on the following morning at daylight, as we were on the point of starting, we heard distant shouts in the bush, and presently in ran two natives, who had been sent after us with letters from Bandawé. It appeared that after our departure, the little steamer *Ilala*, which runs up Lake Nyassa about once a month, had arrived, having on board three Europeans—E. O'Neill (the British consul at Mozambique), Dr Tomory of the London (Medical) Missionary Society, and Mr Scott. They were on their way up to the north end of the lake, to the assistance of two Europeans at Karonga (one of the African Lakes Company's stations) who were being threatened with attack by the Arabs.

I returned to Bandawé, therefore, and we all left in the steamer for Karonga, having with us some twelve natives and fifteen guns of various kinds. Steaming throughout the night, we stopped

for a few hours on the following day, at a wooding-place in Deep Bay, and reached Karonga after dark the same evening. We were glad to find that the two Europeans were safe and well—Bain of the Scotch Free Church Mission; and Monteith, the agent of the African Lakes Company in charge of the station. Their news was, however, very bad. The Arabs, some five hundred in number, had been ravaging the country round, killing the natives, burning their villages, making slaves, and in fact depopulating the whole district about Karonga. On the day before our arrival, the Arabs had gone to the Cambwé lagoon, where many natives had taken refuge, hiding in the reeds about the lagoon. They set the reeds on fire and shot the natives as they ran out. Some were roasted; and some, who jumped into the lagoon, were taken by the crocodiles.

The Arabs had threatened to take possession of the station at Karonga; and Monteith and Bain expecting an attack daily, had built a small fort of unburnt bricks on the edge of the lake, some eighty yards from the station, to which they intended to go in case of attack.

We sent the steamer back on the day after our arrival, instructing her skipper to hurry to the south end of the lake and bring back men, guns, and ammunition with all speed; and we expected her back in six or seven days. (As it turned out, however, eventually, she did not get back for five weeks.)

A few days after our arrival, Nicol, one of the African Lakes Company's employees, arrived from Tanganyika, where he had been absent for some months. This increased our force considerably, as he brought with him some more men and guns. We now had some forty guns of all kinds, but only a few hundred rounds of ammunition. Among our guns were flint-locks, Tower muskets, shot-guns, elephant-guns, express rifles, Sniders, and Martinis. And there was one enormous two-bore muzzle-loader: this, however, no one cared to fire.

On November 7th, seventy to eighty natives came in and asked for protection, and we allowed them to occupy some empty sheds in the station. And on the 19th, many hundred natives, of whom a large proportion were women, were taken into our camp for protection.

We were busy now strengthening the brick fort. It was a space about twenty yards square, on the edge of the lake, surrounded by a wall of unburnt bricks about four feet six inches to five feet high, and two feet thick. Outside this we dug a shallow wide trench, which we filled in with thorns. We also enclosed a piece of the sandy beach behind our fort with a wooden stockade for the refugees, cattle, and donkeys.

On the 18th, we received word that the Arabs were preparing to attack us; and we then moved the ivory from the store and all valuable goods into the fort. We put up three tents inside, enclosed the refugees and animals in the stockade behind us, and took up our abode in the fort, leaving the old store and station empty, as it would have been impossible to defend the houses against attack.

There were four Arab towns near Karonga: Maramba (two miles south), Kopakopa (sixteen miles south), Sulema (seven miles west), and Mpata (sixteen miles west). The Arabs from

these four towns had concentrated at Maramba. On the 23d, while at breakfast in the fort, we heard shots fired, and saw the Arabs in the bush some three hundred yards south of us; but after some ten minutes' firing they retired. On this day we sent Nicol to the north end of the lake, to the Sokili chiefs, asking them to come down in force to our assistance. On the 24th, at daylight, the whole Arab force, numbering some five hundred guns, attacked us. They were also assisted by a tribe of Wahenga natives from the town of Kanyolé, who had thrown in their lot with the Arabs. They came on apparently intending to 'rush' our fort, but never got within eighty yards of us, our fire driving them back to the trees. They then entered the empty station and fired from behind the houses, trees, &c.

I now give extracts from my diary for the next five days:

'24th.—Before noon, the Arabs had learnt not to expose themselves to our fire. We saw several shot, but cannot tell the extent of their casualties. Ours were, a donkey killed and a woman (a refugee) wounded in the cheek. In the afternoon the Arabs occupied the empty store and used it as a fort, knocking out loopholes. Firing all day. Our greatest anxiety is that we are so short of ammunition. We have stopped the boys from firing; whites only firing, picking off any of the Arabs who show themselves.

'25th.—Firing kept up by Arabs all night. During the darkness, they have built a stockade of thick tree-trunks one hundred and eighty yards south of us on the beach, and from there and the store they pour a nasty cross-fire into our fort. All our tents have bullet-holes. Firing all day. Rain in morning makes things uncomfortable for us. Unless the steamer or the Sokili people come soon, we shall be in a bad way. During the morning, seeing that a large number of Arabs were running into the store to get out of the rain, we took two of the eight-bore elephant guns which carried a three-ounce bullet and ten drams of powder, and fired for the strong door. The bullets must have penetrated and done some execution, as we saw the Arabs pouring out again.

'26th.—Rain all night—everything wet. Arabs firing all through last night. They have now started another stockade of horizontal logs, which they are building up into some large trees one hundred and fifty yards south of us. Firing all day, many bullets in the tents. In the evening sent out a party to try to fire the store, we in the fort keeping up meanwhile a heavy fire. The boys were successful, and the store was burnt down.

'27th.—Firing all day. In the afternoon, the Arabs opened fire from their new stockade, fully thirty feet from the ground: they are thus enabled to fire down into the fort. No longer safe to walk about in the fort. Had to dig ditches two feet deep all about, to walk in. Also heightened the walls by piling bales of cloth on the top.

'28th.—Early this morning the Arabs ceased firing. We sallied out, and in a few hours pulled down their stockades. About noon we were delighted to see large numbers of the Sokili natives coming down the lake shore to our assistance—fully four thousand of them.'

On the following day, together with our native allies, we went for the Arab town of Maramba,

and rushing the stockade, found the town empty, the Arabs having hurriedly deserted it, and gone to Mpata, to resist us there if we attacked them. We burnt the town, and tried to induce our native allies to go with us to Mpata; but they would not, saying they wished to return home now. We therefore returned with them to their own country, and camped at Nsesi, some thirty miles north of the old station, intending to await here the arrival of the steamer with ammunition and reinforcements, and then to attack Mpata.

On the 4th of December we attacked and destroyed the native town of Kanyolé, whose people had been with the Arabs fighting against us.

While awaiting the arrival of the steamer, I took a short journey to the foot of the Livingstone range of mountains. They rise straight from the shore of the lake on the north-east shore, and at the north end of the lake curve round to the north-west, having the large plain inhabited by the Sokili tribes at their base. Elephants are plentiful in the wooded foothills; and in the plain itself are immense quantities of buffalo. On my first day I shot three elephants out of one herd; and on the 14th of December I shot two more, one of which had tusks weighing nearly sixty pounds each. On the 15th of December I shot three, one of which had only one tusk. On the 16th I received letters from the camp at Nsesi telling me that the steamer had arrived bringing a few more guns and men, and a few hundred cartridges and four Europeans, and that it was arranged we should attack Mpata at once. Among the arrivals were Hawes, the British consul for Nyassa; and J. Moir, the manager of the African Lakes Company. I returned to the camp; and on the 22d we started for Mpata with one hundred guns of all descriptions, and a large native contingent armed with spears. We reached Mpata on the morning of the 23d, and found the Arabs in great force, and the town strongly stockaded. The Arabs were outside the town; but as we advanced, they retired inside and fired from behind their stockade. Where we had hoped our native allies would be of most use to us, was in the taking of the stockade. We had hoped they would advance up with us, and by climbing over in their overwhelming numbers, have overpowered the Arabs; but they showed the white-feather, and utterly failed us, hung back, and could not be induced to advance right up; so we had to go on without them. Luckily, as soon as we reached the stockade itself and put our guns through, the Arabs fled back into the town, and then our natives came up and swarmed over. For an hour or two we had a lively time. Our natives were bent solely on looting, and would not join with us and drive the Arabs out of the far end of the town; consequently, a desultory fight was kept up all the time among the houses. Eventually, we set fire to our end of the town, and started back for Nsesi—the natives having secured ivory and cloth to the value of some eight hundred pounds, as well as guns, powder, and numerous other things. Our casualties were two Europeans wounded, several of our native allies wounded and several killed. The Arab loss must have been heavy compared with our own.

On the 5th of January, seven of us Europeans left in the *Ilala* for the south end of the lake;

and I went on from there, down the Shiré, Zambesi, and Kwakwa rivers to Quillimane, which port I reached on the 28th of January.

I see, from recent English papers, that in answer to a question asked in the House of Commons on the 28th of February, Sir J. Ferguson stated that no assistance could be given by government to the British subjects settled at Nyassa. This leaves them in a somewhat awkward position, as the British consul for Nyassa has positively forbidden the African Lakes Company to take matters into their own hands and to protect their own interests in their own way. They are therefore told that the English government will not help them, nor are they to help themselves. Surely one course or the other should be taken by our government—either to help the British subjects at Nyassa, or else to leave them alone to help themselves in such way as they think best.

There are, moreover, other interests to be considered in this matter as well as those of the African Lakes Company and the missions and traders. It is quite certain, unless the Arabs at the north end of Nyassa are driven out or kept in proper control, that the route viâ Nyassa to Tanganyika will be permanently closed by them. Sufficient attention has not been given to this route to Central Africa, which is, I think there can be no doubt, the quickest and the safest. I travelled from the north end of Nyassa to the coast (at Quillimane) in twenty-three days, the whole of this, except sixty miles, being by water. The journey from Nyassa to Tanganyika takes twenty days, and the country all through is healthy, and natives quiet and friendly. Tanganyika can be traversed from south to north in eight days by the steamer now on the lake belonging to the London Missionary Society; and the north end of Tanganyika is only some two hundred and eighty miles from the Albert Nyanza.

There is also the slave-trade question. At the present time, a large and increasing slave-trade is being carried on by the Arabs in the districts west and north of Lake Nyassa; and nearly the whole of the slaves procured in those regions are taken across the lake in Arab dhows and canoes, and down to the sea-coast. The Arabs are anxious to have the north end of Nyassa entirely in their own hands, as it is a convenient depot for caravans from the west, and a good starting-point for the journey to the sea-coast. This route to the coast (Nyassa to Kilwa) is a far easier and shorter journey for them than the old routes from Tanganyika to Zanzibar.

THE SILVER STREAM.

AN IDYL OF THE WYE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

SOME men are naturally homely; others more prone to a wandering life, and Colonel Scobell was one of the latter. He had a great predilection for 'camping out,' to use his own term, which in his case invariably meant taking a cosy country-house for the summer months and immediately asking all of his acquaintances to fill it. As the Colonel's good-nature was only exceeded by his thoughtlessness, and that is saying a great deal,

complications and confusions were by no means a rarity. But blessed with a good wife who understood his little weaknesses, these contretemps usually ended happily.

Pencraig was a beautiful old house, of semi-Elizabethan architecture, with plenty of large airy apartments, and an unknown quantity of bedrooms. As the three voyagers stood upon the terrace, they caught a glimpse of light draperies, and heard the ripple of girlish laughter from a shady tennis lawn. The Colonel led the way into a cool dim drawing-room, where they found Mrs Scobell deep in the delightful chronicles of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

'I have brought you some more visitors, Belle,' cried the Colonel. 'A most fortunate thing I was down on the Rock Cottage streams as they went by. Fancy not knowing we were in the neighbourhood!'

Mrs Scobell, a rosy plump little lady, who had been a beauty in her time, before a sturdy harum-scarum family had come to be the joint plague and joy of her life, shook hands heartily. And she was not the least less pleased to see her visitors, despite the fact that she hadn't the smallest idea how they were going to be accommodated.

'Thank goodness it is no worse,' she said. 'Oh, of course I don't mean that, you know, only the Colonel is so inconsiderate. It is only last week that he went off fishing below Ross and brought back no fewer than five with him, not one of whom he had seen before. Of course, it seems very inhospitable, but I had to put two in the billiard-room.'

'That Scotch fellow could tie a fly, though,' the Colonel observed reflectively. 'He had a way of dressing "hackles" I never saw before.'

'And that covers a multitude of sins,' said Denton, with a laugh.—'But you can make yourself easy about that, Mrs Scobell. I need not ask if you have a houseful. Any one here we know?'

'I expect so. There is Miss Rashleigh and her brother; the Moffat girls—five of them; and in fact several others. We are very short of gentlemen.'

'Oh, come now,' the Colonel remonstrated. 'There are young Rashleigh and myself, with our three friends here, to say nothing of Du Maurier.'

Denton shot a significant glance at Bertie, who looked in his turn towards Decie. Beyond a quick flush of colour in his cheeks and a mechanical clenching of the right hand, he betrayed no sign. It was a relief to the awkward silence when the luncheon bell rang.

'We are in luck,' said Denton grimly, when the trio were changing in the privacy of their apartment—a large room with three beds set apart for bachelors and such erratic visitors. 'Rashleigh and Du Maurier! The Colonel isn't a gambling man, Phil, I apprehend?'

'About the last man in the world to amuse himself that way.—You are wondering what brings Du Maurier down here. No good, you may be certain.'

In the dining-room the ample table was laid for eighteen, though that unconventional, but none the less cosy meal, luncheon, as interpreted in a country house, was apparently anything but well patronised. The Colonel liked to see his

young friends enjoying themselves, and so long as dinner was not delayed, they could drop in or out from luncheon as the spirit moved them. A group of merry maidens, clad in flannel tennis costumes and striped jackets, and carrying the warmth and excitement of the fascinating game in their flushed faces, stood chattering before the cool fern-decked fireplace as Denton with his gallant crew entered.

'My prayer has been answered,' cried the tallest of the group, a dark vivacious-looking girl, rejoicing in the name of Gwendolyn Moffat. 'I have prayed for some boating-men, and they have come.—Mr Trevor, I have been here more than a fortnight and never on the river once. And till I came here I was getting on splendidly with my sculling.'

'Let's have a look at your knuckles,' said Bertie; 'that will soon show.'

Miss Gwen held out a long white hand pure and stainless as marble. But the light blue 'four,' not being gifted with a sculptor's admiration of the beautiful, eyed the slim fingers critically and from a purely athletic point of view.

'Oh, we'll soon alter that,' he said cheerfully. —'Don't you remember what a state they were in last Easter after a fortnight's coaching?—Come with me after luncheon. We've got the old gig and a famous pair of skulls.'

Denton, cynic as he was, found himself in the toils of a sister siren ambitious of aquatic honours, and in a few moments was making arrangements for forming an amateur 'pair,' under the watchful eye of himself and Bertie Trevor, with all the eagerness of a schoolboy. So busily engaged were they, that no notice was taken of the advent of a new-comer, another girl in tennis costume. But Phil saw, and turned a little paler as his eyes encountered hers. She came towards the gay group almost reluctantly. Decie bowed low, to hide the flush of colour that would rise to his cheek. As she turned away, standing by one of the open windows, he crossed over to her.

Her fair sweet face was hidden from him, but she seemed to feel his presence. 'Why did you come?' she asked, still gazing fixedly at the landscape.

'I could not help myself.—No; do not misunderstand me. I am not paying you an idle compliment. The simple truth is that I did not know you were here. I will keep out of your sight as much as possible.'

Beatrice Rashleigh made no reply for a moment; her face was very white and set, had he but seen it; but Phil was not looking in her direction, for the simple reason that he was afraid to do so. 'There is room enough here for both of us,' she said. 'Still, it would be ridiculous to attract attention. Outwardly at least we can be friends. I hope I have made my meaning plain enough?' The words were very cold, though Decie could not guess what a violent effort they cost the speaker. His mind was too full of bitterness and despair to comprehend the feelings of another.

'Perfectly plain,' he replied. 'You may rest assured that I shall not trouble you with my company. Still, we had better have a complete arrangement. If you can spare me a few moments presently, I shall be grateful.'

'It shall be as you wish; but only this once, understand.'

Miss Rashleigh quitted her position and took a seat at the table. There was a vacant chair by her side, into which a late comer presently glided. He was a young-old man, to coin an expression—young in air and manner, and in the lower part of his face, which was ornamented by an elaborately waxed moustache; though his narrow receding forehead was lined and wrinkled, and his densely black hair was growing somewhat thin—the only sign by which, said Denton, Horace Du Maurier showed his fast life and dissipated habits.

Decie experienced an inward spasm of relief, curiously mingled with pain, as Beatrice rose from her seat and disappeared. He did not, however, view with corresponding equanimity the speedy exit of the fascinating Horace, or the little smile of meaning telegraphed from face to face with that instinctive freemasonry, the secret of which is known only to the gentler sex.

'I don't like that man,' Edith Moffat murmured, for Phil's ear alone. She was the youngest of the family, only just out, and an old friend and favourite of Decie's. 'What can Beatrice be thinking about?'

'Oh, there is something between them, is there?' asked Phil coolly. They were quite alone by this time. Down the winding path towards the river, Denton and Trevor were just disappearing from view, accompanied by the fair crew, for a long lazy afternoon on the water. 'How long has it been going on?'

'Before we came here—when we were in town, I imagine. I can't think what has come to Beatrice. And I am certain Mr Du Maurier is not a gentleman. However, it has nothing to do with me—it is *some one else's* business.—When are you going to teach me that back-handed cut?'

Phil gave his solemn promise to lose no time in imparting the dark secret; and content with this assurance, and, sooth to say, finding her companion somewhat dull, Miss Edith departed.

It was half an hour later when, in crossing the terrace, he came full upon the versatile Frenchman, smoking a scented cigarette, and attired in a superb knickerbocker suit and velvet gaiters, reaching almost to the knee. Had he been a Cockney snob instead of a Gallic cad, thought Phil bitterly, he would have found scant welcome at Pencraig.

'I am going to show Miss Rashleigh some of the neighbouring beauties,' he explained airily. 'It is a pleasure to point out to her the beautiful—she has the soul.'

'She has a nice little fortune of her own, too,' said Phil dryly.

Du Maurier shot a suspicious glance at the speaker out of his glittering eyes—a glance Decie returned with a smile of contempt. The Frenchman flipped the ashes from his cigarette languidly. 'Ah, you English take an interest in these sordid, these prosaic details. We, on the other hand, ignore them. When we love, we love madly.'

'Yes—to command. A little money and a little love—an admirable mixture, which is a credit to your disinterested motives.'

'You speak in enigmas, *mon ami*,' Du Maurier returned coldly. 'And I like not your tone. In all politeness, I offer you the chance of explanation.'

Decie, though by no means phlegmatic in temperament, held his rival in such profound

contempt that all anger was swallowed up in the prevailing emotion. As the Frenchman's valiant blood rose, so much the cooler did Phil become.

'Now, all this histrionic business is very taking, no doubt, with people who don't happen to know you. I do. And, without egotism on my part, you will gain nothing by a quarrel—from a physical point, that is. You have made up your mind that you love Miss Rashleigh—for her money. I won't have it.'

'He will not have it!' returned the Frenchman, addressing a gorgeous peacock sailing by in friendly rivalry. 'This dogmatic gentleman will not have it. Horace, *mon cher*, you will please take the back seat.'

'You will have to accept my terms all the same.'

'Ah! I shall have to accept your terms! And wherefore, M'sieu?'

'Because, unless you cease this—this impertinence, you will be under the painful necessity of depriving yourself of the pleasure of Colonel Scobell's hospitality.'

The immaculate Horace came within measurable distance of losing his studied calm altogether. Though a torrent of passion boiled in his veins, there was nothing to indicate a consuming rage beyond a pink spot burning upon his high cheekbones. But with the instinct of a true adventurer, he scented danger; and, like the hunter, braced his nerves for the fray.

'You take a high hand, my friend,' he lightly replied. '*Ma foi*, you English have a strange way of doing things. I thank you for warning me. But as your proverb says, "At that game, two can play." And if I go to the excellent Colonel and say, "You have a thief in the house!"'

Phil laughed aloud, so loud, that Miss Edith, waiting upon the tennis lawn for the initiation into the mystery of the 'cut,' wondered what excellent joke the pair had discovered.

'You would obtain Miss Rashleigh's permission first. Pah! you are a shallower rogue than I took you for. I am certain you could know nothing of that unless you had a hand in it. Besides, Colonel Scobell would be much more likely to throw you out of the window than believe such a tale. Why can't you take a hint?'

'And if I refuse this peremptory request?'

'Then I must speak more plainly. I want no scandal here, the less that your name has become connected with Miss Rashleigh's. I am not speaking without book, understand. I am going to tax your excellent memory, which I have so often and fortunately seen displayed at games of skill—and chance.'

During this speech, the Frenchman had shifted his ground uneasily. The cool measured scorn in Phil's voice alarmed him more than any outburst of violence could have done, there was such a ring of assured certainty behind every word. He had betrayed himself once, a *faux pas* he had no intention of repeating.

'I will call your mind back to a year ago, when you did the university the honour of enrolling yourself as a member. There is a certain billiard-room in the High Street kept by a rascally Greek, and officiated over by an equally rascally marker, a Frenchman like yourself—in fact, your brother,' Phil uttered these words so quickly and simply,

that Du Maurier for a moment failed to comprehend their import. His face was very white and set; he would have spoken, had not Decie waved him aside.

'Yes; I see you remember. You will also recollect young Selby of Trinity. As a source of income he was invaluable to you, I understand. It was one night in the May term I allude to, that, after making him extremely tipsy, you won from him something like fifteen hundred at billiards. He tells me he has no recollection of the event; but you say he gave you bills to that amount, which he does not dispute, and that they were left with you to discount. As Selby was a rich minor at that time, you had no difficulty in passing them. But, like most other knaves, you overreached yourself. A bill was presented by you the other day, and discounted. Selby, somewhat dubious about the signature, handed it to me. It was dated 5th March 1886, which was apparently correct. But upon reading the red stamp in the corner, I found the singular figures 18-1-87. To put it plainly, the thing is a forgery, for the bill stamp is younger than the bill. I need not explain further to a man of your sagacity that this is why I do not consider you a fit companion to cicerone Miss Rashleigh or any other lady round the neighbourhood.'

Du Maurier moistened his dry lips and tried to swallow the choking lump that would rise into his throat. His face presented a singular appearance, like a dead white coal touched with low gleaming points of flame. All his *savoir faire*, his easy assurance, had disappeared; he looked what he was, a pitiful detected swindler face to face with his accuser.

'You will not say anything of this?' he gasped.

'As my friend Selby does not wish to be written down an ass, I shall say nothing. I owe you no malice. Only one stipulation I certainly make, and that is—you leave Pencraig by the first convenient train to-morrow.'

'I am in your hands,' the discomfited Horace replied. 'I must do as you ask. Only, my friend, if you ever come across me again, look to yourself.'

To this characteristic gasconade, Phil deigned no reply beyond a look of supreme disdain. He was perfectly satisfied with himself, and the way he had conducted the somewhat trying interview; for, say what you will, it is no pleasant matter to accuse any one of a mean and contemptible action, to say nothing of a crime.

The afternoon dragged on somewhat slowly till dinner-time arrived. It was not a full-dress affair, though most of the ladies were resplendent in shimmering draperies and shining arms. There was no lack of conversation, with the exception of Decie and his late antagonist, who were strangely silent—the latter, as Phil did not fail to notice, paying more attention to the champagne than thirst or the dictates of good breeding ordains.

'That class of fellow never can resist champagne,' said Bertie *sotto voce*, as he called Phil's attention to the Frenchman's flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes. But Phil did not heed. He was listening with all his ears to a song floating out from the drawing-room, a song he well remembered, the refrain of which rang in his heart like a sharp pain. As he turned in the direction of the

salon, he encountered Beatrice Rashleigh walking towards the garden. With the courage of despair, he turned and took his place by her side. They promenade some distance in silence. A soft moon rode high in the blue arch, shining upon the swift flowing river and on the painful pallor of the girl's face.

'You had better say all you have to say,' she said. 'I did not seek this interview.'

'I think it is my right,' said Phil gently. 'It is more than a year ago since we parted with a tacit understanding. I loved you then—I always shall. Unless you had a little affection for me then, you must be the most selfish coquette that ever took delight in breaking a man's heart.'

'You do me scant justice, Mr Decie. My friends do not find me so.' Beatrice stooped over a rose-tree, breaking off a fragrant golden bud, and carried it to her face. It was not a pleasant or soothing gesture, but her hands trembled so that she felt forced to give them some occupation. But all this was lost upon Phil, who read in it a callous coldness.

'I want you to tell me why you behaved so to me—indeed, I will know. There is something more in your manner than indifference—there is dislike, contempt. What have I done to merit this?'

'What have you done!' Beatrice cried passionately. 'You have bitterly deceived me. I liked and trusted you—nay, more, if you will hear the truth, I loved you until that day—you, you know of. Oh, Phil, Phil, why did you not come to me if you were in trouble or distress, and tell me everything! Do you think that I should have thought the less of you because such things do not come within the unwritten laws of society? I would not have minded; I would have helped you.'

'I daresay you would,' Phil returned forlornly, 'only I had no occasion to ask for your help. I understand what you mean. How can I help it? You think I—I stole your diamond bracelet!'

'How otherwise?' retorted Beatrice. She had recovered from her momentary fit of emotion, and looked him in the face with hard scornful eyes. 'You always made me your *confidante*—even that silly escapade of yours when you had to pawn your watch, I heard of from you. I have a good memory for trifles. Do you remember the assumed name you used on that occasion?'

'I am not so used to the inside of those places that I am likely to forget,' said Phil bitterly. 'To be correct, it was Philip Reid.'

Beatrice answered nothing, but taking from the bosom of her dress a square yellow ticket, handed it to her companion. It bore the name and address of a well-known Cambridge jeweller, and ran to the effect that a certain diamond bracelet with ruby medallion had been deposited with the person therein named, to secure the repayment of a loan of thirty pounds advanced to Philip Reid.

Phil gazed at the shabby little pasteboard like a man in a dream. The idea of his being guilty of such an act struck him dumb with amazement. 'Beatrice,' he said solemnly, as soon as he found voice to speak, 'on my word of honour, I know nothing of this. Still, the proof is strong—undeniably strong. Will you try and trust me once more?'

'What is it you want me to do?'

'Leave this in my hands for a little while. Will you?'

She turned away from him with a choking sob. All the harshness and coldness had melted from her heart; she was for the moment a gentle loving woman. 'Anything to clear this wretched mystery. If you can restore my broken faith, it will be the happiest day I have known for eighteen months.' Without another word she turned away, leaving Phil to gaze after her in rapt astonishment.

PARVENUS.

ENGLAND is a great nation, and its greatness has been built up principally by the enterprise and business capacities of Englishmen, of whose abilities and perseverance any nation might be proud. Oddly enough, however, although their merits are generally appreciated after death, and often then commemorated by 'storied urn and animated bust,' they labour during their lifetime under what may be termed a social ostracism. If we are asked to define socially the position of a man who, by force of will, by inventive genius, by determination to succeed and a capacity to do so, has prominently raised himself from the ranks of his fellow-men, we borrow a term from our French neighbours and call him a *parvenu*. If, with a general knowledge of what is meant by a *parvenu*, we turn to our Anglo-French Dictionary to ascertain its exact equivalent in English, we find it given as an 'upstart.'

The advent of a stranger who buys a place and settles down in the country naturally excites much curiosity, and gives rise to a good deal of gossip amongst his neighbours; and happy the man who, having been fortunate enough to glean full particulars about the new-comer, is in a position to give a more or less accurate account of him in response to the invariable question, 'Who is he?' This question does not refer to his character, genius, or ability, but is understood by the initiated to refer simply to his antecedents in the way of family and family connections. If he comes from what is considered a good stock, if he or his wife is well connected, then the answer comes readily, and is sure to be a satisfactory one. He may be a fool or a rascal—that is not even taken into consideration; people who live in glass houses must not throw stones; he belongs to the right sort, and he and his belongings are warmly welcomed by, and at once take their place among the élite of the county.

Among the same set of people comes a stranger who has no record in the gilded pages of Debrett, and whose name is unknown to the compiler of the *County Families*. By the exercise of such commonplace qualities as prudence, patience, and self-denial in his youth, and honesty and perseverance in his prime, he has in the decline of life amassed a considerable fortune. Sensible of his own defects in the way of early education, he has given his children the best that our public schools can afford them; and now his one object is to see them take that social position which he considers that their means and education entitle them to. Alas for his hopes! The county will have nothing to say to him: he is a *parvenu*: he actually made his fortune in

trade; and those whose fathers or grandfathers did the same are the first to turn up their noses at him. No; he must be content to think that possibly his children or grandchildren may venture within the portals which are now resolutely closed to him, as being only the founder of a family.

He may console himself, if he can, by reflecting that in 'the dim and distant future' his descendants, if they carefully avoid doing all that he has done, if they stick to the property which he has purchased and the wealth which he has amassed, if they sedulously devote themselves to fox-hunting and shooting, and never do anything really useful all their lives, may confidently count upon gradually becoming more and more akin to their neighbours, like them in manners, feelings, and ideas, till they end by imperceptibly amalgamating with them and becoming themselves a county family. Then their turn will come, and they will do unto their neighbours as their neighbours are now doing unto them. They will be the most rigid sticklers for county exclusiveness; the bare idea of a manufacturer or any one who has made a fortune in trade being put up for a Hunt Club or invited to a County Archery Meeting will make the ladies of the family raise their eyes in mute astonishment, and the brothers pull their moustaches with scorn.

Curiously enough, these are the people who are the real arbiters of the social world. The old aristocracy, the families who have flourished in the county for centuries, care little or nothing about these things. Secure in their own position, they can meet all sorts of people without the least fear of being contaminated. It is a matter of indifference to them whether they meet the respectable Jones himself at a county gathering, or the children or grandchildren of the said Jones. There is no fussiness, no anxiety to dodge this person, and be prepared with a grateful smile for a recognition by that. The true grand seigneur is courteous and considerate to all; he dwells in a moral region wherein the envy, malice, and all uncharitableness of Society cannot enter.

On the other hand, the real parvenu—that is, the one who, having succeeded, after the process already described, in getting a footing in county Society, tries to pose as having always belonged to it—unconsciously betrays himself or herself to the initiated at every step. There is a want of repose, to begin with, a self-assertive manner, an anxiety to let everybody know that he or she is acquainted with the best people, an eagerness to bring great names into ordinary conversation. We don't want to know that Mrs Tomkyns met dear Lady de Smith at dinner last Wednesday, and that she was so nice; but she insists upon telling us, whether we like it or not. It is no concern of ours that Mrs Brown-Jones and her husband stayed two nights last week with that charming old Lady Doldrum at Doldrum Castle, and that she was so sweet and so nice to them; but we must listen to it all. Indeed, it would be cruel not to listen, for she and Brown-Jones simply went there that she might talk about it for the rest of her life. Jones, who is an honest fellow enough, but with no moral courage whatever where his wife is

concerned, will tell you as much. He says that that visit to Doldrum was the most frightful thing he had ever undergone in his life: the old woman had a lot of people in the house, and was barely civil to them. The groom of the chambers took his cue from her, and was so supercilious that Jones could have kicked him; instead of which, he had to give him a sovereign; and what with the butler and the footman, and the coachman who drove him to the station, and the tips which his wife had to give, Jones said they could have stopped at the *Grand* or the *Métropole* and been better 'found' for the money, to say nothing of the comfort.

There is a Nemesis, therefore, in social matters, as in most others. Parvenu acts and reacts upon parvenu; each in turn must pass through the social crucible; and so long as the 'tenth transmitter of a foolish face' is held in greater honour than the first recipient of a wise one, it is likely to continue so. Retribution, however, is even now overtaking us; the old order is rapidly giving place to the new; manufacturers and shopkeepers are gradually becoming the owners of the soil. They will soon be powerful enough to make social laws of their own; and when they do occupy that position, it will be neither safe nor expedient to sneer at the parvenu.

READY WIT.

THERE are few people to whom the possession of ready wit does not seem desirable, for nothing is of more use in an emergency than the ability to return 'a Roland for an Oliver' in such a way as to extinguish an opponent. But the art of retaliating skilfully is by no means universal. Perhaps this is as well, considering the proneness of repartee to degenerate into maliciousness; and it is not difficult to imagine how much more disagreeable the world would be if every one in it were a Douglas Jerrold or a Horne Tooke.

None of the professions seems more devoted to ready wit than that of the law; and, judging from the following story, this devotion is of no recent origin. It is related that on one occasion Sir Nicholas Bacon was about to pass judgment upon a man who had been guilty of robbery, at that time punishable by death; but the culprit pleaded for mercy on the ground that he was related to the judge. 'How is that?' he was asked. 'My lord,' was the reply, 'your name is Bacon, and mine is Hog, and hog and bacon have always been considered akin.'—'That is true,' answered Sir Nicholas; 'but as hog is not bacon until it has hung, until you are hanged you are no relation of mine.'

Still more to the point is an anecdote told regarding two opposing barristers. The lawyer for the defence was so severe upon the prosecutor that the latter rose and asked: 'Does the learned counsel think me a fool?' The retort was prompt: 'My friend wishes to know if I consider him a fool; and in reply to his question, I can only say that I am not prepared to deny it.'

There are many instances of passages of arms

between Bench and Bar, but this one may be new to most of our readers. At the close of a lengthened wrangle between a judge and a prominent counsel, the former said: 'Well, sir, if you do not know how to conduct yourself as a gentleman, I am sure I can't teach you.' To which the barrister mildly replied: 'That is so, my lord.'

Occasionally, however, the votaries of the law have the tables turned upon them, as in the case of the lawyer who, driving along a country road, asked a woman who was going in the same direction the way to his destination. She told him, and added that, as she was going part of the journey, she would point out the way. 'All right, my good woman,' said the lawyer; 'jump up—better bad company than none.' After going some miles, the woman thanked him for the drive and descended, and he asked how much farther he had to go. 'Oh,' she answered, 'you passed the place you want two or three miles back; but as I thought bad company better than none, I brought you on.' The legal gentleman certainly deserved the lesson, and it is to be hoped that he profited by it.

Parliamentary elections usually afford a good field for the exercise of wit. While a noble lord was conducting his canvass, he met a bully, who declared fiercely that he would 'sooner vote for the devil than for him.'—'I've not the slightest doubt of it, my friend,' said the candidate quietly; 'but in the event of your friend not coming forward, may I count on your vote?' Here is another of the same kind. At an open political meeting a man cried, 'Hurrah for Jackson!' to which a bystander retorted, 'Hurrah for a jack-ass!'—'All right, my man,' exclaimed the first speaker; 'you can hurrah for your favourite candidate, and I'll do the same for mine.'

An enviable quickness of repartee was shown by a French actor when the head of a goose was thrown upon the stage. Advancing to the footlights, he said: 'Gentlemen, if any one among you has lost his head, I shall be glad to restore it at the conclusion of the piece.' Deservedly severe also was the reply of Descartes to a nobleman, who, seeing that he enjoyed the pleasures of the table, remarked: 'I see, sir, that philosophers can sometimes indulge in good cheer.'—'Why not?' asked Descartes. 'Do you really imagine that Providence intended the good things of this earth only for the foolish and ignorant?'

Of wit bordering on the malicious there are many examples, and some of the repartees are fully deserved, while others are only calculated to give pain. Amongst the latter is one told at the expense of an elderly French widow who had fallen in love with a young nobleman, whom she was never tired of praising to her friends as 'handsome as one of Dumas' three musketeers.' 'Yes,' said a lady who heard her, and who was possibly jealous; 'he is the musketeer, and you are *Twenty Years After*.'

Much more merited than the above, probably, was the answer given by Foote to a dissipated Duke who asked him in what new character he should go to a masquerade: 'Go sober!'—A 'man about town' said to a young lady: 'No, I'm not exactly engaged, but I have the refusal of two or three girls.' He undoubtedly deserved the crushing rejoinder: 'I suppose you mean you have asked them and they have said "No."—The

tourist, also, who said to an idle Skyeman, 'Why do you lie there all day with your hands in your pockets?' must have been taken aback by the cool reply: 'Cause she hasna been far enough south to learn to put them in other people's.'

Ready wit cannot be said to be natural to youth, for the answers given by precocious schoolboys are not witty, being usually the outcome either of misunderstanding or of 'cheek.' There are exceptions, however, to this rule. A teacher asked his class what was meant by 'divers diseases,' and was rather surprised when one of the boys answered, 'Water in the head.' A little dot of a girl inquired of her mother the meaning of 'transatlantic,' and was told, 'Across the Atlantic.'—'Does "trans" always mean "cross," mamma?' she then asked.—'Yes,' replied her mother; 'but don't bother me any more.'—'Then I guess "transparent" means a cross parent,' was the conclusion the unconscious little humorist came to as she relapsed into silence.

The Lord Provost of a certain well-known city in the north had a daughter married to a gentleman of the name of Baird; and speaking of names to several friends, he happened to remark: 'My grandmother was a Husband and my mother a Man,' these having been the maiden names of the ladies.—'Why, in that case,' said the celebrated Dr Gregory, who was present, 'we may the less wonder at your daughter having got a Baird.'

Turning from expressed repartee, we find that there can be no less wit in the manner in which writers subscribe themselves. For instance, we have it upon record that, when Glengarry claimed the chieftainship of the Macdonald clan, the generally acknowledged chief wrote to him as follows: 'MY DEAR GLENGARRY—As soon as you can prove yourself my chief, I shall be ready to acknowledge you. In the meantime, I am *yours*—MACDONALD.' This letter may have suggested to Benjamin Franklin the note he wrote to a friend in England when the American colonies declared their independence, and which closed thus: 'You and I were long friends. You are now my enemy, and I am *yours*—B. FRANKLIN.'

During the last half of the eighteenth century the governments of the day frequently kept themselves in power by bribing and corrupting members of parliament; and this was the case during the debates on the India Bill, when the opposition, led by Fox, found its majorities steadily decreasing. This, it was known, was the work of the Secretary to the Treasury, John Robinson, who used both places and money to carry out the ministerial policy. One evening Sheridan, speaking of the decrease, said: 'This is not to be wondered at, Mr Speaker, when a member is employed to corrupt everybody to obtain votes.'—'Who is it? Name him, or withdraw!' rose fiercely from all parts of the House. Sheridan saw that he was in a predicament, but he was equal to the emergency. 'Sir,' he said, 'it would be an unpleasant and an invidious thing to name the person, and therefore I shall not do it. But don't suppose, sir, that I refrain because there is any difficulty in naming him; I could do that, sir, as soon as you could say Jack Robinson.'

Sheridan's ready wit was equalled some years ago by another prominent politician on the occasion of the Derby being won by a French horse. The Frenchmen present, as was natural, cheered

vociferously, and not content with that, one of them shouted, 'Waterloo avenged!'—'Yes,' said the statesman, who happened to hear the remark, 'you ran well in both cases.'

NATURAL GAS WELLS OF PITTSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A.

THESE wells have now come to be regarded as some of the wonders of the world; certain it is that since their discovery the attention of the world has been attracted to the busy and favoured American city in whose neighbourhood they exist, and for whose numerous and ever-increasing industries they supply the motive-power. 'To those not familiar with the facts,' as one has well said, 'the story of this new manufacturing facility is like a fable. It does seem almost incredible that a great community of three hundred and fifty thousand people, of whom one hundred thousand find employment in workshops, carry on all the avocations of life, where heat, fuel, or light is concerned, by the use of this invisible vapour, furnished by nature, and distributed by pipes to dwellings, factories, warehouses, schools, churches; and the city transformed thereby from one of the smokiest, gloomiest, dirtiest of the country to one of the cleanest and brightest, by its use, in something over two years. It seems almost a leaf out of the *Arabian Nights* or some other fairy-story volume.'

Although found in smaller quantities at greater distances, the principal supply of gas seems to be confined within a radius of from fifteen to thirty miles from Pittsburg. Its temperature, when proceeding directly from the wells, is about forty-five degrees, its pressure from two to four hundred pounds to the inch, although some have known it to reach a pressure of eight hundred pounds. As may be inferred from these figures, it rushes upwards from the bowels of the earth with a tremendous and almost uncontrollable force. Its roar, as it shoots forth in a solid column of flame to the height of fifty feet from a fresh tapped well, is said to be deafening, and can be heard at a distance of six miles. The gas is found in certain formations at a depth varying from seventeen hundred to two thousand one hundred feet. This mysterious vapour when analysed gives the following result: Marsh gas, 67 parts; hydrogen, 22; ethylic hydride, 5; nitrogen, 3; carbonic acid, $\frac{1}{10}$; carbonic oxide, $\frac{1}{10}$; oxygen, $\frac{1}{10}$. Regarded as a fuel, its total freedom from sulphur makes it invaluable in the treatment of minerals, iron, steel, glass, and oxides of lead.

How was this mysterious product of nature formed? Is its creation still in progress? or will it exhaust itself? These are inquiries of the highest importance; and they are found upon the lips of others besides the fortunate inhabitants of Pittsburg, whom they more immediately concern. In reply to the question of how long the earth will continue to furnish this vapour, a writer in a recent issue of the *Pittsburg Despatch*, to whom we hereby acknowledge our indebtedness for the

most interesting portions of this article, says: 'Its continuation were a question on which some definite conclusion might be arrived at, if its production were understood. On this point there are three leading theories: one, that it is the result of the distillation of the fern-formed resinous plants of the Devonian age, the gas from which became stored in the sand rocks and fissures that form the tanks from which it is now released. Another is, that it is the result of the percolation of interior springs and surface rainfall through the earth's crust, the water becoming impregnated in its passage through carbon and slate formations with their qualities, and reaching a certain depth by that slow percolation the heat of the earth evokes from such water a gas. These theories,' the same writer adds, 'are yet speculative; but there are certain facts as to the rising of this gas to the surface that may give some idea of its continuance.' He then proceeds to tell us what some of these facts are. In America, a similar or identical gas is known to have issued from the same wells for more than a century. In the State of New York it has been burning in wells for fifty years. At East Liverpool, on the river Ohio, some thirty or forty miles from Pittsburg, it has been used for manufacturing purposes for twenty-five years; and also in West Virginia, the wells show little or no decrease in pressure. It is well known that many of these wells have become exhausted or decreased in their pressures. But on being examined, it has been found that it was not from any exhaustion of gas, but from a clogging up of the pipes or in the inflowing of salt water. The gas has a tendency to deposit a substance in the casing similar to a salt or paraffin, which fills up the pipe, which being removed, the flow resumes at its usual volume.

As far back as 1875 the Pittsburg natural gas was utilised to a limited degree in two iron mills; but it was not until 1884 that a Company was formed on a large scale for the systematic introduction of the gas into the city for practical purposes. At the present time there are eight such Companies in Pittsburg; and in addition to hundreds of miles of pipe conveying the gas from the wells, there are over two hundred miles of pipe to convey the gas to the consumers laid under the streets of Pittsburg and Allegheny. All this has been accomplished in a little over two years; and it is said that there is 'virtually not a workshop or dwelling to which pipes can be run from the mains where it is not the only fuel used, and represents a displacement yearly of about four hundred thousand tons of coal, as nearly as could be estimated.' The pipes referred to are of wrought iron, with a diameter of from six to fifteen, and in some cases twenty-four inches.

With a view of furnishing the reader with an adequate idea of the amount of work accomplished by the combined efforts of the several Gas Companies referred to above, it will be sufficient to adduce the following facts relative to those of one of them, the Chartien Valley Gas Company, which is said to possess the largest line in the world for the conveyance of natural gas, which is twenty miles in length! Before this large line was constructed, the Chartien Valley Company could deliver eighty-five million cubic feet of gas every twenty-four hours. The new line will deliver alone in round numbers the almost incred-

ible amount of one hundred million cubic feet every twenty-four hours, making a total of one hundred and eighty-five million cubic feet per day. This amount of natural gas will do the work of seven thousand five hundred and thirty tons of coal, to transport which it would take every day five hundred and two cars, holding fifteen tons each, which would make a train over three miles long.

Lastly, a word as to the uses to which natural gas can be applied. Seeing that it can be conveyed anywhere with the greatest ease, and with the minimum of expense, it can be applied to every conceivable purpose under the sun which is concerned, whether remotely or directly, with light and heat. 'The range from iron furnaces to asparagus beds is wide, yet in the latter instance it has been utilised, with the result of producing that vegetable in the open air in February. This was simply by running pipes along the beds with orifices every eight or ten feet for the escape of the gas, which being ignited, created such a summer atmosphere as caused the agricultural result cited. If asparagus, why not other vegetables, and in winter's dreariest months? It does not seem impossible to thus create an atmosphere of tropical productiveness. This seems to border on romance; yet go to one of the new-struck wells and feel the heat; see the grass flourishing in winter as in summer, trees budding, flowers blooming, and recall this practical application of gas just cited, and there seems more of fact than nonsense in a possibility that it will be used in agriculture as well as manufacturing. There is so much of fact, of probability, and of conjecture within the possibilities of natural gas, that much space might be consumed in considering it.'

TRUSTEES' LIABILITY.

A correspondent writes us as follows: 'Referring to the useful article in your issue of the 21st April respecting the liability of trustees, the following further forcibly illustrates the risks which are often unconsciously run by those occupying that undesirable office.

'A wealthy foreign merchant, resident in London, left by his will power to his executors to invest the proceeds of his estate according to their absolute discretion, and the will further contained a clause exonerating them from all liability in case loss should ensue from any such investments. The executors—who were also the trustees under the will—in accordance with the powers so confined, invested a considerable sum in foreign government securities, not being satisfied with the moderate interest arising from the class of investments sanctioned by English law. After some years, circumstances arose which induced the executors to apply to the Court of Chancery to undertake the future administration of the estate. The application was granted; and they were called upon to furnish a statement of their dealings with the property, from which it appeared that a heavy loss had resulted from the foreign investments. This loss, notwithstanding the terms of the will, the court compelled the trustees to make good, holding that, unless other securities were specifically named, the discretion of trustees did not extend beyond the limits assigned by the

court. The decisions in the City of Glasgow Bank affair, where, in several instances, trustees were called upon to make good losses arising from continuing—not actually making—investments in the shares of that unfortunate concern, also serve as emphatic warnings to executors and trustees.'

A SONG OF SUMMER.

On, lovely sunbeams through the meadows dancing
On golden pinions all the livelong day,
Kissing young leaves, on crystal streamlets glancing,
Changing to living gold their silver spray;
Wee amorous elves, coquetting with the roses,
 wooing the daisy in her grassy bed
Till the shy flower unconsciously uncloses
Her dew-gemmed leaves, and blushes rosy red;

Gilding gray rocks, on rugged mountains streaming,
Bidding the flowers in sheltered nooks awake,
Calling young song-birds from their happy dreaming,
Waking the laughter of the dimpling lake;
Playing 'Bo-peep' amid the white buds blowing
In pearly clusters on the hawthorn tree,
To the round eyes of wondering childhood showing
The rapid journeyings of the wandering bee!

Shedding a halo bright on youthful tresses,
Bidding young hearts for very rapture sing,
Touching the brow of care with kind caresses,
Or glinting lightly on the skylark's wing.
Ah, merry sunbeams, like sly Cupids straying
In the glad footsteps of the rustic lass,
On sun-tanned cheek and snow-white kerchief playing,
Twinkling like fireflies in the emerald grass!

Oh, lovely sunbeams, like blest angels gliding
Through courts of squalor, sickness, want, and gloom,
Telling of clouds like golden chariots riding
Proudly majestic o'er a world of bloom!
Of winding lanes, and milk-white homesteads peeping
Like modest virgins from secluded bowers;
Of shallow pools, and baby streamlets leaping
In giddy gladness 'neath down-drooping flowers.

On the poor children playing in the gutter,
Nursed amid hardship, bitter tears, and sighs,
Kissing their rags like loving friends ye flutter,
Warming their limbs, and sparkling in their eyes!
When from the dust they raise their beaming faces,
Once pinched and wan, now radiant with delight,
Ye love to show a thousand fairy graces
That want and squalor have no power to blight.

Dance, lovely sunbeams, through fair country meadows,
Bathe hall and cottage in your holy light,
From city slums go chase the mournful shadows
That fill poor homesteads with eternal night.
To those who pine in ignorance and sorrow,
May all your tenderest, holiest gifts be given,
That sorrowing hearts one ray of hope may borrow
In the sweet knowledge that ye come from heaven.

FANNY FORRESTER.

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THE CHINESE IN THE COLONIES.

For a period of thirty-five years the antipathy of the white settlers in the Australian colonies to the presence of the Mongolian stranger has been steadily growing and manifesting itself in a variety of unmistakable forms. 'John'—which is the generic name of the Chinaman in the colonies—has to pay a heavy poll-tax before he is permitted to land; but compliance with colonial law in this respect does not always avail to save him from popular violence. He is not unfrequently hunted away from gold-fields, and bruised and beaten in towns and cities. He rarely attempts to retaliate; he takes his punishment meekly; he accepts rough treatment as his appointed lot, and he thrives under Caucasian persecution. Hitherto, however, the antagonism to the Chinese in the colonies has been of a local and personal character; but a crisis has suddenly arisen, and the Australians are now organised and united in their determined opposition to any further influx of Chinese immigrants. Now that America is legally closed for the next twenty years against the advancing Mongolian host, the colonists recognise the imperative necessity of united action if Greater Britain is to be conserved for the British race and not overrun by an alien population.

The reasons that underlie the hostility of the colonists to the Chinese are plain and intelligible. Immigrants from all other countries can be assimilated and welded with mutual advantage into the general mass; but the Chinaman cannot coalesce with the European, and must of necessity occupy an isolated position. They possess no feelings or tastes in common, and are mutually antipathetic. The Chinaman makes not the slightest effort to rise to the superior level of his new surroundings, but merely transfers his Asiatic mode of living to the antipodes, congregates in an exclusive quarter of his own, treats the laws of decency and health with sublime contempt, and is content to live in such an abbreviated space and limited atmosphere that the wonder is how it is possible to sustain life at all under these insanitary con-

ditions. He differs from immigrants of all other nationalities in another most important and radical respect, for, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the Chinaman is not accompanied by a wife or female relative; and the necessary consequence of this unnatural state of things is that his 'camps' on the gold-fields and his 'quarters' in the cities are notorious for the immorality prevalent in them. He also introduces wherever he goes a most insidious form of gambling, by which young Europeans are oftentimes demoralised and ruined; and he relies with but too much success on the seductive influences of the opium-pipe to attract European women and girls to his dens, and to keep them there as captives to this most tyrannical of drugs. All other immigrants come to stay, and to establish homes for themselves and their families on Australian soil; but the average 'John' never regards himself as a permanent resident, and invariably hastens back to the Flowery Land as soon as he has accumulated a few hundreds of pounds in the colonies.

The last and, from the utilitarian standpoint, the weightiest count in the indictment against the ubiquitous Mongolian is that he slowly but surely throws the white man out of employment, and secures to himself a monopoly of certain favoured departments of mechanical industry. This he is enabled to do by reason of the singularities of his life and character, for he can live on a small daily modicum of rice; he has no wife or family to support; he is never troubled by the demands of conformity to Western civilisation; and he can thus save money out of what would be starvation wages to the European workman. He is willing to work for all hours, and in this manner makes up by persistent toil for what he lacks in physical strength and stamina as compared with his European competitor. Unwearying industry is ordinarily a very commendable virtue; but to the white man, handicapped as he nearly always is by a home, a wife, and a family, it is not surprising that the untiring assiduity of 'John' to the trade of his choice should be regarded as essentially vicious, and should lead to the engendering of bad

blood between the races. The Chinaman is an unfair and unequal competitor, an uncompromising alien, an uncivilised animal, an unwholesome neighbour, and an impossible colonist. That is the sum and substance of the colonists' deep-rooted objections to the threatened multiplication of Chinese 'quarters' and 'camps' on their territory.

The Chinese quarter in the city of Melbourne, the capital of the colony of Victoria, is situated at the eastern end of a long narrow thoroughfare called Little Bourke Street, from which numerous dark and grimy lanes diverge, conducting the venturesome visitor away from the familiar sights and sounds of the modern metropolis into the strange and crowded haunts of the chattering Celestials. The houses in these unprepossessing lanes and alleys are mostly old and decrepit; they constitute the antipodean equivalent to the London slum; but every room is seen to be utilised to the utmost extent. As many as thirty Chinese have been known to find sleeping accommodation in a small apartment which, according to European notions, would not be capable of comfortably lodging four or five persons. In the matter of economising space the Chinaman is confessedly *facile princeps*. The number of bunks or sleeping-berths with which he can surround the interior of an ordinary room passes comprehension, and, in stereotyped phrase, must be seen to be believed. The atmosphere within these extemporised dormitories, it goes without saying, is the reverse of pleasant to the nostrils of the casual visitor; but the regular frequenters apparently suffer no discomfort and are perfectly at ease amidst their noxious surroundings. It is a peculiarity of the Chinese that they rarely resent an intrusion on their privacy, if such a word is permissible in connection with these communistic abodes, and the European visitor is thus at liberty to enter where he pleases and survey the scene without fear of interruption. As a rule, the Chinese evince no recognition of the stranger's presence, maintaining an attitude of stolid placidity, or at most, giving one momentary glance of quiet unconcern. They can thus be studied in the act of manufacturing furniture and various household accessories for the citizens of Melbourne—a department of colonial industry in which they have almost succeeded in gradually elbowing the superior race out of the field. They can be watched as they lie in their narrow bunks, slowly inhaling the intoxicating fumes of the opium-pipe; or, with a look of ecstasy on their pallid countenances, revelling in those gorgeous visions of majestic palaces, tremendous heights, and picturesque processions which the narcotic drug conjures up before the mental eyes of its slumbering devotees. They can be seen in their quaint little eating-houses skillfully plying their chopsticks and philosophically sampling the mysterious viands that are concocted by their favourite Celestial cook. They can be observed whilst intently interested in their popular game of 'Fan-tan,' when they risk their shillings and sixpences on the accidental number of little brass tokens that may happen to be covered by the presiding genius of the gambling-table. And on Sunday afternoons they can be seen in their hour of relaxation, squatting in long lines on the kerbstone in front of their dwellings, and discussing the events of

the week with a volubility and a unanimity that make the locality exceedingly lively and Babelish.

As an itinerant hawker of fish and vegetables, 'John' is a familiar figure all over Australia. With his large and heavily laden circular baskets suspended from either end of the bamboo pole swung across his shoulders, he ambles along from street to street, and generally succeeds in doing a good business with careful economising housewives. It is alleged that the Australians are practically dependent on the Chinese market-gardeners for their vegetable supplies, and that something resembling a famine in this commodity would probably ensue on their expulsion from the colonies. The first portion of this allegation is in a large measure correct; but the second by no means necessarily follows. The fact is that, for the reasons already detailed, the Chinese vegetable-growers were able to undersell their white competitors, and compel many of them to retire from an unprofitable industry. If unfair Chinese competition were checked or excluded, this industry would simply revert to European hands, and the price of vegetables to the consumer would undergo a corresponding but not unreasonable increase.

On the gold-fields, 'John' is detested with a widespread bitterness that has frequently found expression in open violence. He exasperates the European diggers by rarely, if ever, searching out gold for himself, and by coming in vast crowds wherever the white man makes a discovery of the precious metal. He thus reaps a harvest that he has not assisted to sow. He profits by the pioneering enterprise of the European without exposing himself to any of its attendant risks or dangers. He knows by experience that, when it has once been definitely ascertained by the white man that payable gold exists in a certain spot, there is a very strong probability of the surrounding locality also proving auriferous. He therefore spreads himself all over the neighbourhood, prospects in every nook and gully, collects as much gold as he can out of the alluvial, and thus deprives the original discoverers of no small proportion of the fruits of their enterprise. The knowledge that none of the gold thus obtained by alien hands would be circulated for the good of the community at large, but that it would all be carefully hoarded up for transportation to China, intensified the animosity between Caucasian and Mongolian in the mining districts. In the annals of almost every one of our colonial gold-fields, conflicts between whites and Chinese are recorded. The most memorable of these racial encounters occurred at a diggings called Lambing Flat, in New South Wales, when a body of three thousand diggers attacked the Chinese camp, and, after committing many excesses, burnt it to the ground. The aspect of affairs became so serious that it was deemed necessary to despatch the Imperial military forces from Sydney to quell the riot and restore order.

On gold-fields that have been abandoned by the whites, either because they appeared to have been worked out, or because the yield of the precious metal was not sufficiently satisfactory in European estimation, the Chinese always make a good living, and sometimes secure valuable prizes. They enter into possession of the abandoned

workings, resume operations in their leisurely methodic fashion, and are occasionally rewarded for their perseverance by the discovery of a handsome nugget. But 'fossicking' is their favourite pursuit on these deserted fields. This consists in slowly and deliberately raking over the unsightly heaps of upturned earth that are the dismal mementoes of the white man's former presence. The vigilant eye of the Chinaman detects in these hurried accumulations many a minute particle of gold, and sometimes a piece of quartz studded with the precious metal that escaped the observation of his white predecessor; and there is rarely a day on which he does not return to his tent in the evening the richer for this process. In travelling through the gold regions of Australia, no sight is more familiar than the abandoned diggings, dotted here and there with the patient plodding Chinese, each bent low with his handy little rake, analysing the contents of the white man's leavings, or scrutinising the alluvial deposits in the bed of the neighbouring creek.

The Chinese have a New Year's Day of their own, and they welcome its advent by a prodigious discharge of fireworks and a general display of coloured lanterns in front of their houses. On this annual festive occasion the Chinese camps and quarters are seen in a novel and picturesque dress, the repulsive and demoralising features that characterise their every-day aspect being rendered much less prominent in the variety and liveliness of the spectacle. Many Europeans embrace this favourable opportunity to study 'John' in his hour of collective gaiety, to see him lifted for the moment out of his customary animal existence, and indulging in a mild form of aestheticism, to gaze upon his eccentricities in illuminations and the vivacity of his interest in the pyrotechnical performances of the festival. Another annual ceremony which usually attracts a crowd of inquisitive spectators, but has nothing in the nature of artistic accessories to recommend it, is the exorcism of the devil from the camp. The spirit of evil is scared away by the vigorous and prolonged beating of Chinese drums and the shrill wailing of Chinese fifes—a combination of aggressive forces which the most determined demon could not withstand for any length of time.

Few and far between are Chinese women in the colonies; but they seem to be prized in proportion to their rarity, and are seldom seen in public. When they do come under the observation of the Caucasian eye, they are invariably attired in striking costumes of several colours, that give them a butterfly appearance as they pass on their way through the crowd. Sometimes, too, a little Chinese child is encountered, with its incipient pigtail, its miniature velvet smoking-cap, its inquisitive almond eyes, and its attenuated body enveloped in queerly cut garments of the brightest hue. A percentage of the unfortunate European girls who have either been betrayed into the hands of the Chinese or have voluntarily entered their camps, adopt the fantastic costume of the Mongolian female; but the majority of these hapless waifs naturally shrink, even in this deepest degradation, from an act that would seem to imply a total severance of the connection with the world of civilisation without. A few wealthy

and cultured Chinese in the colonies have married white women, and these unions have proved mutually satisfactory; but it must be borne in mind that the cultured Chinaman is a *rara avis* on the great southern continent. Those of them to whom that complimentary phrase could be truthfully applied might be counted on the fingers. In the whole of Victoria there are only two Chinese residents whose figures stand out prominently against the dark background of ignorance, vice, and degradation which the mass of their fellow-countrymen presents to the general gaze. One is Kong Meng, a wealthy Melbourne merchant, and a master of several languages; the other is Cheek Hong Cheong, the only Chinese graduate of the University of Melbourne, an excellent English speaker, and a representative elder of a suburban Presbyterian church. In the colony of New South Wales only one Chinaman has so far attracted public attention, a tea-merchant named Quong Tart, who has laboured hard but unavailingly for the suppression of the demoralising opium-trade amongst his countrymen.

In forcing this unholy traffic upon the unwilling Chinese at the cannon's mouth, the government of Great Britain became guilty of a most unwise and mischievous proceeding, for which the international complications that are likely to arise out of the threatened Chinese invasion of the colonies may be in some sense a retribution. But however this may be, the latest information from Australia leaves no room to doubt that the colonists are firmly resolved never to allow their territory to be overrun by an alien population. They have already between forty and fifty thousand of these objectionable aliens in their midst, and they see clearly that the thousands will gradually grow into millions, and eventually outnumber the European inhabitants, if a strong and effective barrier against the teeming hosts of China is not raised at the right time. The Premier of Victoria (the Hon. Duncan Gillies) has pithily summed up the anti-podean situation in a sentence in his recent memorandum on the subject for the information of Lord Salisbury: 'In the infancy of a nation, the question of race is of paramount importance, and the issue is therefore raised, whether in the occupation of this great continent, with all its possibilities of progress, and its opportunities of outlet for the surplus populations of Europe, we are to admit hordes of the Mongolian race, or, on the other hand, to reserve it for those people—our own, or kindred to our own—that have led the van of the world's civilisation.'

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—Continued.

WHEN the hired man from the mews behind flung open the drawing-room door in his lordly way and announced in a very loud voice, 'Mrs Bouverie Barton and Mrs Hugh Massinger,' neither Warren nor Edie was in the front room to hear the startling announcement, which would certainly for the moment have taken their breath away. For communications between the houses of Relf and Massinger had long since ceased. But Warren and Edie were both up-stairs. So Winifred and her hostess passed idly in (just shaking hands by

the doorway with good old Mrs Relf, who never by any chance caught anybody's name) and mingled shortly with the mass of the visitors. Winifred was very glad indeed of that, for she wanted to escape observation. Sir Anthony's report had been far from reassuring. She preferred to remain as much in the background as possible that afternoon: all she wished was merely to observe and to listen.

As she stood there mingling with the general crowd and talking to some chance acquaintance of old London days, she happened to overhear two scraps of conversation going on behind her. The first was one that mentioned no names; and yet, by some strange feminine instinct, she was sure it was of herself the speakers were talking.

'Oh yes,' one voice said in a low tone, with the intonation that betrays a furtive side-glance; 'She's far from strong—in fact, very delicate. He married her for her money—of course: that's clear. She hadn't much else, poor little thing, except a certain short-lived *beauté du diable*, to recommend her. And she has no go in her; she won't live long. You remember what Galton remarks about heiresses? They're generally the last decadent members, he says, of a moribund stock whose strength is failing. They bear no children, or if any, weaklings: most of them break down with their first infant; and they die at last prematurely of organic feebleness. Why, he just sold himself outright for the poor girl's property; that's the plain English of it; and now, I hear, with his extravagant habits, he's got himself after all into monetary difficulties.'

'Agricultural depression?' the second voice inquired—an older man's and louder.

'Worse than that, I fear; agricultural depression and an encroaching sea. Besides which, he spends too freely.—But excuse me, Dr Moutrie,' in a very low tone: 'I'm afraid the lady's rather near us.'

Winifred strained her ears to the utmost to hear the rest; but the voices had sunk too low now to catch a sound. Even as she did so, another voice, far more distinct, from a lady in front, caught her attention with the name 'Miss Challoner.' Winifred pricked up her ears incontinently. Could it be of her Elsie that those two were talking?

'Oh yes,' the second lady addressed made answer cheerfully; 'she was very well when we last saw her in April at San Remo. We had the next villa to the Relfs on the hillside, you know. But Miss Challoner doesn't come to England now; she was going as usual to St Martin de Lantosque to spend the summer, when we left the Riviera. She always goes there as soon as the San Remo season's over.'

'How did the Relfs first come to pick her up?' the other speaker asked curiously.

'Oh, I fancy it was Mr Warren Relf himself who made her acquaintance somewhere unearthly down in Suffolk, where she used to be a governess. He's always there, I believe, lying on a mudbank, yachting and sketching.'

Winifred could restrain her curiosity no longer. 'I beg your pardon,' she said, leaning forward eagerly, 'but I think you mentioned a certain Miss Challoner. May I ask, does it happen by

any chance to be Elsie Challoner, who was once at Girtton? Because, if so, she was a governess of mine, and I haven't heard of her for a long time past. Governesses drop out of one's world so fast. I should be glad to know where she's living at present.'

The lady nodded. 'Her name's Elsie,' she said with a quiet inclination, 'and she was certainly a Girtton girl; but I hardly think she can be the same you mention. I should imagine, indeed, she's a good deal too young a girl to have been your governess.'

It was innocently said, but Winifred's face was one vivid flush of mingled shame and humiliation. Talk about *beauté du diable* indeed; she never knew before she had grown so very plain and ancient. 'I'm not quite so old as I look, perhaps,' she answered hastily. 'I've had a great deal to break me down. But I'm glad to learn where Elsie is, anyhow. You said she was living at San Remo, I fancy?'

'At San Remo. Yes. She spends her winters there. For the summers, she always goes up to St Martin.'

'Thank you,' Winifred answered with a throbbing heart. 'I'm glad to have found out at last what's become of her.—Mrs Barton, if you can tear yourself away from Dr and Mrs Tyacke, who are always so alluring, suppose we go up-stairs now and look at the pictures.'

In the studio, Warren Relf recognised her at once, and with much trepidation came up to speak to her. It would all be out now, he greatly feared; and Hugh would learn at last that Elsie was living. For Winifred's own sake—she looked so pale and ill—he would fain have kept the secret to himself a few months longer.

Winifred held out her hand frankly. She liked Warren; she had always liked him; and besides, Hugh had forbidden her to see him. Her lips trembled, but she was bold, and spoke. 'Mr Relf,' she said with quiet earnestness, 'I'm so glad to meet you here to-day again—glad on more than one account. You go to San Remo often, I believe. Can you tell me if Elsie Challoner is living there?'

Warren Relf looked back at her in undisguised astonishment. 'She is,' he answered. 'Did my sister tell you so?'

'No,' Winifred replied with bitter truthfulness. 'I found it out.' And with that one short incisive sentence, she moved on coldly, as if she would fain look at the pictures.

'Does—does Massinger know it?' Warren asked all aghast, taken aback by surprise, and unwittingly trampling on her tenderest feelings.

Winifred turned round upon him with an angry flash. This was more than she could bear. The tears were struggling hard to rise to her eyes; she kept them back with a supreme effort. 'How should I know, pray?' she answered fiercely, but very low. 'Does he make me the *confidante* of all his loves, do you suppose, Mr Relf?—He said she was in Australia.—He told me a lie.—Everybody's combined and caballed to deceive me.—How should I know whether he knows or not? I know nothing. But one thing I know: from my mouth at least he shall never, never, never hear it.'

She turned away, stern and hard as iron. Hugh had deceived her; Elsie had deceived her. The

two souls she had loved the best on earth! From that moment forward, the joy of her life, whatever had been left of it, was all gone from her. She went forth from the room a crushed creature.

How varied in light and shade the world is! While Winifred was driving gloomily back to her own lodgings—solitary and heart-broken, in Mrs Bouverie Barton's comfortable carriage—revolving in her own wounded soul this incredible conspiracy of Hugh's and Elsie's—Edie Relf and her mother and brother were joyfully discussing their great triumph in the now dismantled and empty front drawing-room at 128 Bletchingley Road, South Kensington.

'Have you totted up the total of the sales, Warren?' Edie Relf inquired with a bright light in her eye and a smile on her lips; for the private view—her own inception—had been more than successful from its very beginning.

Warren jotted down a series of figures on the back of an envelope and counted them up mentally with profound trepidation. 'Mother,' he cried, clasping her hand with a convulsive clutch in his, 'I'm afraid to tell you; it's so positively grand. It seems really too much.—If this goes on, you need never take any pupils again.—Edie, we owe it all to you.—It can't be right, yet it comes out square. I've reckoned up twice and got each time the same total—Four hundred and fifty!'

'I thought so,' Edie answered with a happy little laugh of complete triumph. 'I hit upon such a capital dodge, Warren. I never told you beforehand what I was going to do, for I knew if I did, you'd never allow me to put it into execution; but I wrote the name and price of each picture in big letters and plain figures on the back of the frame. Then, whenever I took up a person with a good, coinly, solvent expression of countenance, and a picture-buying crease about the corners of the mouth, to inspect the studio, I waited for them casually to ask the name of any special piece they particularly admired. "Let me see," said I. "What does Warren call that? I think it's on the back here." So I turned round the frame, and there they'd see it, as large as life: "By Stormy Seas—Ten Pounds;" or, "The Haunt of the Sea-Swallows—Thirty Guineas." That always fetched them, my dear. They couldn't resist it.—Warren, you may give me a kiss, if you like. I'll tell you what I've done: I've made your fortune.'

Warren kissed her affectionately on the forehead, half abashed. 'You're a bad girl, Edie,' he said good-humouredly; 'and if I'd only known it, I'd certainly have taken a great big cake of best ink-eraser and rubbed your plain figures all carefully out again.—But I don't care a pin in the end, after all, if I can make this dear mother and you comfortable.'

'And marry Elsie,' Edie put in mischievously.

Warren gave a quiet sigh of regret. 'And marry Elsie,' he added low. 'But Elsie will never marry me.'

'You goose!' said Edie, and laughed at him to his face. She knew women better than he did.

And all this while, poor lonely Winifred was rocking herself wildly backward and forward in Mrs Bouverie Barton's comfortable carriage, and muttering to herself in a mad fever of despair: 'I

could have believed it of Hugh; but of Elsie, of Elsie—never, never!'

CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE STRANDS DRAW CLOSER.

'I feel it my duty to let you know,' Sir Anthony Wraxall wrote to Hugh a day or two later—by the hand of his amanuensis—'that Mrs Massinger's lungs are far more seriously and dangerously affected than I deemed it at all prudent to inform her in person last week, when she consulted me here on the subject. Galloping consumption, I regret to say, may supervene at any time. The phthisical tendency manifests itself in Mrs Massinger's case in an advanced stage; and general tuberculosis may therefore on the shortest notice carry her off with startling rapidity. I would advise you, under these painful circumstances, to give her the benefit of a warmer winter climate; if not Egypt or Algeria, then at least Mentone, Catania, or Malaga. She should not on any account risk seeing another English Christmas. If she remains in Suffolk during the colder months of the present year, I dare not personally answer for the probable consequences.'

Hugh laid down the letter with a sigh of despair. It was the last straw, and it broke his back with utter despondency. How to finance a visit to the south he knew not. Talk about Algeria, Catania, Malaga! he had hard enough work to make both ends meet anyhow at Whitestrand. He had trusted first of all to the breakwater to redeem everything: but the breakwater, that broken reed, had only pierced the hand that leaned upon it. The sea shifted and the sand drifted worse than ever. Then he had hoped the best from *A Life's Philosophy*; but *A Life's Philosophy*, published after long and fruitless negotiations, at his own risk—for no firm would so much as touch it as a business speculation—had never paid the long printer's bill, let alone recouping him for his lost time and trouble. Nobody wanted to read about his life or his philosophy.

Of Winifred's health, Hugh thought far less than of the financial difficulty. He saw she was ill, decidedly ill, but not so ill as everybody else who saw her imagined. Wrapped up in his own selfish hopes and fears, never really fond of his poor small wife, and now estranged for months and months by her untimely discovery of Elsie's watch, which both he and she had entirely misinterpreted, Hugh Massinger had seen that frail young creature grow thinner and paler day by day without at any time realising the profundity of the change or the actual seriousness of her failing condition.

He went out into the drawing-room to join Winifred. He found her lying lazily on the sofa, pretending to read the first volume of Besant's last new novel from Mudie's. 'The wind's shifted,' he began uneasily. 'We shall get it warmer, I hope, soon, Winifred.'

'Yes, the wind's shifted,' Winifred answered gloomily, looking up in a hopeless and befogged way from the pages of her story. 'It blew straight across from Siberia yesterday; to-day it blows straight across from Greenland.'

'How would you like to go abroad for the winter, I wonder?' Hugh asked tentatively, with

some faint attempt at his old kindliness of tone and manner.

His wife glanced over at him with a sudden and strangely suspicious smile. 'To San Remo, I suppose?' she answered bitterly.

She meant the name to speak volumes to Hugh's conscience; but it fell upon his ears as flat and unimpressive as any other. 'Not necessarily to San Remo,' he replied, all unconscious. 'To Algeria, if you like—or Mentone, or Bordighera.'

Winifred rose, and walked without one word of explanation, but with a resolute air, into the study, next door. When she came out again, she carried in her two arms Keith Johnston's big Imperial Atlas. It was a heavier book than she could easily lift in her present feeble condition of body, but Hugh never even offered to help her to carry it. The day of small politenesses and courtesies was long gone past. He only looked on in mute surprise, anxious to know whence came this sudden new-born interest in the neglected study of European geography.

Winifred laid the Atlas down with a flop on the five o'clock tea-table, that staggered with its weight, and turned the pages with feverish haste till she came to the map of Northern Italy. 'I thought so,' she gasped out, as she scanned it close, a lurid red spot burning bright in her cheek. 'Mentone and Bordighera are both of them almost next door to San Remo.—The nearest stations on the line along the coast.—You could run over there often by rail from either of them.'

'Run over—often—by rail—to San Remo?' Hugh repeated with a genuinely puzzled expression of countenance.

'Oh, you act admirably!' Winifred cried with a sneer. 'What perfect bewilderment! What childlike innocence! I've always considered you an Irving wasted upon private life. If you'd gone upon the stage, you'd have made your fortune; which you've scarcely succeeded in doing, it must be confessed, at your various existing assorted professions.'

Hugh stared back at her in blank amazement. 'I don't know what you mean,' he answered shortly.

'Capital! capital!' Winifred went on in her bitter mood, endeavouring to assume a playful tone of unconcerned irony. 'I never saw you act better in all my life—not even when you were pretending to fall in love with me. It's your most successful part—the injured innocent:—much better than the part of the devoted husband. If I were you, I should always stick to it.—But it's very abrupt, this sudden conversion of yours to the charms of the Riviera.'

'Winifred,' Hugh cried, with transparent conviction in every note of his voice, 'I see you're labouring under some distressing misapprehension; but I give you my solemn word of honour I don't in the least know what it is you're driving at. You're talking about somebody or something unknown that I don't understand. I wish you'd explain. I can't follow you.'

But he had acted too often and too successfully to be believed now for all his earnestness. 'Your solemn word of honour!' Winifred burst out angrily, with intense contempt. 'Your solemn word of honour, indeed! And pray, who do you think believes now in your precious word or your

honour either?—You can't deceive me any longer, thank goodness, Hugh. I know you want to go to San Remo; and I know for whose sake you want to go there. This solicitude for my health's all a pure fiction. Little you cared for my health a month ago! Oh no, I see through it all distinctly. You've found out there's a reason for going to San Remo, and you want to go for your own pleasure accordingly.'

An idea flashed sudden across Hugh's mind. 'I think, Winifred,' he said calmly, 'you're labouring under a mistake about the place you're speaking of. The gaming tables are not at San Remo, as you suppose, but at Monte Carlo, just beyond Mentone. And if you thought I wanted to go to the Riviera for the sake of repairing our ruined estate at Monte Carlo, you're very much mistaken. I wanted to go, I solemnly declare, for your health only.'

Winifred rose, and faced him now like an angry tigress. Her sunken white cheeks were flushed and fiery indeed with suppressed wrath, and a bright light blazed in her dilated pupils. The full force of a burning indignation possessed her soul. 'Hugh Massinger,' she said, repelling him haughtily with her thin left hand, 'you've lied to me for years, and you're lying to me now as you've always lied to me. You know you've lied to me, and you know you're lying to me. This pretence about my health's a transparent falsehood. These prevarications about the gambling tables are a tissue of fictions. You can't deceive me. I *know* why you want to go to San Remo!' And she pushed him away in disgust with her angry fingers.

The action and the insult were too much for Hugh. He could no longer restrain himself. Sir Anthony's letter trembled in his hands; he was clutching it tight in his waistcoat pocket. To show it to Winifred would have been cruel, perhaps, under any other circumstances; but in face of such an accusation as that, yet wholly misunderstood, flesh and blood—at least Hugh Massinger's—could not further resist the temptation of producing it. 'Read that,' he cried, handing her over the letter coldly; 'you'll see from it why it is I want to go; why, in spite of all we've lost and are losing, I'm still prepared to submit to this extra expenditure.'

'Out of *my* money,' Winifred answered scornfully, as she took the paper with an inclination of mock-courtesy from his tremulous hands. 'How very generous! And how very kind of you!'

She read the letter through without a single word; then she yielded at last, in spite of herself, to her womanly tears. 'I see it all, Hugh,' she cried, flinging herself down once more in despair upon the sofa. 'You fancy I'm going to die now; and it will be so convenient, so very convenient for you, to be near her there next door at San Remo!'

Hugh gazed at her again in mute surprise. At last he saw it—he saw it in all its naked hideousness. A light began gradually to dawn upon his mind. It was awful—it was horrible in its cruel Nemesis upon his unspoken crime. To think she should be jealous—of his murdered Elsie! He could hardly speak of it; but he must, he must. 'Winnie,' he cried, almost softened by his pity for what he took to be her deadly and terrible

mistake, 'I understand you, I think, after all. I know what you mean.—You believe—that *Elsie*—is at *San Remo*.'

Winifred looked up at him through her tears with a withering glance. 'You have said it!' she cried in a haughty voice, and relapsed into a silent fit of sobbing and suppressed cough, with her poor wan face buried deep once more like a wounded child's in the cushions of the sofa.

AURICULA CULTIVATION.

For some years back the cultivation of this fascinating flower has been spreading, and the recent formation of the Scottish *Primula* and *Auricula* Society will give a greater impetus to the pure and health-giving recreation. A few plain and simple directions for the successful management of this sweet and beautiful flower may not be amiss, seeing that it is in many cases not so well grown as it might and could be, if its wants were better understood. Many cultivators, too, lose valuable plants during the winter. This need not be; a very little care and a little knowledge would prevent such losses.

As I have said, the care needed is very little; but that little must be given, as these flowers are sensitive, and will be sure to resent neglect or ill treatment. I have cultivated this beautiful flower for many years, and never lost one that came to me in a healthy state; but when they did not come in that state, I have seldom been able to bring them round again. I will now give a few directions, which will enable any one to cultivate this simple beauty to something like perfection, premising, however, that I write for those not well up in plant culture, and so will be more anxious to write plainly than to write finely.

First, then, the pots in which they are grown should be small, and that for three good reasons. In the first place, the plants are more easily kept in health in such pots; in the second place, they look far better, for no one with an eye for proportion likes to see a small plant in a big pot; and lastly, they take up less room. For plants of full average size, four-inch pots will do quite well; while for those under the average, three-inch pots will be ample. A few very strong growers, if in perfect health, will need five-inch pots. Next comes the drainage, which should be perfect. Into the bottom of a thoroughly clean and dry pot put, first, a potsherd large enough to cover the hole; then pack all round it other bits as close to each other as you can; then, on these put smaller bits over any open spaces, finishing with a good sprinkling of bits the size of peas or so. Over all, press some clean moss, thus forming a filter, which allows the superfluous water to escape, and at the same time prevents any particles of soil being carried in to choke the drainage, which would result in the soil becoming sour and unhealthy. For the compost: it should consist of good loam from rotten turf, and very rotten manure. A safe proportion is two parts loam and one manure, to which add a good dash of clean sharp sand. Those who have not much experience in watering might with great advantage add one-fifth part of wood-charcoal in lumps from the size of peas to that of broad beans. As to the state of the soil: it should not be clammy or very

dry, but to the dry side, and friable, with plenty of fibre in it, and not too fine.

Re-potting may be done any time from the middle of June to September. The first-mentioned month is the best, because it gives the plants time to fill their pots with roots before winter sets in, a matter of the greatest importance.

In potting, take the plant to be operated upon, turn it out of its pot, and shake away all the old soil. As the auricula plant grows older, the lower leaves keep dying off, and if left alone, would in time form a long bare stem. To prevent this, the plant, at every re-potting, is sunk up to the lower leaves; and it is from this new part, so sunk, that the best roots will be produced for the support of the plant next year. But the stem thus buried if let alone would soon get to be of an inconvenient length; hence the lower part should be cut off with a sharp knife; and if all has gone well with the plant since last re-potting, abundance of fine healthy white roots will remain on the upper part. Putting some of the compost into one of the prepared pots, press it moderately with the ends of your fingers; heap some more in the centre in the form of a mound, on the top of which set your plant, adjusting the roots all round the sloping sides. As many of the fibres as possible should touch the sides of the pot; and if they happen to be too long to be thus adjusted without doubling them up, trim them to the proper length with a sharp knife, then put in some soil evenly and firmly all round. If this operation has been properly performed, the lower leaves of the plant will be level with the surface of the soil, and half an inch or a little more will be left between that and the top of the pot, to hold water.

As this is supposed to be your first trial at auricula potting, you may have sunk the plant too deep, or not deep enough. In that case, just do it over again; and this first experience will have taught you to do all the rest right without more ado. I do not water my plants immediately after re-potting, but put them into the frame, shut them close, and keep them well shaded. If they do not require water for eight days or more, all the better. But the soil must not be allowed to get very dry, and when the necessity for watering arises, it must be done thoroughly. To make sure of this, two applications will be necessary, allowing an interval of a few hours between. After this thorough first watering, one application will be enough each time it is needed.

With regard to watering, it is curious to note the erroneous notions many people have about it. A lady will sometimes ask me: 'Gardener, when should I water my plants?' Another one will say: 'I had a most beautiful plant which I bought at a nursery, and though I gave it plenty of water every day, it died.' Not long since, one of the most amiable gentlemen I have ever met, said to me: 'My plants are not looking so well to day; I think I must have given them too much water yesterday.'

If the soil in the pots is of the right texture and the drainage in proper order, and if the plant needs water, too much cannot be given at one application. The pots must be filled to overflowing, so as to make sure that the whole soil is thoroughly moistened; the superfluous water will

escape by the drainage. But if a plant often gets water when it does not need it, it will result in injury. A plant should be watered just when it requires it, and at no other time. The careful cultivator will learn to know the time sooner than he thinks. From time to time examine the soil in the pots, and if it be found to be neither wet nor dry, but in a state between the two, watering will only do harm. But as soon as the surface looks a little dusty-like, water will be required.

In giving directions for re-potting, I forgot to speak about the offsets, or young plants, which will be found growing on the stem of the old plant. These are taken off with a sharp knife, all but the very small ones—which perhaps had better remain on till next year—and laid aside among damp moss, each sort by itself, and properly tallied. If there happens to be any large ones with good roots, they may be put into small pots at once. The most of them, however, will be small, and have hardly any roots, in which case, proceed as follows: Prepare a number of four-inch pots; fill them with the ordinary potting soil; then take a wooden pin as thick as your finger, and make from three to six holes in the soil close to the side of the pot. Fill these holes with moist sand; in this sand make holes with a smaller pin, and in these insert the offsets, close to the side of the pot, the larger ones three in a pot, five or six in the small ones. This plan is much better than putting them singly into smaller pots; they root quicker, and make good plants in a shorter time. As in the case of the older plants, keep from watering as long as possible, also keep close, and shade from the sun. This shading and shutting-up close is to prevent evaporation from the foliage, which would cause the plants to flag, a thing to be avoided. It is a good plan, on calm clear evenings, after the sun is off the frame, to pull the sash off altogether, and let it remain so till bedtime. On such evenings, dew will form on the plants, and refresh them greatly. The sash must, however, be put on again before retiring for the night, as no one can tell what sort of weather it may be before morning.

After receiving their first watering, the plants should get air night as well as day, little at first, but gradually increasing it until they are able to stand a full supply. I would, however, caution all who are ambitious to grow this lovely flower well, that it will not stand wind or bear strong sunshine. If the frame can be set in a situation where the sun will shine on it up to nine in the morning, and no more that day, it will be well. If set in a sunny place, it must be shaded with some light material not too closely woven. This shading may be put on or off according to the state of the weather, if the grower is always at hand and has time to do it. Otherwise, it may be fastened on in February and not taken off till October. In winter, the plants will be the better of all the sunshine they can get.

The auricula fancier who is determined to go into the matter with spirit will have a frame made for the proper keeping of his favourites. One to hold a hundred plants will measure three feet from back to front, and six feet the other way, and it may be four feet high at the back, and two and a half in front. Such a frame may have seven shelves, each five inches wide, rising from front to back in conformity with the slope of the glass, and

sixteen inches from it. The sash of a frame like this is commonly hinged at the top, and can be propped up to allow the plants to be easily attended to. It is obvious, however, that danger would attend raising such a sash during wet stormy weather; and as, even then, a free circulation of air among the plants is highly desirable, other means of attaining that end must be resorted to. It is done as follows: In front of the frame is a ventilator four inches wide, and running the whole length. It is four inches from the ground, and is hinged on the under side, so that, when opened, it falls down of itself, and gives no more trouble. Wind and rain blowing in at this opening can do no harm, as it is under the level of the stage. A similar contrivance is also needed at the back, near the top; but in this case the opening, in addition to the hinged shutter, must be protected by having a strip of perforated zinc fastened over it on the inside.

THE SILVER STREAM.

AN IDYL OF THE WYE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. III.

On the morning following, before Pencraig was awake, Colonel Scobell had fished his favourite stream, aided and abetted by the gardener's boy, a precocious youth, intended eventually for a naturalist or a poacher, as the gods decreed, and succeeded in catching three fish. The three shining monsters were carried up to the house in triumph, and laid on a stone in the dairy, where a well-attended levee was held till breakfast-time. So delighted was the Colonel with this unique accomplishment, that in the exuberance of his joy he proposed a picnic down the river in honour of the occasion. Mrs Scobell, always most happy when her spouse was pleased, fell in with this arrangement. There was not a particularly large gathering at the early breakfast, consisting of the Moffat girls and our trio, concluding with Du Maurier, who had not yet broken the direful tidings of his premature departure. Miss Rashleigh did not put in an appearance.

'We will go to Ross by water,' Mrs Scobell explained. 'When we reach there, we will decide what further to do.—Mr Denton, I am told you are a capital hand at arranging these little matters. Will you help me?'

Denton laid down his knife and fork, and regarded his hostess with a look in which bewilderment and reproach were amusingly blended. With Malvolio, he felt he had greatness thrust upon him. 'My dear madam, some one has libelled me cruelly. Would you be surprised to hear that I never attended such a function in my life?'

'Oh, in that case we must go,' said the hostess good-naturedly. 'How many shall we be? There will be four of us—all you girls, with Mr Du Maurier—no fewer than seventeen altogether.'

'The invasion of Ross,' said Denton with a forlorn air. 'What a sensation we shall create! The army of Pencraig, under the command of Colonel Scobell.—Du Maurier, these knickerbockers of yours will cause a *furor*.'

The gallant Frenchman smiled, but without his usual airy assurance. He was by no means at ease, though he was somewhat grateful to Denton

for the opportunity afforded. 'It is a great disappointment, no doubt,' he said; 'but I shall not be there. I have important business calling me to town, and I shall be compelled to go to Hereford to-day. My charming hostess will forgive this unavoidable termination to the pleasantest of visits; but, ah! the stern calls of business; I shall be forced to take my leave early to-morrow.'

Phil looked up at the speaker, whose eyes were fixed upon him in a questioning manner, and nodded shortly. So long as the fascinating Horace would not be present at the fête, it was a matter of little moment whether he remained at Pencraig another night or not. This decision was none the less satisfactory because Phil had no intention of going himself. He had a little work to do, and a great deal to think about. He also had a clue in his hands, which, skilfully handled, would put an end to the painful coldness between Beatrice and himself. As he sat upon the terrace smoking a matutinal cigarette, Denton with a face of woe joined him.

'The die is cast!' he said. 'We are to go into Ross; though what we are going to do there is a social problem beyond ordinary understanding. I believe there is a fine church there, where we shall spend the customary ten minutes. What follows, I shudder to contemplate.'

'What a humbug you are!' Phil retorted. 'Just as if you won't enjoy yourself as well as the rest of them. I know what the programme will be, well enough. You will go down to Ross, taking care that you and Bertie pull the gig pair with Gwen and Nellie Moffat.'

'Not a bad idea,' said Denton, as if such a plan had been furthest from his thoughts. 'We have only to drop a hint to some of the women that the gig is not quite safe, and the thing is done.—Now, as to yourself?'

'I shan't go—at least I don't think so. I—I have some particular work to do. Only leave me that little oak dingey for this afternoon. I dare say I shall find time for a pull up to Hoarwithy and back.'

Denton whistled softly; he was too much a man of the world to inquire the reason for this unexpected determination.

'We shall be rather short of the nobler sex, in that case. Rashleigh cannot favour us with his desirable company; we shall mourn the absence of Horace the incomparable in silent despair.—What's to be done?'

But the unexpected arrival of three Oxford undergraduates, who had rushed over from Hereford owing to the collapse of a cricket match, satisfactorily solved the problem. The party resolved itself into a smaller one than had been at first anticipated, and as a matter of fact the limited number of floating craft rendered this imperative. It was past eleven before the three boats got under way and slid gradually out of sight round the bend. Phil stood upon the tiny wooden pier watching them, and smiling at the brilliant diplomacy of Denton's, which had been attended by triumphant success. He was not quite alone, for Miss Edith Moffat stood by his side, an unmistakable pout disfiguring her pretty lips.

'It is too bad!' she exclaimed, with tears in her voice. 'I am always left out.'

'Then why didn't you say you wanted to go?' asked Phil with scant sympathy. 'There was plenty of room in our boat.'

An April smile darted across Miss Edith's piquant little face, a saucy smile of meaning. 'There are *four* of them there, you know. And besides I heard Mr Trevor say the boat was not quite safe. Wasn't it brave of Nell and Gwen to risk such horrible danger?'

'Very,' said Phil dryly. 'You are naturally a courageous family. Still, if you can put up with such a commonplace cavalier as me, we will have a long pull this afternoon.'

'Delightful!—Only, there isn't a boat.'

'Oh, I took care of that. There is plenty of room in the little dingey, if you only sit still, and exactly in the centre. You and I will go as far as Hoarwithy directly after luncheon, and get back in time for dinner.'

Miss Edith looked up at the deep blue sky above the larch tassels, then down again to the swift running river, musical as it rushed over the brown pebbles. She gazed seriously out of her great eyes at her companion, as if she would read his thoughts. 'I wonder what you stayed behind for?' she asked abruptly.

'Now, I suppose that is what a woman would call gratitude.—My dear Edie, have you so soon forgotten the moral precepts of your school-mistress? But seriously, I have something important to do this morning. Don't ask me any questions, there is a good child.'

'I am very sorry, Phil,' Miss Edith replied with humility. 'If you would only let me help you a little. I—I understand that you'—

'You are a good little girl, and I am very grateful.—No; you can't help me, little one. I hope everything will come right in a few days. When it does, you shall be the first to know.'

Philip Decie was not the kind of man to make a confidant of any one; but the quick warm-hearted sympathy had touched him more deeply than he cared to own. Moreover, it was not like confiding in a stranger, for the girl had been an especial favourite of his ever since he had first known her an imperious little beauty aged seven. There had always been something in the frank innocence of her great gray eyes that drew him towards her, child as she was, as one noble nature is attracted by another. After this little interchange of sympathy, it came almost like a shock to Phil when he encountered Du Maurier strutting along the terrace, smoking one of his everlasting scented cigarettes.

The Frenchman's colour rose as he saw Decie approaching. He bore the air and manner of one who conquers his pride to ask a favour of an unrelenting and implacable enemy. 'You will recollect our little conversation of last night?' he asked.

'Um! I don't think it is likely either of us will forget it. Still, your memory seems to have proved somewhat treacherous. I made a certain stipulation as regards the duration of your stay here.'

'Which is precisely what I am going to mention,' Du Maurier exclaimed. 'I found it was impossible.'

'Impossible?' Phil returned, his face darkening. 'As for that'—

'Nay; hear me out, my impetuous friend. It

was impossible for me to go to-day, for the simple reason that I had not the means of taking myself away from here. Yesterday, I sent a telegram to a friend, who can and will refuse me nothing'—

'Blackmail, probably,' Phil interrupted.—'Go on.'

'It matters not to you,' continued the Frenchman, with a flash of his glittering eyes, 'so long as this remittance comes. I go into Hereford this afternoon to get my letter, which shall wait for me at the bureau. But to-morrow mid-day shall see me gone.'

'I do not wish to be hard upon you,' said Phil, with a slight feeling of compunction. 'Neither did I seek this information. Still, I am satisfied.'

Du Maurier watched his rival as he turned away. His long thin fingers were tightly clenched, the cigarette in his mouth was crushed between the even white teeth in silent impotent consuming rage.

'*Ma foi*, but it is a fine thing to be one of these English aristocrats,' he said with a deep respiration. 'So cool, so contemptuous! I would give all I possess to have my gentleman on a nice level strip of turf with twelve paces between us. Still, I have my little revenge. La belle Rashleigh is proud; her self-respect is wounded. If it is not Horace Du Maurier, it will never be M'sieu Decie.—Ah! if it had not been for those bills!'

The dark scowl upon the Frenchman's face gradually changed to a sour smile. He rejoiced in a cat-like nature, only capable of those petty meannesses which make up the *summum bonum* of some men's lives. He looked at his watch, and finding it close upon twelve, set out with apparent determination of purpose across the fields. As he came into the high-road at some distance beyond, there was another individual awaiting him—Gerard Rashleigh. From the expression of the young undergraduate's face, the interview was neither self-sought nor pleasing.

'Ah, I thought you would not keep me waiting,' said Du Maurier. 'One cannot be too careful in a house like Pencraig, where no place is sacred against intrusion.—In one word, have you the money?'

'Money? Where can I get it from? It was only yesterday morning that you promised me another month.'

'Possibly, dear boy; only, this is a case what you call Hobson's choice. Many things have happened since yesterday. Your friend Decie—to put it plainly—insists upon my leaving Pencraig to-morrow.'

'You don't mean that!' Rashleigh exclaimed, every vestige of colour gone from his cheeks. 'Under the circumstances he would not dare!—'

'He has dared, all the same; and I shall have to obey. See how one suffers for the little indiscretions of youth. It's hard upon me.'

'What particular rascality has Decie got hold of?' Rashleigh asked bluntly.

'I do not like that word, sir, and I will ask you to be careful. Still, as the poet says, *Arcades ambo*!—'

'*Id est*—blackguards both,' Rashleigh finished. —'Oh, why be nice about expressions, particularly when they are true! I wish to heaven I had never seen you. I wish—— But what is the

use of wishing? I am anxious to pay you this money; but I haven't got it, and that's the long and short of it. Some day, I shall make a clean breast of the whole thing.'

But Du Maurier was too familiar with these transient fits of repentance to be seriously alarmed; he merely laughed again and lighted another cigarette. 'It will be a black day for you when you defy me,' said he. 'You and I sink or swim together. If you wish to return to your buttercups and daisies, I shall not hinder you. Pay me four hundred pounds and you are free.'

'I haven't four hundred pence,' Rashleigh replied doggedly.

'Perhaps not; but I will show you how to get it. Let us take a long walk; it will soothe your nerves and clear your brain. And besides, I am going to show you the way to rid yourself of Horace Du Maurier, who, after all, is no greater scamp than you; only, he has the pluck, and you are a coward.'

The complacent hostess of Pencraig, who had not joined the Ross excursion, saw no objection to Decie's proposal for the afternoon. It was not often that the good lady had a long afternoon in peace, and the chronicles of the *Little Lord Fauntleroy* were of overpowering interest.

'My dear child, so long as you come home alive, you may do just what you please,' she said. 'Phil was always most trustworthy, even as a boy, and I am sure you will be safe with him.'

There was not a ripple on the water as the little craft left the landing-stage and took its way up-stream. Miss Edith sat with the crimson tiller-ropes over her shoulders, looking over the shining river before her from under the shade of a smart sailor hat with a truly nautical air. It was so quiet and pleasant there beneath the overhanging willows, and along through cool sombre shades cast by the trees in the sloping woods. There was just the rhythmic throb of sculls in the rowlocks, with tiny pools left by the sweeping blades.

'Now, don't you feel just as happy as if you had gone with the others?' asked Phil, when a mile or two had been covered. 'Probably by this time they are all hot and tired, and heartily wishing they had never met.'

'That is a slightly egotistical remark, Phil,' the fair coxswain observed; 'and I shall not pay you the compliment of replying. Besides, it is all very well to console yourself with sarcastic remarks, when you know that, under more favourable circumstances, I might have proved another Mariana of the Moated Grange for all you cared.'

'Um! A season in town hasn't improved you,' said Phil gravely. 'That's the worst of taking too much notice of very young ladies, they get so flippant.'

'Ah, but it isn't original,' said Edith serenely. 'I overheard much the same remark made in a London drawing-room one night; and the answer struck me as being so appropriate, that I remembered it—which is very creditable, and not a little risky, for I haven't the remotest notion who Mariana is.'

'Put it down to Tennyson or Shakespeare; it's sure to be one or the other.—Pull the

left-hand string; we shall be on the gravel in a minute.'

They had reached a broad bend in the river, where the stream widened, with low sloping meadows upon the one bank, and an eminence—upon which is situated the village of Hoarwithy—upon the other. At this point the stream takes a peculiar V shape, and is particularly puzzling to the amateur oarsman. Decie, pulling round sharply to miss the foreshore, struck the blade against a solid mass of rock and snapped it nearly off below the button.

'This is a pleasant thing,' he exclaimed ruefully.—'Will you get out and wait till the damage can be repaired, or stay here?'

Miss Edith treated this proposal with the scorn it merited. 'Get out? Certainly not.—There is at least four yards of mud between me and dry land.—No; you shall row me under that delightful shady alder, and fasten up. I don't suppose there will be any danger of my being spirited away till you return.'

Making the best of his broken implements, Decie succeeded at length in reaching the desired haven; and having fastened the dingey securely, scrambled up the bank with the fractured blade, though not without detriment to his spotless flannels, in search of the handy man, without which no village is complete. This individual, a bluff old fisherman in blue Guernsey frock and ducks, who combined the office of postman, publican, and carpenter to the village, expressed a cheery opinion of the damage. 'I can splice it as good as new in half an hour, your honour,' said he. 'You'd better step inside. And if you'll ask for the "strawberry Norman," you'll get as good a glass of cider as a man need wish to drink.'

As Phil knew both the man and his cider by reputation, he had no hesitation in taking the hint, though it is not always advisable to accept a west-countryman's dogmatic opinion upon this patriotic subject on every occasion. As Decie stood in the little bar alone, he was not a little astonished to hear from the room beyond, the door of which was only partially closed, the familiar voices of Du Maurier and Gerard Rashleigh. He was still more surprised to hear his own name so frequently mentioned.

'It's a blackguard thing to do,' Rashleigh exclaimed. 'I have done him harm enough already. I tell you I won't do it.'

'Not so loud: you don't want the whole parish to hear,' came the smooth seductive tones of the Frenchman. 'Surely, you would not scruple at such a little thing, after what you have already done.—Ah, that little yellow ticket was a masterpiece; a smooth touch so artful that it looked like nature itself. Now that Miss Rashleigh is convinced her lover is a thief!'

'Leave my sister out of it altogether,' Rashleigh exclaimed passionately. 'I tell you I won't have it. If it wasn't that I was afraid of you, I would tell Decie everything.—Why do you tempt me? It can do you no good.'

'It will give me revenge. But you have your alternative. To use one of your sweet insular phrases, the borrower is always the servant of the lender. Pay me what money you owe me, and my power is gone.'

'Would to heaven I could! There would be no hesitation then.'

'Decie would be delighted to accommodate you,' sneered Du Maurier. 'The paltry hundreds would be cheerfully paid, if you only cared to exercise this new and interesting fit of honesty. Why not ask him?'

'Because I have done him too much harm already. Because, if you must know, I am in his debt now. That bracelet affair'—

Decie, conscious for the first time that he was playing the part of an eavesdropper, stayed to hear no more. His face was very stern and set as he paid for the repair of the blade, and passed down the garden path with a curt 'Good afternoon' to the village genius.

'Seems as if he was upset,' remarked that worthy, 'and him so affable and perlit at first. Maybe missis ha' given he the "red streak" by mistake.'

For some minutes the boat was propelled towards Pencraig in silence. Miss Edith regarded her companion demurely from the unclouded serenity of her gray eyes. 'You are looking very amiable,' she observed in the sweetest tones. 'You must have heard some particularly good news; that is, if your hurry to get back is any criterion.'

'Do I look amiable?' said Decie with an effort—'more amiable than usual? I have heard something; but whether it is good or bad, for the life of me I can't tell.' And with this enigmatic remark Miss Edith was fain to be content.

EUCALYPTUS HONEY.

At a meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society in London, a sample of Eucalyptus Honey was shown, and created much interest from the fact of its containing all the essential properties of those invaluable trees. (See *Chambers's Journal*, March 26, 1881). The existence of this peculiar honey was made known in 1884 by a French traveller, Mr Guilmeth, who, while exploring the island of Tasmania, noticed at the summit of one of the eucalypts a peculiar formation, which appeared to him to be a gigantic gall. Having for some time examined it through his glass, he was much surprised to notice that it was frequented by a legion of small black bees, which swarmed around the 'gall' or hive as it was now revealed to him. A strong desire to possess this hive led him to order his native followers to cut down the tree, which had a girth of seven metres and a height of eighty metres. The men before beginning their work were well protected over the face and hands; while Mr Guilmeth retired to a safe distance, to watch the proceedings of the bees during the time the men were at their laborious work of sawing through this large tree. At first, no notice was taken of them; but as progress was made, the explorer was much interested and amused by the sight which met his gaze. A swarm of the bees flew down to within a few yards of the toilers, and after flying around for a time rapidly returned to the hive, their places being filled by others. This curious behaviour of the bees continued until the tree was sufficiently cut through to be pulled to the ground by ropes. When the tree was finally laid low, the men were instructed to drive away

the queen, and this they did after a deal of shouting and beating of utensils. They would have fared very badly had they not been well protected, for the bees greatly resented this interference with their home. The hive and several bees which had lingered were captured, and the honey collected. Upon tasting the honey, Mr Guilmeth, much to his surprise, found that it possessed the characteristic odour and flavour of the eucalyptus essences. This he thought so important a discovery as to lead him to forward a shipment of it to a French doctor in Normandy for examination.

Upon carefully inspecting the bees that had been captured, they were found to be of a species not known in Europe, and accordingly the name of *Apis nigra mellifica* was provisionally given to them. They were of a smaller size than the common bee of Europe, and quite black, with a far more developed proboscis. Experiments failed to acclimatise it in Algeria and in France. It is curious to note that in Algeria, where the eucalypts have been acclimatised, it was sought to obtain this honey by means of the Algerian bee. All flowering crops were cut down, and the bees forced to turn their attention to the eucalypts, with the result that the bees gradually died. To prevent a disaster, fresh flowering plants had to be imported. The eucalypts being biennial, this honey is only obtainable every two years; but it does not during that period lose any of its important constituents. It is of a deep orange colour, of a transparent sirupy consistence in warm weather; but in this country it is usually partly solidified. It has the characteristic odour of the eucalyptus essences, and also their flavour. It is said to contain about sixty-two per cent. of the purest sugar, and over seventeen per cent. of the essential constituents of the eucalyptus, consisting of eucalyptol, eucalyptene, cymol, and terpene, all of which play an important part in the therapeutics of the present day. It was thought that a similar honey could be obtained by mixing these ingredients; and experiments were tried in Paris, but without success, as it was found that the ingredients gradually separated and volatilised off.

Eucalyptus honey is designed to take an important place as a therapeutical agent and as an article of food, on account of the unusually large percentage of sugar it contains and of the presence of the eucalyptus essences, the properties of which as antiseptics and deodorisers are well known. It is usually given in warm milk or warm water. One or two teaspoonfuls twice or thrice daily have produced beneficial effects on bronchitis, asthma, and diseases of the lungs and respiratory organs, producing elasticity of the lungs and a decided increase of the vocal powers. The breath is said to be perfumed, and a sense of warmth and well-being to pervade the body.

The field for such an important honey would almost appear unlimited, owing to its antiseptic properties; and already cases have been recorded of its use in typhoid gastric infection, whooping-cough, and catarrhs. As a substitute for cod-liver oil, the advent of eucalyptus honey will be hailed with delight by all who have to undergo the nauseous experience of a course of this oil, while its nutrient powers are not thought to be inferior. Much interest was created a short time since by the chemical analysis of the famous Trebizond

honey, which produces narcotic effects upon all who take it, followed by strong excitement and toxic effects. It was carefully analysed in this country, and its ingredients when separated were tried physiologically upon animals with a two-fold object: firstly, to ascertain the nature of the poison; and secondly, to determine, if possible, by this means the species of plant the bees producing this honey frequented. The results thus obtained led the experimentalists to suspect a certain plant; and communications were made to friends residing in the districts whence this honey was sent as to the names of the plants mostly abounding in the neighbourhood. It was thus ascertained that the bees relied upon a poisonous plant for their honey.

There are now many honeys containing either toxic properties or peculiar odours, which have been traced to the bees frequenting a certain plant; for instance, the Narbonne honey owes its peculiar flavour to the rosemary, which grows so profusely in the neighbourhood. Another instance is that of the Mount Hymettus honey, which derives its flower and odour from the labiates.

With such facts before us, we should not be surprised to see our Australian brethren's example followed in this country, and apiaries started for the production of honey of a distinct flavour, odour, and effect.

BABY—BEER—BULLETS!

A WESTERN SKETCH.

SUCH, in display type, with staring capitals and exclamation points, was the heading of an article in the *Daily Denver News* issued on the morning of Monday, April 11, 1887.

Denver, it is well known, is the chief city between Chicago and San Francisco. It is the centre of a great mining and agricultural district; it is the meeting-point of a network of railways; it boasts a cathedral, a state-house, a population of between seventy and eighty thousand, and a climate which entitles it to the proud appellation of the 'Queen City of America.' Rather more than twenty years ago it was a mere mining camp, unknown save to miners and cattle-men. The reports of discoveries of fabulous rich minerals in the Leadville Hills ten years ago attracted the attention of the entire continent. Capital and emigration flowed towards Colorado, and Denver was transformed from a rude settlement into a goodly city, from a little coach-visited town into a world of rapid motion and rushing railways. The old order of things gave way before that great civiliser, the 'iron horse;' and the traveller of to-day finds it difficult to believe in the coach robberies of yesterday. London itself boasts not of better roadways, or of business houses more handsomely massive and solid in character. To a Cockney, to be sure, the glare and want of finish and harmony about the streets are not pleasant. To one who has been accustomed to move between the plain ripe old buildings of London, the advertisements and their 'uncommendable iteration' savour of vulgarity. But there is an air of bustle about the place, a ring of decision about the voices, a self-reliant

expression about the clear-cut American features, which tell of the healthy national business pulse which beats from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

It was Monday morning. I had arrived at Denver on the previous Sunday afternoon, on my way from New York to San Francisco. My desire to see western life, always great, had been 'fed fat' by my fellow-travellers. New York and its wonders had disappointed me: they were too much like London. Of my fellow-travellers, one was an American, whose angles had been rubbed off by intercourse with Europe; the other was an Englishman, the greater part of whose life had been spent in Arizona. George C. Warner, as the latter signed his cheques, had been led by circumstances to the West when the travelling was not to be accomplished with all the comfort to be obtained in a middle-class hotel. He did not profess to have been one of the pioneers of the West; but he had 'hoofed' the journey, and 'roughed' it when he reached his destination. His enterprise had been rewarded: he had made a fortune, and could now afford to travel like a millionaire. He was a good *raconteur*, and his voice, looks, and manner indicated a profound belief in all he said. Many and good were the stories with which he beguiled the hours after the novelty had worn off the journey, and when our clothes were saturated with alkali dust.

'I recollect once,' said Mr Warner, one evening when we were in the smoking-room, 'out in Ar'zona, bein' in a s'loon. We were just havin' dinner. There was a girl waitin' on us—you must know that girls ain't common in those parts—and the boys were pertickler fond o' her. Wal, a man came in and sat down just opposite one o' the "boys." The girl brought him some half-dozen dishes, and amongst 'em some beans.

"Tek these beans away; I don't eat beans," said the stranger, in a voice savouring of command. It may ha' been that the girl didn't hear him, or it may ha' been that she kind o' resented the tone in which the order was given. Anyway, she didn't take any notice, and the stranger repeated his order in a still more peremptory manner. The girl put out her hand to remove the unwished-for dish.

"Stop! He does eat beans," said a cowboy, whipping out a revolver and covering the newcomer. Click! went the hammer. "Stranger, if you don't get away wi' them beans, I'll make cold-meat of you." The stranger *did* eat the beans.

"Bring him another plateful." It was brought and eaten in silence. This was repeated until five platefuls had been disposed of. Then the revolver was returned to its place, and the "boy" remarked to his fellow-diners, in a tone half explanatory and half justificatory, but wholly decisive: "I warn't a-goin' t' have the little girl insulted, anyway; don't you forget it!"

I ventured to hint that refusal to eat the beans would probably not have been followed by a punishment altogether so disproportionate to the offence as that to which the cowboy's conduct pointed. But Mr Warner seemed hurt by the suspicion, and gave me a look so full of contempt of my opinion, pity of my ignorance, and surprise at finding any one sceptical as to the honesty of the 'boy's' intentions, that never afterwards have I allowed a doubt as to the veracity of Mr

Warner's stories to appear in my face, still less have I translated my doubts into words.

'Wouldn't have shot him! Great Scott! wouldn't he? Why, I've seen a man shot because he ate peas with a fork, down in Ar'zona,' said Mr Warner, with a look of righteous indignation from which there could be no appeal.

I really believe these things did happen 'down in Ar'zona.' But the explanation for many atrocities too dreadful to be here mentioned, I gathered, was to be found in the fact that owing to climatic influences—chiefly, of course, the want of water—insanity obtained amongst a startling proportion of the inhabitants of Arizona. The forms which insanity there took were dreadful. In that country, every bush had a thorn, every insect a sting, and every man a revolver and bowie-knife. One can conceive what dire use such weapons as the knife and revolver would be put to by madmen. Indeed, on no other theory can the diabolical deeds said to be done in Arizona be accounted for. There lynch-law took summary vengeance; insanity was not admitted as any justification; asylums there were none; mitigating circumstances were not, and could not be, taken into account. Rye-whisky assisted the pestilential climate to produce criminals, who, if taken red-handed, were killed on the spot without trial of any kind.

Revenons à nos moutons. I have said that I had arrived at Denver on the previous afternoon. I was driven to the *Windsor Hotel*, a most elegantly appointed hotel in the modern Gothic style, built of Colorado stone trimmed with granite. My room looked out upon Larimer Street, the principal business thoroughfare. The hotel is a five-story building, and contains upwards of three hundred rooms. Nearly the whole of the basement is occupied by a spacious hall, known as the 'rotunda,' in which the chief exchange business of the town and neighbourhood is conducted. The whole building is lighted by electricity and heated by steam. An electric button places a well-disciplined army of attendants at the command of the traveller; the table is supplied with a wealth of milk, cream, vegetables, and fruit from a model farm owned by the Denver Mansion Company; and the Turkish, Electric, Russian, and Roman baths, also under the same management, are supplied, as is the hotel, from an artesian well for which many health-giving properties are claimed. The wants of the pleasure-seeker or the traveller are all anticipated in this truly palatial building.

I was sitting at the window, absorbing the sentiment and observing the people. Everything was bathed in beautiful sunlight, sunlight as beautiful as that of Naples. The atmosphere was that of summer rather than spring, and so clear, that the snow-capped heights of the Rocky Mountains, distant fifty miles, showed a dazzling brightness against the azure sky. The trees were putting forth buds, and here and there a lawn was bright with grass of a vivid green. Everybody seemed to be in the streets, enjoying the open air in light hats and very light overcoats. There was an unmistakable atmosphere of prosperity about the place, and an odd mixture of city and of country life. On each side, between the broad roadway and the markedly clean footways, ran a little stream of water.

The repose was broken by a patrol wagon containing armed men. It dashed up the street, turned to the right, and was lost to my view. The bystanders roused themselves; some few followed, as they would have followed a fire-engine, but the greater number quietly went their way.

Baby—Beer—Bullets!—Baby Lost Sight of in Beer and Blood.—Here, then, was the solution of the mystery of the patrol wagon. Was there anything comic about it? Shortly, the story was this. The Polish quarter of the town had been the scene of a brutal drunken riot. A woman named Mrs Mary Klunder invited her friends to celebrate the christening of her eight months' old baby. With her husband she lived in one of a row of single-story frame tenement houses in the centre of a district inhabited by foreigners employed chiefly in the iron-works of the town. Before the time for christening arrived, many of the men were intoxicated. A quarrel began. Somebody drew a revolver and fired two shots. The whole company then joined in a free fight, which was put an end to by a police patrol armed with Winchester rifles, but not before one man had been killed and two others seriously wounded. Between twenty and thirty persons were arrested and placed in jail.

According to the leading daily of Denver, at the beginning of the row, officer Hart 'sailed in, but they piled upon him, and at the first shower of bricks he sailed out.' That which officer Hart failed to accomplish was performed by the patrol wagon, containing a lieutenant and about twenty Winchester rifles, with sufficient ammunition to use if necessary. The patrol party took about twenty prisoners, who, bespattered with blood, with their clothes torn, their faces and hands scratched, and their hair dishevelled, looked more like scarecrows eloped from a cornfield than men. To complete the picture, there was a rough sketch of the room (lit up by an illuminated card of *Home, Sweet Home*), in which the holes in the walls looked like so many black beetles, in which the chairs were all 'split into toothpicks,' and in which a most saintly looking person—intended, I believe, to represent the murdered man—was depicted as though saying his prayers to the last of a row of beer barrels. The whole thing might have been got up by the reporter who put a funeral under the heading 'Amusements' 'cause he got it up kind o' funny.

I went to see the prisoners in jail, and was present at their trial. The jailer was a negro. I complimented him with half a dollar and some tobacco; and with a bow and a grin he became my conductor. The prisoners were of the lowest type of humanity conceivable. Not one of them spoke a word of English. The Denverites complained, doubtless with justice, that their 'low-browed, brutal faces bespoke them to be of the lowest type of the foreigners who were shipped to that country to get them away from their native lands.' They were lodged in a structure called the 'bull-pen.' The jail consisted of a large chamber on the ground-floor of a handsome building which in England would be called a town-hall. The criminal court was on the first floor, and the rest of the building was set apart for public offices. There was nothing dungeon-like about the jail: it was light, and its furniture looked slight even

to frailty. The cells extended round the chamber. An iron partition divided one cell from another, and a gate of iron bars formed the front. In this case stone walls *did* a prison make, and iron bars a cage. No one had escaped, my conductor told me, but one man had been fetched out and lynched. Round the 'bull-pen,' which was a huge detached square cage in the centre, was a footway some six feet in breadth. The occupants of this den were amusing themselves in various ways. One was playing the part of a barber; thick and fast fell his comrade's locks as he ploughed away with a rusty pair of scissors which disdained to click. Some were taking their ease at full length on the straw; others were talking excitedly. They jabbered and gesticulated at me. My conductor interpreted this into a request for tobacco for chewing. At that time they were good-humoured and quiet. When first brought in they had been obstreperous; but a few buckets of water were thrown over them, and 'Lor' golly! them was quiet, you bet.'

They were brought up for trial on the Tuesday. No interpreter could be found, and for a time it looked as if nothing could be done. The prisoners were formed in a line which reached from one wall to the other. With their caps in their hands, they looked dazedly at the judge. The baby was in evidence, and, like Dickens's poor little consumptive, 'seemed to wonder what it was all about.' At length an interpreter was secured. The attempt to find out their names led to great confusion. The interpreter seemed almost as much at sea as the prisoners. The counsel for the prosecution was obliged to remind him that one of the prisoners had had four names, and it was ultimately decided to christen him 'Philip Flatlip.' Another prisoner was so loquacious that the interpreter was commanded to 'stop his talk.' By the time their names were ascertained, the judge was exhausted, and adjourned the inquiry for a week.

That evening I visited the theatre. Mrs Langtry played Lady Clancarty before an immense audience. The gentlemen of the gallery, who know a good thing when they see it, warmly applauded her sensational fall. In truth, it is the most startling fall ever seen upon the stage. And when, in the last act, she declared, clinging wildly to Mr Charles Coghlan, that 'her country was in her husband's arms,' there was a wild hurroo of delight, and a voice yelled, 'Bravo, miss!' Mr Coghlan was still more successful in 'holding the mirror up to nature,' and the Denver critic who insisted that the *feu sacré* did not burn within Mrs Langtry, admitted that Coghlan had genius—and genius is not lavishly dispensed by nature.

I left for San Francisco on the following morning. For me, the B. B. B. tragedy was over. I learned subsequently that one of the actors in it suffered the death penalty.

Yes, the romantic cowboy is gone. Gentle dry-goods men and dainty bank clerks march about under the cowboy's attractive headgear; but no one fears their fierceness; for, instead of a black muzzle under the hat, a tobacco-stained chin, their chins are 'new-reaped, and show like stubble-lands at harvest-home.' Yes, the broad-shouldered, black-moustached, generous highwayman, who killed the father and fell in love with the daughter, who preached better than the parson

and set bones better than the doctor, whose face none had ever seen, and at whose name travellers trembled—where is he? He is as much a thing of the past as Julius Cæsar. Civilisation is fatal to the growth of such beautiful children of nature, and extended knowledge renders belief in their existence impossible. They have gone into the limbo of the past; and the solitary horseman who is seen wending his way up the gulch is probably as peaceable as you or I.

FINDING WATER BY THE DIVINING ROD.

WITH reference to the paper on 'Modern Divination' which appeared in this *Journal* (February 18, 1888), we have received the following communications:

You may perhaps be surprised to hear that there are numbers of intelligent readers of your *Journal* that believe implicitly in the 'dowsing rod' for finding water, and that those readers include noblemen, gentlemen, parsons, bishops, officers of the army, engineers, magistrates, and others. The chief 'water-wizards' at present are John Mullens and Lawrence; and the first can, I know, furnish a volume of testimonials to his powers from parties such as I have named. John Mullens has operated in very many places in England, and as far north as Dundee and other places in Scotland. He belongs to the same county as Lawrence, is a working-mason on a gentleman's estate, and an unpretending honest man, who, if desired, sinks and builds his own wells, and charges nothing if the water is not found. He prefers to be employed after long droughts, as water found then, he reasonably concludes, will generally be from a permanent source. In wet seasons, he says 'there is water everywhere,' and the good springs are consequently worse to find. He has been employed here several times to find water, after much expense had been incurred with engineers and others, and has always been successful, although at first most of us doubted his powers. I have tested him in every possible way, and he has never failed. No one now hereabouts doubts his powers. The vicar was perhaps the most incredulous until he had tested the man thoroughly. What convinced him most being that when Mullens was asked to find water in his flower-garden, he set out accurately the running sewer from his house for a long distance—not a trace of which was discernible above ground, and which no one knew but the vicar. He did other work of the same kind at the mansion here, finding an old disused sewer, the existence of which was suspected, but, although searched for, could not be found.

He has been employed, I believe, on similar duties by the London authorities. He discovered our water-mains and branches here wherever he crossed them in the course of his journeys, greatly to the surprise of an engineer from Sheffield who constructed our reservoirs, and who followed John 'afar off' for several days. The same engineer afterwards confessed to the writer that he was puzzled; but he admitted the man's powers. Mullens used the hazel and thorn 'twig' only. No member of his family has the 'gift,' hence everything has to be done by himself. He asks

no assistance save a 'twig,' cut close by, and a lad to follow behind and put a peg in where he makes a mark with his heel. He charges his fare and a modest fee, and is willing to submit to any reasonable test. He does not profess to explain his power, knows little or nothing about science, and is rather illiterate. Not a few large breweries and manufactories owe their water-supply to him. He does not profess to find *still* water: it must be *running*. In the case of the water-mains here, the 'twig' turned up above the pipe in fields, woods, and highways where no sign of the ground having been disturbed appeared, the pipes having been long down, and no one knowing anything about their whereabouts but the waterman, and he depends on the map when he seeks them.

I do not attribute the man's gift to anything supernatural, but to natural causes not yet understood. That water can be found by the man in the way described, I have no doubt whatever; and I am equally sure he will confound any sceptic who tries him. Mullens says a 'twig' from a variety of trees will do, but the hawthorn and hazel are the most active; and the way the point whirls round in a moment above water is marvellous. The 'twig' is Y-shaped; and the man, holding a leg firmly in each hand and the point downwards, steps slowly forward, stooping. On one occasion I held one end of the 'twig,' where it projected through his hand, the vicar holding the other end, both firmly, Mullens simply holding it, but without the power to move it up or down, yet it whirled round as before, except where we held it, and consequently *twisted* the bark into wrinkles by the force it exercised.

Another correspondent writes: My attention having been drawn to your article upon the use of the divining rod in finding water, I beg to give you my experience upon the matter. About four years ago I was invited by a land-agent in a neighbouring parish to meet him and a man whom he had sent for from the neighbourhood of Bristol, who, he stated, could find water with a divining rod. At first, I decided I would not go on such a wild-goose chase as I thought it would turn out; but afterwards I changed my mind and went to meet them. The rod consisted of a small branch of white-thorn about eighteen inches long in the shape of the letter Y. When the man—who was a mason—tried to find water, he walked slowly over the ground claspings the rod firmly with both hands near to the forked branches; and when the branches moved upwards, he said there was a spring of water below, and gave his opinion as to the depth of it from the surface. I was sceptical about the rod, and thought he moved it by some sleight-of-hand; but in the course of the day I was convinced it was not so. We afterwards came to a small stream of water by the side of a road caused by a heavy shower of rain. I asked the man to test it. I took hold of the rod as well as himself, in order to prevent the stick from twisting about; but in crossing the water I could not stop it doing so. I then held it with a pair of pincers, which had the desired effect as regarded that portion of the rod, but not so with the forked branches; in twisting upwards, each branch was split in the middle of them.

I engaged the mason to look over an estate of which I had the management, and some por-

tion of which was short of water. I took him to some deep wells of which I knew the depth. He was able to tell me the depth within a few feet. We next proceeded to a farmyard where there was a short supply of water, and where I wished to sink a well. He fixed upon a place, and said there was water about sixty feet from the surface. This proved to be correct. Afterwards, I had a well sunk, and found a tolerable supply of water.

He was taken to two other parts of the estate where I was anxious to get a supply of water; but he could not find any there. I afterwards tested him with places where I knew there was water, first at a small spinney, when he immediately said: 'There is a large supply of water here and bubbling near the surface.' This was the case. A spring about fifty yards off, and which he could not see, as the trees intercepted his view, supplied this village with a constant supply of water. Afterwards we came to a field where water was conveyed by a drainage-pipe from a fishpond to the kitchen gardens. When the man crossed the field where the drainpipe was laid, the rod immediately twisted about. Lastly, he was taken to another pipe which was laid under the highway to convey water from a pump in the woodyard to the stables. When he crossed it, the rod twisted up.

INSECT TORMENTS OF BRAZIL.

INSECTS in all countries often possess an extensive power of annoyance greatly in contrast with their diminutive size. They appear to combine the maximum of effect with the minimum of effort in a very scientific fashion. Brazil is specially favoured with parasitic torments; and even if those who are to the manner born become case-hardened, the traveller from climes where insect-life is less offensive in its attacks, can never be wholly reconciled to his lot. Even the most generous of Christians harbours a revengeful spirit against his bloodthirsty but minute assailants, which are at once puny and powerful.

Take the bush-tick, for example. Of this diminutive monster there are three species, of which the largest is about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. We are told that this insect was known to the ancients; but it is very unlikely that they enjoyed its acquaintance. There are three varieties: *Ixodes ricinus*, *Ixodes plumbeus*, and *Ixodes reticulatus*. The Latin name was derived from its supposed resemblance to the ripe bean of the *Palma Christi*. The Brazilian name is *carrapato*; and when examined under a magnifying-glass, it is seen to be furnished with a weapon of offence in the form of a trident of teeth, which are serrated inwards. It has also three pair of legs, and each leg is provided with strong hooked claws. Enormous quantities of the eggs are laid upon the ground; and the young ones as they creep out climb up the plants and catch at any passing animal which brushes past, and fatten on it. When Mr H. W. Bates was in the highlands of Brazil, he had to devote an hour at the end of his daily rambles to picking off the carrapatos that clung to him by their incisive fangs. The infliction is so dreadful, that horses and cattle sometimes die from the exhaustion caused by the bites of these creatures, which settle in swarms.

The traveller soon has the appearance of a person suffering from shingles. Sometimes the attacks bring on ricinian fever, just as in Russia, people may suffer from pulchious fever. The rainy season kills many of the carrapatos, and they also fall a prey to the birds; and the cieriema, in particular, is never shot by the natives, because they know the value of its services in thinning the ranks of the multitudinous blood-sucking *Ixodes*.

Another insect torment of Brazil is the Jigger, or *Pulex irritans*, *Pulex subintrans*, *Pulex minimus*, *Pulex penetrans*. These interesting creatures make their home chiefly in the human foot, and hence are known to the Brazilians as *bichos do pé* (foot-beasts). Mr H. C. Dent had five of these unwelcome guests from January to June, and they took up their abode in the following localities: the first on the right big toe, second on the right heel, third on the left heel, and two under the sole of the left foot. He had to cut them out.

Still worse are the *verne*, which attack indifferently cattle and human beings. With animals, they appear to raise a large hard lump, so that they probably reside in the skin after the fashion of the ox-warble in this country. Sir Richard Burton says that stories are current of negroes losing their lives from the *berno*. The grub is deposited in the nose and other parts of the body, and if squeezed to death, instead of extracted, it festers, and produces serious consequences. Children of three months' old may suffer from a visitation of the *berno*. Some of the natives, in the case of adults, apply a burning stick to the wound, in order to destroy the worm. Mercurial ointment is also used. Mr Dent's dog was one mass of sores from the *bernos* and *bichos do pé*, and it was pitiable to see him, when running about, turn round almost every minute and, with a pitiful whine, bite his wounds until they were raw. Such are some of the pleasures of the insect world of Brazil.

UNSUNG HEROES.

So long as the world and the heart are young,
Shall deeds of daring and valour be sung;

And the hand of the poet shall throw the rhyme
At the feet of the hero of battle-time.

But nobler deeds are done every day
In the world close by, than in fight or fray.

There are heroes whose prowess never sees light,
Far greater than ever was ancient knight.

In many a heart lies a secret tale
That would make the Homeric legends pale;

And oft is a deed of valour untold
Which is meet to be written in letters of gold!

J. S. FLETCHER.

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GREAT WRITERS AND THEIR ART.

DOGBERRY declared that 'to write and read comes by nature;' and if we but interpret him rightly, he was perfectly justified in his opinion. It will be remembered, however, that Pope thought somewhat differently. In one of his most celebrated couplets he has it that

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.

At first sight, it might seem that the two judgments can hardly consist with each other. But their self-contradiction is really only on the surface. Dogberry's remark very well expresses the fact that without an overpowering natural instinct to expression, no one can become a distinguished writer. On the other hand, the saying of Pope emphasises the truth, which all literary history bears out, that mastery of language comes only of the most strenuous endeavour. It has often been remarked that writers of the very highest order are far more rare than musicians or painters of the same high rank in their respective arts. During the last two thousand years the world has seen only some half-dozen poets of the first rank; whereas, even during the last two hundred, the number of first-rate musical composers is considerably larger than this. The usual explanation given of the fact seems entirely satisfactory. What forms the materials of the writer is clear and definite thought ranging over the whole field of human life, with language adequate to it; and a moment's consideration shows that to master such materials implies a vastly greater effort than is demanded of the painter or the musical composer.

It is interesting to consider the various methods by which great writers have trained themselves to perfection in their art. The other day a contemporary took the world into his confidence, and gave us a curious history of the apprenticeship he served as a man of letters. The account of Mr Louis Stevenson is doubly interesting, from the fact that it is specially in style, as distinct from matter, that he has won the praise of critics. The

wonderful range of his vocabulary and his singular felicity in the choice of words arrested attention at the very outset of his literary career. In his case, therefore, the method he followed in attaining this perfection has a special interest. From boyhood, he tells us, it was his habit to carry about with him a note-book and pencil, and on every possible occasion to set himself to write a description of the objects around him. Such exclusive attention to mere expression—for the subject, he tells us, was entirely indifferent to him—must, it is evident, bring with it its own drawbacks. The critics, as might have been expected, have not been slow to find in the work of Mr Stevenson distinct evidence of this peculiar self-discipline. They have all along seen, they assert, that his capital defect as a writer is that his expression much outruns his thinking; and they point to his early training as the evident cause of the disproportion.

It is curious, however, that a somewhat similar discipline was pursued by the most exquisite of American prose-writers, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne, as is felt even by those who find little interest in his stories, is unapproachable in the art of saying the subtlest things in the simplest and most graceful way. His art in this respect is so consummate that it can be best described in Dogberry's words, as coming by nature. Yet so far is this from being the case, that all through life, Hawthorne had that habit which Mr Stevenson practised in his youth. Whenever circumstances would permit, he made a point of elaborately noting all the experiences of each day. At home, for example, he set himself to describe the minute changes of nature in his daily walks. His American note-books are filled with trivial details, which can have interested him only as affording scope for practice in writing.

The method of acquiring a good style practised last century—by Adam Smith, amongst others—was assiduous translation from great foreign writers. From this practice it was supposed that two good results must follow. In translating a sentence, we have a definite thought before us, for

which we must find an exact equivalent in our own speech. Hence, it was supposed that the assiduous practice of translation must necessarily teach that prime quality in all good writing—precision. Again, in translating a great writer, we are carried beyond our own range of thought and feeling, from which it should follow that the range of our vocabulary should necessarily be widened. This method has one advantage over the other—it is not so apt to lead to the use of words as mere counters, but keeps constantly before us the organic connection which should hold between thought and language. Yet few would nowadays recommend this practice to one really desirous of acquiring the habit of clear and simple expression. The translator in time inevitably acquires something of the tones and idioms of the language from which he translates. Gibbon is an example of a writer who lost something of the simplicity of his native idiom by his constant use of French. It would seem, indeed, that an equal acquaintance with any two languages precludes the perfectly idiomatic use of either.

Readers of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography will remember how diligently he strove to acquire a good English style. The method he chiefly practised was one which many great writers have followed. His practice was to read over a passage from some approved author, and then in his own words strive to give the same sense. By a comparison of his own composition with the original, he was taught by that most effective of all forms of instruction—the contrast between a good and a bad model. It cannot be said that Franklin with all his industry ever attained to what is called distinction of style; he writes plainly and simply and in entire keeping with his subject, but the dryness of his manner is perhaps in some measure due to the excessive practice of this mechanical method in his youth. It is easy to see, indeed, that all these methods carried to excess must result in the loss of that spontaneity and individuality which should mark every man's writing not less than his speech and demeanour. When thought and experience do not keep pace with power of expression, we may have brilliancy indeed, but never that highest grace or power which belongs only to language coming straight from the heart.

There is still another discipline, to the practice of which many distinguished prose-writers have attributed much of their skill in the use of language. This is the practice of verse-making in youth. Undoubtedly, of all modes of literary training this is the one most likely to lead to the best results. In the first place, these writers practised it not in the spirit of mere mechanical exercise, but in the inspiring delusion that poetry was their natural mode of expression. The exercise practised in this spirit can never become a mere forcing process. Thought, emotion, and language have in this case free, natural play; and the whole man grows as nature meant. The delusion soon passes; but in the meantime the mind has passed through a training which for the purposes of literature is invaluable. The most practised poets bear testimony to the intense mental concentration required to produce even fairly good verse. Byron, who had greater facility than most of his brethren, declared that it was necessary to write every day for years even to

rhyme well. Besides the exigences of rhyme and metre, which make their own difficulties, the tests in the choice and rejection of words are infinitely finer in verse than in prose. In the composition of a single couplet, the number of words called up and rejected is truly surprising, as any one who tries his hand will find. A curious notion once prevailed that it was impossible in the nature of things to be at once a great poet and a great prose-writer. In view of the history of literature, it is strange how this idea should have arisen. For magnificence of prose style no English writer has surpassed Milton. Edmund Burke took Dryden as his model in the qualities of strength and precision. For grace and simplicity, the poets Gray, Cowper, and Goldsmith hold the first place in our literature. Sainte-Beuve, the greatest of French critics, is a conspicuous example of the value of such a discipline. In his youth he mistook the true bent of his genius, and cultivated poetry. He afterwards discovered his mistake; but he was fully aware that he could not have chosen a better mode of preparing himself for the work he afterwards did.

The moral of all this is that Dogberry's remark, true enough so far as it goes, must undoubtedly be supplemented by the maxim of Pope. The stanza of the poet, the paragraph of the prose-writer, where every word seems to find its place as by some inevitable law of nature, is in reality the consummate result of an apprenticeship the most stringent and exacting in the world. 'At length,' exclaims Goethe—'at length, after forty years, I have learned to write German.' It surprises us to learn how hard even the most original and spontaneous of poets have toiled at their art. Burns is supposed to have owed less to premeditation than almost any other poet, yet we know that he was acquainted with all the great English poets, and that he read them in such a way that no academic training could have more successfully set all his faculties at work. Heine has the reputation of being the most spontaneous of lyrical poets; yet it was reported but the other day that one of his songs, which had struck every one as being as unforced as a bird's warble, was written and rewritten some half-dozen times, the poet's blurred manuscript revealing the mental struggle that had gone to its production. It may be an inadequate definition of genius to say that it is an 'infinite capacity of taking pains.' The words at all events express the inevitable conditions under which it can alone manifest itself.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXXV.—RETRIBUTION.

OH the horror and drudgery of those next few weeks, while Hugh, in a fever of shame and disgust, was anxiously and wearily making difficult arrangements, financial or otherwise, for that hopeless flitting to the sunny South, that loomed ahead so full of gloom and wretchedness for himself and Winifred! There was nothing for it left now but to face the unspeakable, to endure the unendurable. He must go through with it all, let it cost what it might. For at least in the end he had one comfort. At San Remo, Winifred would find out she was mistaken; there was no Elsie at all, there or elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Winifred grew rapidly worse, so ill, that even Hugh began to perceive it, and despaired of being able to carry her in safety to San Remo. The shock at the Relfs' had told seriously upon her weak and shattered constitution; the constant friction of her relations with Hugh continued to tell upon it every day that passed over her. The motherless girl and childless mother brooded in secret over her great grief; she had no one, absolutely no one on earth who could sympathise with her in her terrible trouble. She longed to fling herself upon Elsie's bosom—the dear old Elsie that had once been, the Elsie that perhaps could still understand her—and to cry aloud to her for pity, for sympathy. When she got to San Remo, she sometimes thought, she would tell all—every word—to Elsie; and Elsie at least must be very much changed if in spite of all she could not feel for her.

Proud as she was, she would throw herself on Elsie's mercy. Elsie had wronged her, and she would tell all to Elsie. But not to Hugh. Hugh was hard and cold and unyielding as steel. It would not be for long. She would soon be released. And then Hugh— She shrank from thinking it.

At last the day came for their journey South. They were going alone, without even a maid; glad to have paid the servants their arrears and escape alive from the clutches of the butchers and bakers. November fogs shrouded the world. Hugh had completed those vile transactions of his with the attorneys and the money-lenders, and felt faintly cheered by the actual metallic chink of gold for the journey rattling and jingling in his trousers' pocket. But Winifred sat very weak and ill in the far corner of the first-class carriage that bore them away from Charing Cross Station. They had come up the day before from Almundham to town, and spent the night luxuriously in the rooms of the *Métropole*. You must make a dying woman comfortable. And Hugh had dropped round with defiant pride into the Cheyne Row Club, assuming in vain the old jaunty languid poetical air—'of the days before he had degenerated into land-owning,' Hatherley said afterwards—just to let recalcitrant Bohemia see for itself it hadn't entirely crushed him by its jingling jibes and its scathing critiques of *A Life's Philosophy*. But the protest fell flat; it was indeed a feeble one: heedless Bohemia, engrossed after its wont with its last new favourite, the rising author of *Lays of the African Lakeland*, held out to Hugh Massinger of White-strand Hall its flabbiest right hand of lukewarm welcome. And this was the Bohemia that once had grasped his landless fingers with fraternal fervour of sympathetic devotion! The chilliness of his reception in the scene of his ancient popularity stung the Bard to the quick. No more for him the tabour, the cymbals, and the oaten pipe; no more the blushful Cheyne Row Hippocrene. He felt himself *démodé*. The rapid stream of London society and London thought had swept eddying past and left him stranded. Oh for some enchanted carpet of the Arabian Nights, to transport him back with a bound from his present self to those good old days of Thirds and Elsie!

But enchanted carpets are now unhappily out of date, and Channel steamers have quite superseded the magical shallops of good Haroun-al-

Raschid. In plain prose, the Straits were rough, and Winifred suffered severely from the tossing. At Calais, they took the through train for Marseilles, having secured a *coupé-lit* at Charing Cross beforehand.

That was a terrible night, that night spent in the *coupé-lit* with Winifred: the most terrible Hugh had ever endured since the memorable evening when Elsie drowned herself.

They had passed round Paris at gray dusk, in their comfortable through-carriage, by the *Chemin de Fer de Ceinture* to the Gare de Lyon, and were whirling along on their way to Fontainebleau through the shades of evening, when Winifred first broke the ominous silence she had preserved ever since they stopped at St-Denis. 'It won't be for long now,' she said dryly, 'and it will be so convenient for you to be at San Remo.'

Hugh's heart sank once more within him. It was quite clear that Winifred thought Elsie was there. He wished to heaven she was, and that he was no murderer. Oh the weight that would have been lifted off his weary soul if only he could think it so! The three years' misery that would rise like a mist from his uncertain path, if only he did not know to a certainty that Elsie lay buried at Orfordness in the shipwrecked sailors' graveyard by the Low Lighthouse. He looked across at Winifred as she sat in her place. She was pale and frail; her wasted cheeks showed white and hollow. As she leaned back there, with a cold light gleaming hard and chilly from her sunken blue eyes—those light blue eyes that he had never loved—those cruel blue eyes that he had learned at last to avoid with an instinctive shrinking, as they gazed through and through him with their flabby persistence—he said to himself with a sigh of relief: 'She can't last long. Better tell her all, and let her know the truth. It could do no harm. She might die the happier. Dare I risk it, I wonder? Or is it too dangerous?'

'Well?' Winifred asked in an icy tone, interpreting aright the little click in his throat and the doubtful gleam in his shifty eyes as implying some hesitating desire to speak to her. 'What lie are you going to tell me next? Speak it out boldly; don't be afraid. It's no novelty. You know I'm not easily disconcerted.'

He looked back at her nervously with bent brows. That fragile small creature! He positively feared her. Dare he tell her the truth? And would she believe it? Those blue eyes were so coldly glassy. Yet, with a sudden impulse, he resolved to be frank; he resolved to unburden his guilty soul of all its weight of care to Winifred.

'No lie, Winifred, but the solemn truth,' he blurted out slowly, in a voice that of itself might have well produced complete conviction—on any one less incredulous than the wife he had cajoled and deceived so often. 'You think Elsie's at San Remo, I know.—You're wrong there; you're quite mistaken.—She's not in San Remo, nor in Australia either. That was a lie.—Elsie's dead—dead three years ago—before we were married.—Dead and buried at Orfordness. And I've seen her grave, and cried over it like a child, too.'

He spoke with solemn intensity of earnestness; but he spoke in vain. Winifred thought, herself, till that very moment, she had long since reached

the lowest possible depth of contempt and scorn for the husband on whom she had thrown herself away; but as he met her then with that incredible falsehood—as she must needs think it—on his lying lips, with so grave a face and so profound an air of frank confession, her lofty disdain rose at once to a yet sublimer height of disgust and loathing of which till that night she could never even have conceived herself capable. ‘You hateful Thing!’ she cried, rising from her seat to the centre of the carriage, and looking down upon him physically from her point of vantage as he cowered and slunk like a cur in his corner. ‘Don’t dare to address me again, I say, with lies like that. If you can’t find one word of truth to tell me, have the goodness at least, since I don’t desire your further conversation, to leave me the repose of your polite silence.’

‘But, Winifred,’ Hugh cried, clasping his hands together in impotent despair, ‘this is the truth, the very, very truth, the whole truth, that I’m now telling you. I’ve hidden it from you so long by deceit and treachery. I acknowledge all that: I admit I deceived you. But I want to tell you the whole truth now; and you won’t listen to me! O heaven, Winifred, you won’t listen to me!’

On any one else, his agonised voice and pleading face would have produced their just and due effect; but on Winifred—impossible.

‘Go on,’ she murmured, relapsing into her corner. ‘Continue your monologue. It’s supreme in its way—no actor could beat it. But be so good as to consider my part in the piece left out altogether. I shall answer you no more. I should be sorry to interrupt so finished an artist!’

Her scathing contempt wrought up in Hugh a perfect fury of helpless indignation. That he should wish to confess, to humble himself before her, to make reparation! and that Winifred should spurn his best attempt, should refuse so much as to listen to his avowal! It was too ignominious. ‘For heaven’s sake,’ he cried, with his hands clasped hard, ‘at least let me speak. Let me have my say out. You’re all wrong. You’re wronging me utterly. I’ve behaved most wickedly, most cruelly, I know: I confess it all. I abase myself at your feet. If you want me to be abject, I’ll grovel before you! I admit my crime, my sin, my transgression.—I won’t pretend to justify myself at all.—I’ve lied to you, forged to you, deceived you, misled you!’ (At each clause and phrase of passionate self-condemnation, Winifred nodded a separate sardonic acquiescence.) ‘But you’re wrong about this. You mistake me wholly.—I swear to you, my child, Elsie’s not alive. You’re jealous of a woman who’s been dead for years. For my sin and shame I say it, she’s dead long ago!’

He might as well have tried to convince the door-handle. Winifred’s loathing found no overt vent in angry words; she repressed her speech, her very breath almost, with a spasmodic effort. But she stretched out both her hands, the palms turned outward, with a gesture of horror, contempt, and repulsion; and she averted her face with a little cry of supreme disgust, checked deep down in her rising throat, as one averts one’s face instinctively from a loathsome sore or a venomous reptile. Such hideous duplicity to

a dying woman was more than she could brook without some outer expression of her outraged sense of social decency.

But Hugh could no longer restrain himself now; he had begun his tale, and he must run right through with it. The fever of the confessional had seized upon his soul; remorse and despair were goading him on. He must have relief for his pent-up feelings. Three years of silence were more than enough. Winifred’s very incredulity compelled him to continue. He must tell her all—all, utterly. He must make her understand to the uttermost jot, willy, nilly, that he was not deceiving her!

With eager lips, he began his story from the very beginning, recapitulating point by point his interview with Elsie in the Hall grounds, her rushing away from him to the roots of the poplar, her mad leap into the swirling black water, his attempt to rescue her, his unconsciousness, and his failure. He told it all with dramatic completeness. Winifred saw and heard every scene and tone and emotion as he reproduced it. Then he went on to tell her how he came to himself again on the bank of the dike, and how in cold and darkness he formed his Plan, that fatal, horrible, successful Plan, which he had ever since been engaged in carrying out and in detesting. He described how he returned to the inn, unobserved and untracked; how he forged the first compromising letter from Elsie; and how, once embarked upon that career of deceit, there was no drawing back for him in crime after crime till the present moment. He despised himself for it; but still he told it. Next came the episode of Elsie’s bedroom: the theft of the ring and the other belongings; the hasty flight, the fall from the creeper; and his subsequent horror of the physical surroundings connected with that hateful night adventure. In his agony of self-accusation he spared her no circumstance, no petty detail: bit by bit he retold the whole story in all its hideous inhuman ghastliness—the walk to Orfordness, the finding of the watch, the furtive visit to Elsie’s grave, his horror of Winifred’s proposed picnic to that very spot a year later. He ran, unabashed, in an ecstasy of humiliation, through the entire tale of his forgeries and his deceptions: the sending of the ring; the audacious fiction of Elsie’s departure to a new home in Australia; the long sequence of occasional letters; the living lie he had daily and hourly acted before her. And all the while, as he truly said, with slow tears rolling one by one down his dark cheeks, he knew himself a murderer: he felt himself a murderer; and all the while, poor Elsie was lying, dishonoured and unknown, a nameless corpse, in her pauper grave upon that stormy sand-spit.

Oh the joy and relief of that tardy confession! the gush and flow of those pent-up feelings! For three long years and more, he had locked it all up in his inmost soul, chafing and seething with the awful secret; and now at last he had let it all out, in one burst of confidence, to the uttermost item.

As for Winifred, she heard him out in solemn silence to the bitter end, with ever-growing contempt and shame and hatred. She could not lift her eyes to his face, so much his very

earnestness horrified and appalled her. The man's aptitude for lying struck her positively dumb. The hideous ingenuity with which he accounted for everything—the diabolically clever way in which he had woven in, one after the other, the ring, the watch, the letters, the picnic, the lonely tramp to Orfordness—smote her to the heart with a horrible loathing for the vile wretch she had consented to marry. That she had endured so long such a miserable creature's bought caresses filled her inmost soul with a sickening sense of disgust and horror. She cowered and crouched closer and closer in her remote corner: she felt that his presence there actually polluted the carriage she occupied; she longed for Marseilles, for San Remo, for release, that she might get at least farther and farther away from him. She could almost have opened the door in her access of horror and jumped from the train while still in motion, so intense was her burning and goading desire to escape for ever from his poisonous neighbourhood.

At last, as Hugh with flushed face and eager eyes calmed down a little from his paroxysm of self-abasement and self-revelation, Winifred raised her eyes once more from the ground and met her husband's—ah, heaven!—that she should have to call that thing her husband! His acting chilled her; his pretended tears turned her cold with scorn. 'Is that all?' she asked in an icy voice. 'Is your romance finished?'

'That's all!' Hugh cried, burying his face in his hands and bending down his body to the level of his knees in utter and abject self-humiliation. 'Winifred! Winifred! it's no romance. Won't you, even now, even now believe me?'

'It's clever—clever—extremely clever!' Winifred answered in a tone of unnatural calmness. 'I don't deny it shows great talent. If you'd turned your attention seriously to novel-writing, which is your proper *métier*, instead of to the law, for which you've too exuberant an imagination, you'd have succeeded ten thousand times better there than you could ever do at what you're pleased to consider your divine poetry. Your story, I allow, hangs together in every part with remarkable skill. It's a pity I should happen to know it all from beginning to end for a tissue of falsehoods.—For all your acting, you know you're lying to me even now, this minute. You know that Elsie Challoner, whom you pretend to be dead, is awaiting your own arrival to-night by arrangement at San Remo.'

Hugh flung himself back in the final extremity of utter despair on the padded cushions. He had played his last card with Winifred, and lost. His very remorse availed him nothing. His very confession was held to increase his sin. What could he do? Whither turn? He knew no answer. He rocked himself up and down on his seat in hopeless misery. The worst had come. He had blurted out all. And Winifred, Winifred would not believe him.

'I wish it was true!' he cried; 'I wish it was true, Winnie! I wish she was there. But it isn't; it isn't! She's dead! I killed her! and her blood has weighed upon my head ever since! I pay for it now! I killed her! I killed her!'

'Listen!'

Winifred had risen to her full height in the coupé once more, and was standing, gaunt and haggard and deadly wan like a shrunken little tragedy queen above him. Her pale white face showed paler and whiter and more death-like still by the feeble light of the struggling oil-lamp; and her bloodless lips trembled and quivered visibly with inner passion as she tried to repress her overpowering indignation with one masterful effort. 'Listen!' she said, with fierce intensity. 'What you say is false. I know you're lying to me. Warren Relf told me himself the other day in London that Elsie Challoner was still alive, and living, where you know she lives, over there at San Remo.'

Warren Relf! That serpent! That reptile! That eavesdropper! Then *this* was the creature's mean revenge! He had lied that despicable lie to Winifred! Hugh hated him in his soul more fiercely than ever. He was baffled once more; and always by that same malignant intriguer!

'Where did you see Relf?' he burst out angrily. His indignation, flaring up to white-heat afresh at this latest machination of his ancient enemy, gave new strength to his words and new point to his hatred. 'I thought I told you long since at Whitestrand to hold no further communication with that wretched being!'

But Winifred by this time, worn out with excitement, had fallen back speechless and helpless on the cushions. Her feeble strength was fairly exhausted. The fatigue of the preparations, the stormy passage, the long spell of travelling, the night journey, and added to it all, this terrible interview with the man she had once loved, but now despised and hated, had proved too much in the end for her weakened constitution. A fit of wild incoherence had overtaken her; she babbled idly on her seat in broken sentences. Her muttered words were full of 'mother' and 'home' and 'Elsie.' Hugh felt her pulse. He knew it was delirium. His one thought now was to reach San Remo as quickly as possible. If only she could live to know Warren Relf had told her a lie, and that Elsie was dead—dead—dead and buried!

Perhaps even this story about Warren Relf and what he had told her was itself but a product of the fever and delirium! But more probably not. The man who could open other people's letters, the man who could plot and plan and intrigue in secret to set another man's wife against her own husband, was capable of telling any lie that came uppermost to hurt his enemy and to serve his purpose. He knew that lie would distress and torture Winifred, and he had struck at Hugh, like a coward that he was, through a weak, hysterical, dying woman! He had played on the mean chord of feminine jealousy. Hugh hated him as he had never hated him before. He should pay for this soundly—the cur, the scoundrel!

CHAPTER XXXVI.—THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIELD.

That self-same night, another English passenger of our acquaintance was speeding in hot haste due southward to San Remo, not indeed by the Calais and Marseilles express, but by the rival route via Boulogne, the Mont Cenis, Turin, and Savona. Warren Relf had chosen the alternative road by

deliberate design, lest Hugh Massinger and he should happen to clash by the way, and a needless and unseemly scene should perhaps take place before Winifred's very eyes at some intermediate station.

It was by the merest accident in the world, indeed, that Warren had heard, in the nick of opportunity, of the Massingers' projected visit to San Remo.

In the cosy smoking-room at the Cheyne Row Club, he had found Hatherley already installed in a big armchair, discussing coffee and the last new number of the *Nineteenth Century*.

'Hullo, Relf! The remains of the Bard were in here just now,' Hatherley exclaimed as he entered. 'You've barely missed him. If you'd dropped in only ten minutes earlier, you might have inspected the interesting relics. But he's gone back to his hotel by this time, I fancy. The atmosphere of Cheyne Row seems somewhat too redolent of vulgar Cavendish for his refined taste. He smokes nothing nowadays himself but the best regalias!'

'What, Massinger?' Relf cried in some slight surprise. 'How was he, Hatherley, and what was he doing in town at this time of year? All good Squires ought surely to be down in the country now at their hereditary work of supplying the market with a due proportion of hares and partridges.'

'Oh, he's a poor wreck,' Hatherley answered lightly. 'You've hit it off exactly—sunk to the level of the landed aristocracy. He exhales an aroma of vested interests. Real estate's his Moloch at present, and he bows the knee to solidified sea-mud in the temple of Rimmion. He has no views on anything in particular, I believe, but riparian proprietorship: complains still of the German Ocean for disregarding the sacred rights of property; and holds that the sole business of an enlightened British legislature is to keep the sand from blowing in at his own inviolable dining-room windows. Poor company, in fact, since he descended to the Squirearchy.'

'How long's he going to stop in town—do you know?' Relf asked curiously.

'Thank goodness, he's not going to stop at all, my dear fellow. If he were, I'd run down to Brighton for the interval. A month of Massinger at the Cheyne Row would be a perfect harvest for the seaside lodgings. But I'm happy to tell you he's going to remove his mortal remains—for the soul of him's dead—dead and buried, long ago, in the Whitestrand sandhills—to San Remo to-morrow. Poor little Mrs Massinger's seriously ill, I'm sorry to say. Too much Bard has told at last upon her. Bard for breakfast, Bard for lunch, and Bard for dinner would undermine in time the soundest constitution. Sir Anthony finds it's produced in her case Suppressed Gout, or Tubercular Diathesis, or Softening of the Brain, or something lingering and humorous of that sort; and he's ordered her off, post haste, by the first express, to the Mediterranean. Massinger objected at first to San Remo, he tells me, probably because, with his usual bad taste, he didn't desire to enjoy your agreeable society; but that skimpy little woman, gout or no gout, has a will of her own, I can tell you; San Remo she insists upon, and to San Remo the Bard must go accordingly. You should

have seen him chafing with an internal fire as he let it all out to us, hint by hint, in the billiard-room this evening. Poor skimpy little woman, though, I'm awfully sorry for her. It's hard lines on her. She had the makings of a nice small hostess in her once; but the Bard's ruined her—sucked her dry and chucked her away—and she's dying of him now, from what he tells me.'

Warren Relf looked back with a start of astonishment. 'To San Remo?' he cried. 'You're sure, Hatherley, he said San Remo?'

'Perfectly certain. San Remo it is. Observe, hi presto, there's no deception. He gave me this card in case of error: "Hugh Massinger, for the present, Poste Restante, San Remo." No other address forthcoming as yet. He expects to settle down at a villa when he gets there.'

Relf made up his mind with a single plunge as he knocked his ash off. 'I shall go by to-morrow's express to the Riviera,' he said shortly.

'To pursue the Bard? I wouldn't, if I were you. To tell you the truth, I know he doesn't love you.'

'He has reason, I believe. The feeling is perhaps to some extent mutual. No, not to pursue him—to prevent mischief.—Hand me over the Continental Bradshaw, will you?—Thanks. That'll do. Do you know which line? Marseilles, I suppose? Did he happen to mention it?'

'He told me he was going by Dijon and Lyons.'

'All right. That's it. The Marseilles route. Arrive at San Remo at 4.30. I'll go round the other way by Turin and intercept him. Trains arrive within five minutes of one another, I see. That'll be just in time to prevent any *contre-temps*.'

'Your people are at San Remo already, I believe?'

'My people—yes. But how did you know? They were at Mentone for a while, and they only went on home to the Villa Rossa the day before yesterday.'

'So I heard from Miss Relf,' Hatherley answered with a slight cough. 'She happened to be writing to me—about a literary matter—a mere question of current art-criticism—on Wednesday morning.'

Warren hardly noticed the slight hesitation: and there was nothing odd in Edie's writing to Hatherley: that best of sisters was always jogging the memory of inattentive critics. While Edie lived, indeed, her brother's name was never likely to be forgotten in the weekly organs of artistic opinion. She insured it, if anything, an undue prominence. For her much importunity, the sternest of them all, like the unjust judge, was compelled in time to notice every one of her brother's performances.

So Warren hurried off by himself at all speed to San Remo, and reached it at almost the same moment as Massinger. If Hugh and Elsie were to meet unexpectedly, Warren felt the shock might be positively dangerous.

As he emerged from the station, he hired a close carriage, and ordered the *vetturino* to draw up on the far side of the road and wait a few minutes till he was prepared for starting. Then he leaned back in his seat in the shade of the hood, and held himself in readiness for the arrival of the Paris train from Ventimiglia.

He had waited only a quarter of an hour when Hugh Massinger came out hastily and called a cab. Two porters helped him to carry out Winifred, now seriously ill, and muttering inarticulately as they placed her in the carriage. Hugh gave an inaudible order to the driver, who drove off at once with a nod and a smile and a cheery 'Si, signor.'

'Follow that carriage!' Warren said in Italian to his own cabman. The driver nodded and followed closely. They drove up through the narrow crowded little streets of the old quarter, and stopped at last opposite a large and dingy yellow-washed *pension*, in the modern part of the town, about the middle of the Avenue Vittorio-Emmanuele. The house was new, but congenitally shabby. Hugh's carriage blocked the way already. Warren waited outside for some ten minutes without showing his face till he thought the Massingers would have engaged rooms: then he entered the hall boldly and inquired if he could have lodgings.

'On what floor has the gentleman who just arrived placed himself?' he asked of the landlord, a portly Piedmontese, of august dimensions.

'On the second story, signor.'

'Then I will go on the third,' Warren Relf answered with short decision. And they found him a room forthwith without further parley.

The *pension* was one of those large and massive solid buildings, so common on the Riviera, let out in flats or in single apartments, and with a deep well of a square staircase occupying the entire centre of the block like a covered courtyard. As Warren Relf mounted to his room on the third floor, with the chatty Swiss waiter from the canton Ticino, who carried his bag, he asked quietly if the lady on the *segondo* who seemed so ill was in any immediate or pressing danger.

'Danger, signor? She is ill, certainly; they carried her up-stairs: she couldn't have walked it. Ill—but ill.' He expanded his hands and pursed his lips up.—'But what of that? The house expects it. They come here to die, many of these English. The signora no doubt will die soon. She's a very bad case. She has hardly any life in her.'

Little reassured by this cold comfort, Warren sat down at the table at once, as soon as he had washed away the dust of travel, and scribbled off a hasty note to Edie:

DEAREST E.—Just arrived. Hope you received my telegram from Paris. For heaven's sake, don't let Elsie stir out of the house till I have seen you. This is most imperative. Massinger and Mrs Massinger are here at this *pension*. He has brought her South for her health's sake. She's dying rapidly. I wouldn't for worlds let Elsie see either of them in their present condition: above all, she mustn't run up against them unexpectedly. I may not be able to sneak round to-night, but at all hazards keep Elsie in till I can get to the Villa Rossa to consult with you. Elsie must of course return to England at once, now Massinger's come here. We have to face a very serious crisis. I won't write further, preferring to come and arrange in person. Meanwhile, say nothing to Elsie just yet; I'll break it to her myself.—In breathless haste, Yours ever, very affectionately,

WARREN.

He sent the note round with many warnings by the Swiss waiter to his mother's house. When Edie got it, she could have cried with chagrin. Could anything on earth have been more unfortunate? To think that Elsie should just have gone out shopping before the note arrived—and should be going to call at the Grand Hotel Royal in that very Avenue Vittorio-Emmanuele!

(To be continued.)

PALLAS'S SAND-GROUSE.

CHIEF among the ornithological events chronicled during the year will be the visit to the British Isles of Pallas's sand-grouse, a bird whose habitat is the extensive sandy plains of Central Asia. On previous occasions, our shores have been visited by this migrant, but only once (1863) in such numbers as at present.

The first authentically recorded instance of its coming here was in 1859; but its stay was short. Four years later, it was again found in this country, the invasion, which far exceeded that of 1859, numbering many hundreds of birds. But, as was the case during the preceding visit, the gun was soon at work, and the sand-grouse, finding itself in a land of enemies, speedily quitted its newly found home. The bulk of the specimens secured on that occasion were shot on the east coast of England. In 1872 and 1876, a few stray birds found their way here; but the visits were unimportant. Now, however, the sand-grouse has once more made its appearance in this country in numbers which in all probability exceed the remarkable irruption of a quarter of a century ago. In 1863 the migrants were first observed in May; and in the present instance it was about the middle of the same month that they were first recorded as being again with us. Following the advance birds, coveys arrived daily, until now the species is scattered over a wide area, ranging from northerly Shetland and Orkney to the east coast of Ireland, Scotland, and the warmer latitude of the southern counties of England. What may be the cause of the present irruption can only be guessed at. Some incline to the supposition that it is due to a local influence, such as a late season, extreme increase in numbers, or that peculiar disposition to roam which is met with in so many animals in different countries. It is also thought that the invasion may have been brought about by the land becoming what is known as 'sour,' a circumstance which causes animals that have lived upon its herbage to wither and die if they exist upon it beyond a certain period. Others oppose this latter view, and argue that, since the birds which have been shot in this country soon after their arrival have been plump, it cannot be want of proper food that has induced them to quit their native plains. What the real reason for their migration is must be left for the future to determine, though the majority of those able to judge incline to the view that it is extreme increase in numbers.

Scientifically considered, the sand-grouse is somewhat of a remarkable bird, inasmuch as it bears a resemblance to the pigeon, plover, and common grouse; but it is more nearly allied to the latter than to the two former. It is not,

however, a true grouse, and the bird which forms the subject of this article is one of two that constitute the genus *Syrhaptes*, a sub-family which have their toes so closely united as to almost present the appearance of a pad, the hind-toe being wanting. Pallas's sand-grouse, the only representative of the species which ever visits this country, is about the size of a pigeon; and in the male, the tail and wings are prolonged to a point, which gives the bird the appearance, when standing at a little distance, of having two long forked tails. In the female, these elongations are absent. The colouring of the bird is very pretty, being on the upper parts of a bright yellowish buff, spotted and pencilled with dark brown and black. The head and throat are of an orange hue, and the under parts gray and black. In the female, which is the larger bird, the colours are somewhat subdued. The nesting season is the end of May or beginning of June; and the place selected for the nest is usually a sandy spot on the plain, a tuft of heather or coarse grass, or under the shelter of a stunted shrub. The nest, if such it can be called, is composed of a few stalks of grass; or it may be simply a shallow hole scratched in the sand, or the middle of a tuft of the herbage flattened down. In this receptacle three eggs, as a rule, are deposited—rarely is the number more or fewer. In shape they resemble those of a pigeon; but in colour they are not unlike those of a plover, being of a pale olive brown, marked with a darker hue. The birds are monogamous. Each parent sits alternately upon the eggs, and the young very quickly reach maturity. In common with others of its kind, the sand-grouse is fond of basking in the sun, and in the desert plains from which it hails it is enabled to indulge this liking to the full. It assimilates so very closely with its sandy surroundings that, upon one bird uttering a warning cry, a whole flock may sometimes be seen to rise from where but a moment previously no signs of life were visible. The sand-grouse visits fresh water in the morning, and each pair uttering a peculiar cry as they fly, others join them on the route, so that a covey is soon formed. Their food consists principally of the seeds of grasses and small cruciferous plants, especially those of an oleaginous nature. When about to migrate—for they are possessed of a great migratory instinct, passing from one vast uncultivated plain to another—they collect in countless flocks, and, commencing their journey in the night, spread themselves over very large tracts of country.

When the sand-grouse visited us in 1863, the opinion was expressed that if let alone it would establish itself here, and for this supposition there seemed to be good ground, inasmuch as some of the migrants that year nested in Sweden, Denmark, and Holland; but, as before stated, it was accorded such an inhospitable reception that it soon quitted the country. Now, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, we again have the opportunity of endeavouring to retain it amongst us. That the bird would breed here there is not the slightest doubt, for in the ovaries of some of the females that have been shot this year eggs have been found in various stages of development, and in one instance it is recorded that a nest has been discovered containing eggs; but with the usual result—it was taken. Why

every farmer upon whose land the bird has come should seek to destroy it with powder and shot, and why every so-called naturalist should desire to secure specimens, is utterly incomprehensible. As an addition to our feathered game, it would be a good acquisition, being said to be of a flavour only slightly inferior to that of the red-legged partridge. The bird is a non-percher; and when on the wing, it flies fast and straight, the flight resembling that of the golden plover, only it is swifter. In every respect it is an excellent bird for the sportsman. Let us, therefore, give up the wanton destruction we are now pursuing with regard to it, and allow it to nest within our shores, and, if it will, remain here and become naturalised. But for the murderous treatment to which it has been subjected by those who should protect it, there seems no reason why this should not be the case.

THE SILVER STREAM.

AN IDYL OF THE WYE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

THE picnic party returned in time for dinner, much to Mr Frederick Denton's outward and visible joy. Trevor, being younger, and as yet no admirer of the *nil admirari* school, expressed the opinion that they had had a particularly jolly day—a view fully endorsed by the sisters Moffat. There was sufficient time to change flannels and boating jackets for gray tweed and demi-toilet before the first warning of that 'tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell,' though Horace Du Maurier made a point of appearing in all the glory of evening dress, with tiny diamond studs in his ample bosom, and moustache waxed to a pitch of perfection only acquired by long and constant practice.

During the progress of the meal, that prepossessing gentleman was unusually brilliant and vivacious. 'It is a fortunate thing that we do not dwell in the palace of truth,' Decie murmured under his breath, as he noted the many-sided facets of the Frenchman's nature. It would have considerably astonished the unsuspecting guests, had they known that under this dazzling display, this outward appearance of gaiety, Du Maurier was racking his versatile brain to discover some means of escape from the dilemma in which he was placed. Even the most wily adventurer cannot hope to keep up the necessary show without a certain amount of ready-money.

'What have you been doing all day?' asked the Colonel, addressing Decie during a pause in the conversation.—'Ah! you missed a treat, my boy. I never saw Symonds Yat looking more beautiful.'

Phil explained. He detailed the account of the accident, Rashleigh listening intently the while, wondering, with the tormenting conscience of a coward, if the speaker could possibly have overheard part of his conversation with Du Maurier. As he looked up, his glance encountered Decie's. There was something in the look that caused him to grow cold, and his glass to clink against his teeth with a sudden spasm of fear.

'Beautiful old church,' Denton struck in opportunely, 'especially interesting, as we are all such

critical judges of architecture.—I assure you, Miss Rashleigh, I never saw anything more curious than that tree—an elm in full leaf, actually growing inside the church. A most peculiar sight.'

Any further discussion upon this uncommon but nevertheless visible phenomenon was cut short by the exit of the ladies. Colonel Scobell pushed a silver cigarette box round the table and rang the bell for more claret. In two of the Oxford men, both fishing enthusiasts, he had discovered a pair of ready listeners, to whom he was detailing the account of a wonderful fish, caught by foul hooking a cast left in the salmon's gills by an angler, who had been broken by the same funny monster on the previous day.

'These fishermen beat any other sportsmen out of sight,' Trevor murmured.—'Did you hear that Phil? Come into the drawing-room.'

'Presently. Not that there is any particular reason why you should wait for me. I want to speak to Rashleigh a moment.'

Horace Du Maurier had disappeared. Rashleigh remained smoking feverishly, and paying more attention to the claret jug than was good for him or his nerves, as weak-minded men in the hour of trouble or anxiety will do. As Phil touched him suddenly on the shoulder, he started with something in his heart akin to terror.

'What do you want?' he asked a little defiantly, and instinctively upon his guard against some invisible though not unexpected danger.

'Come and play a game of billiards,' Decie replied. These signs of Rashleigh's perturbation were not lost upon him. 'We shall be sure to have the room to ourselves.'

Rashleigh obeyed reluctantly, and together they crossed the hall. Once in the room, Decie closed the door; and turning up the lamps, chose himself a cue, and without further preamble, commenced the play. Rashleigh, though by no means an inferior player, was no match for Decie, though usually he was far the more scientific exponent of that fascinating game.

'You have something on your mind,' Decie observed, executing a brilliant cannon.—'Not a bad shot that. I'll tell you what I will do. Two to one in half-crowns I pot the red and tell you what you are thinking about.'

'You would lose,' Rashleigh laughed recklessly.—'Ah! missed the red.—The other shot of yours would be about as successful.'

'By no means. Let me finish. You are at your wits' end to know where to find that money you owe Du Maurier. And further, you would like to tell me something, if you only dared.'

'How on earth did you know I owed Du Maurier anything?' Rashleigh exclaimed, off his guard. 'He told me no one knew but ourselves.'

'I do know, and you can't deny it. I would rather be under an obligation to my bitterest enemy than to that man. What do you owe him? I am not asking out of idle curiosity.'

'What do I owe him? Well, really I cannot quite say, there are so many transactions. Perhaps eighty or ninety pounds altogether.'

Decie spotted the red which his antagonist had potted. He seemed to have forgotten his previous curiosity in his new and revived interest in the game. Still, there was a grim dryness in his voice and manner that puzzled Rashleigh, and for which he was utterly at a loss to account.

'I do not wish to pry into your affairs,' Decie remarked at length. 'But you might just as well own the truth. You owe Du Maurier four hundred—money he has swindled you out of at cards, I presume. What possessed you to take up with a common blackleg like that?'

'I don't know,' Rashleigh replied, his face aflame.—'I've been an awful fool, Decie.'

'If I don't make a mistake, you've been something worse,' Decie put in *sotto voce*.

'Well, I have. And now the murder is out. I daresay you know we are both members of *The Lotos*—the gambling club in H—Street. I am quite in Du Maurier's power. He has only got to carry out his threat and post me as a defaulter. I couldn't face Cambridge after that.—Decie, I am the most miserable wretch under the sun!'

The unhappy boy threw his cue aside, and falling across the table with his face buried in his hands, sobbed aloud. He was not naturally bad, only weak and easily led into temptation, like many another lad wandering amongst the traps and pitfalls of university life.

Phil laid a hand upon the other's shoulder, speaking not unkindly. 'I think I can help you,' he said. 'I don't want to force your confidence; only, at the same time I have not the smallest intention of paying Du Maurier any sum he chooses to demand. And I don't want him to know I have a hand in this. I haven't much money with me—not quite a hundred pounds—but I can make up that sum. Offer him that, and he will jump at it.'

'Not he,' Rashleigh returned mournfully. 'He holds my paper to the amount of four hundred. You don't know him as I do.'

'Fortunately, I don't. I know him a great deal better—or worse,' said Phil dryly. 'I have an idea he will take it. Make the offer as if you meant it, and be a man for once. You shall have the money now, if you like. By good luck, I happen to have so much with me. And one word in conclusion. If he turns restive, just remark that Selby is of opinion that he is uncommonly lucky to get that.'

Hope springing eternal in the human breast, gave Rashleigh a momentary feeling of elation. But he was too much under the Frenchman's sinister influence to shake off the bondage as a bolder spirit would have done. He stood, inspired alternately by joy and fear, till Decie returned. He had in his hand a crisp roll of bank-notes, which he placed in Rashleigh's hand.

'There!' he exclaimed hurriedly. 'I have just seen Du Maurier, who is inquiring for you.—Now is your time. If you have any lingering traces of manliness, show a bold front, and the victory is yours.'

Decie had barely time to leave the room before Du Maurier entered. He seemed a trifle pale and agitated, now that he was alone with his fellow-conspirator and the mask had fallen from his face. 'I am fortunate in finding you here,' he said. 'We must forget our little difference this afternoon in face of the common danger.—See, my dear Gerard; the situation grows critical. I, even I, am puzzled. I must get away from here to-morrow; and how to raise the wind, as you call it, I do not know. I am reluctantly compelled to look to you, *mon cher*.'

'Supposing, by a lucky accident I am able to

accommodate you. If I was to say to you: "Du Maurier, here is a hundred pounds in hard cash," what advantage am I to have in return?"

'Advantage! The boy is mad. It is not for you to make terms with me. I shall teach you to kick over the traces! Bah! why these theatricals?'

Rashleigh braced himself for the coming trial. The possession of money to silence his tormentor's tongue gave him a new and sweet sense of power. 'I will be perfectly candid with you,' he said. 'Give me my paper, and in return I will hand you a hundred pounds. It is a fair bargain. You are driven into a corner, and I can help you out. You know how those *IOU's* were obtained. I will not discuss that. Take my terms, or leave them.'

'*Par dieu*, I shall do nothing of the sort. You shall give me the money, and trust to my honour to give you further time to pay the balance.'

'Rather a frail reed to rest upon,' said Rashleigh with a reckless laugh. 'Nonsense, Du Maurier. It is I to make terms; and, honestly speaking, I don't owe you anything. I think I am dealing very liberally with you—an opinion shared by more than one; indeed, Selby—you remember Selby?—says you are uncommonly lucky to get that.'

During this interesting conversation, Decie had remained in the hall to watch the progress of events; not that he anticipated failure upon Rashleigh's part, but that he was genuinely anxious that the lad should himself throw off the fetters which bound him. Failure was impossible, as Phil very well knew, so long as he had the whip-hand of the versatile Du Maurier. Still, if Rashleigh could assert his own independence unaided, it would be a great step towards a speedy regeneration.

While Phil was still pacing the hall, turning over these thoughts in his mind, a light footstep descending the stairs attracted his attention; and though there was only a dim light burning, he was enabled to distinguish the face and figure of Beatrice Rashleigh. There was a restless, troubled look in her eyes; but the face grew a trifle colder as she recognised Decie.

'Why did you not come with us to-day?' she asked. 'Oh, surely you must have misunderstood me. I do not wish to make your visit unpleasant.'

'Please set your mind at rest upon that score. My excuse was really no idle one; and so far as regretting the day's pleasure, my decision promises to be one of the most fortunate things I ever did in my life.'

Beatrice looked up surprised at the quiet ring of triumph in the words. She felt an irresistible impulse to remain with him, yet at the same time, woman-like, she blamed herself for this weakness. Like the moth fluttering round the flame, she could not keep from the dangerous lure.

'I am glad to hear it,' said Beatrice with a little sigh. 'Would you mind telling me where Gerard is? I suppose I may go into the billiard-room?'

'Well, I—I think I would wait a moment. He is in there with Du Maurier, only I fancy they are talking over some private business.'

Beatrice laughed lightly, the first sign of mirth Phil had noticed since they met, and crossed over to the billiard-room with a determined step. Regardless of Decie's entreaties, which only served

to increase her resolution, she threw open the door and took a step inside. One glance was quite enough. Du Maurier, his face flaming with passion, stood facing Rashleigh, the latter very white and agitated, but presenting a picture of quiet determination. So engrossed were they in their quarrel, that they were quite oblivious to the presence of the deeply interested spectators.

'Then what follows?' Du Maurier hissed through his clenched teeth. 'I go to M'sieu Decie and say to him I know who stole that bracelet. Can you guess?—No.—Then I will tell you. Rashleigh was the thief!'

'And what would he say?' Rashleigh returned unsteadily. 'He would simply tell you that he had known it all along. He has known it from the first.'

'Ah! you say so. And the little episode of the watch? The Philip Reid who raises money on his valuables'—

'Which was pledged for me. I was driven almost mad for the want of a little money. Decie was not the rich man then he is now. It was for me alone that money was obtained. It was to prevent my sister knowing what a miserable criminal I am, that caused Decie to sacrifice his happiness.—And now, do your worst.'

Decie, the first to recover himself, drew Beatrice back and closed the door unseen. Her face was white as marble, her limbs trembled under her; she would have fallen had he not put his arm round her. As their eyes met, hers soft, sorrowful, and pleading, his smiling tenderly, she found sufficient voice to speak: 'O Phil, what have I done to you? What a miserable girl I am! And to think that he—Gerard— Let me go. I cannot, dare not speak to you yet.'

With a fierce gesture of passionate *abandon*, she broke from the shelter of his arms and flew up-stairs with the speed of a hunted deer. Phil followed her with his eyes, shining with love and triumph, a feeling of wild exultation at his heart. Then, without further ceremony, he opened the billiard-room door and strode in with set determination of purpose.

'You need not go over that miserable business again,' he said, seeing that the Frenchman was about to speak. 'You seem to have lost your philosophic calm. I know everything you would say; but I think you will preserve that secret. Now listen to me. You will retire to your room without seeing any one to-night, and write a letter to Colonel Scobell saying that you are bound to leave by the 8.10 train to-morrow. You will also give Rashleigh the securities you hold. Nothing more need be said.'

'I have them already,' Rashleigh explained. 'As to the rest'—

'As to the rest, we shall meet again in Cambridge,' Du Maurier exclaimed. 'Then we shall see'—

'You will do nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that you will not return to that happy hunting-ground, where there are too many of your class already. You will take your name off the college books.'

'And if I refuse?'

'Refuse! You dare not!' Decie cried contemptuously. 'You have your money. Go, or I shall be tempted to give you the chastisement you deserve.'

With a gesture of impotent rage and one backward look of hatred, the baffled swindler left them. It was the last time either of them was ever to see *Horace Du Maurier*. When morning came, the gentlemanly chevalier had disappeared, leaving no trace and no regret behind.

Phil turned to *Gerard Rashleigh*, and held out his hand. 'I congratulate you heartily. You have done a wise thing, *Gerard*. It will be your own fault if you don't go straight from now. Let us say no more about it. The rest lies in your own hands.'

'There is one thing to be done,' *Rashleigh* returned, a new light in his eyes. 'Do not be too hard upon me, *Phil*. I will make the best atonement I can. Will you leave me for a moment to recover myself? I am quite unmanned.'

With a delicate innate sympathy, always so ready to measure the feeling of others, *Decie* left him, and passing through the open French window, stepped on to the tennis lawn. It was cool and quiet there under the cedars, bathed in the peaceful moonlight, the silence of night broken only by the occasional ripple of laughter from the drawing-room. *Decie* for the moment felt a need for silence and solitude, a peacefulness broken all too soon by the appearance of *Rashleigh*, and with him a figure that caused *Phil's* heart to give a quick leap and stop as if it were still.

'I have been telling her,' *Rashleigh* said abruptly.

Decie smiled and held out his hand. *Beatrice* stretched out both of hers with an impulse of mingled pity and sorrow. As *Phil* held the fluttering fingers in a firm grasp, he turned to hear what the penitent would say.

'I will not make any excuses,' he continued in a faltering unsteady voice. 'I—I took the bracelet, and *Phil* saw me. On my life, I had no idea that he would be suspected, or I would have cut off my right hand first.—But even when you were so foolish, *Beatrice*, he would not speak; he did not care for you to know how bad I was. Then *Du Maurier* got the whole thing out of me: the name I used, even the whole story how *Phil* pledged his watch to lend me money. Finally, he succeeded in obtaining the ticket. What use he made of it, you know better than I. You see I used the same name that *Phil* assumed, and so there was something suspicious about the whole thing.—Do not ask me to say any more. Forgive me if you can; to forget is impossible.'

'Nevertheless, we will try,' said *Phil* cheerfully. 'Only, do not elevate me to the rank of a guardian angel, when I have only been selfishly playing for my own hand. Your presentiment is quite right. I overheard your conversation yesterday, or how should I have known?—But there; we will say no more about it. Shake hands, old fellow; and repay me, if you owe me anything, by doing the same for some one else in due season.'

Rashleigh put out his hand silently, for he could not trust himself to speak. *Beatrice* freed her fingers from *Decie's* warm grasp, and throwing her arms round her brother's neck, kissed him. He turned and walked away in the broad moonlight, slowly, thoughtfully; but there was a higher carriage of the head, a more elastic step, and a new warm feeling of unaccustomed lightness and freedom glowing in his breast.

'*Phil*, you have done a very noble thing!'

Beatrice murmured at length. 'Will you crown it by forgiving me for my sinful folly?'

He passed his arm round her and drew her face close to his. For a time there was a long delicious silence as he looked into her troubled eyes. With all a woman's sweet hypocrisy, she asked for a favour she already had, but the sense of her self-humiliation was not the less precious for that knowledge.

'My darling, I am too happy to feel any soreness at present. I have found you again; that is enough for me. I daresay I ought to have been stern and haughty; to have taken my revenge and left you. But I am only human, and I shall love you all the days of my life.'

By-and-by others of the party wandered out into the perfect evening, strolling in the moonlight in twos and threes; but, with a certain electric sympathy, they kept at a little distance from the lovers. Presently, *Miss Edith*, with a white boating cap perched upon her fair head, passed by, and leaving her companion for a moment, tripped lightly across the lawn. 'It was not bad news, then?' she asked demurely.

'No, indeed,' replied *Phil* gaily; 'the very best in the world. I said you should be the first to know; but mind, it is a profound secret for the present. Though how long it will remain so,' the speaker continued, 'is quite another thing. Anyway, it's nothing to be ashamed of.'

'Ashamed of!' *Beatrice* echoed indignantly.—*Phil*, I believe I am the happiest girl in the world!'

THOUGHTS FOR THE THOUGHTFUL.

'We want thinking souls—we want them,' so wrote *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Now I wish (says a correspondent) to make a few remarks which may serve as Thoughts for the Thoughtful, and cause them, in this world of wonders, to awake to the wonders which surround them.

Let us consider for a moment the vegetable world. First of all, it is the only organism that can convert the inorganic world into life. Neither man nor beast can find nourishment directly from the earth. The beast finds its food in the vegetable, converting it into flesh, which, again, affords food to man and to all carnivorous animals. What a marvellous chemistry do we thus find in the vegetable, kindling the inorganic into life!—how subtle, how completely beyond our ken, no matter how keen our investigation. Nor is the animal chemistry less subtle, less marvellous, in converting the vegetable into flesh. Again, consider how simple and how like, if we may not even say how identical, are the constituents on which vegetable life feeds, and yet what marvellously different results! Think of the variety of flowers and of fruits—some sweet-scented, as the rose and the violet; others, disagreeable, as the garlic, the dunk-tree, and the wormwood. If we take a mere bud of a white rose-tree, and insert it into the stem of a red rose, forthwith it becomes incorporated in it. The root sends nourishment throughout the whole tree; but the same sap, passing up the different stems, results respectively in red and white roses. What a marvellous change the sap has undergone by only travelling up a different kind of wood! Think of the hard stones or nuts that are found in

the fruit of trees—the peach, the walnut, and the cocoa-nut. The conversion of sap into these hard nuts is indeed a piece of wonderful vegetable chemistry. Think, too, of the many useful medicinal, as well as hurtful and poisonous, plants that abound in every clime; all, remember, resulting from the conversion of nearly the same ingredients into the diversely different products. In a dry and thirsty land, too, where no water is, the cocoa-nut fills its shell with an abundance of delicious fluid. We cannot tell how it is done.

Now, let us turn our thoughts to the animal world. How wonderfully are animals built up—the lower, by the eating of vegetable food; the higher, by the eating of the vegetable converted into flesh. Think of the wonderful animal-chemistry that can convert green food into blood, flesh, hair, horn—into all the various requirements of the several parts of the body, and that without any will exerted by the animal to produce the several results. It is done whether the animal is asleep or awake. It is done unconsciously by the animal. What a variety of food and drink man occasionally takes at a meal, and yet the process of digestion separates the mixed mass into its several different results, producing hair, horn, and bone. What a wonderful conversion is that of vegetable matter into the ivory tusks of the elephant and the antlers of the deer and stag! We cannot find any material in hardness and elasticity equal to that of the tusk of the elephant for the making of billiard balls. What a wonderful product is the shell of the eggs of birds, and the shells of lobsters and crabs—produced simply from what they severally eat! Wonder reigns everywhere—in the air, the water, and the earth. Have my readers ever allowed themselves to wonder at the feathers of birds? How gorgeous and yet how artistic are the feathers in the tail of the peacock! All the feathers, remember, are made from what the bird eats. Again, life abounds in every variety of form, and exists under every variety of circumstance. We have fish sporting in the sea, birds floating in the air, and animals traversing land and sea. Some shell-fish, like the crab and lobster, have their skeleton outside their flesh; other fish, as the salmon and the cod, have their skeleton covered by the flesh. Some trees have their nuts covered by the fleshy fruit; others, like the tropical cashew, have the nut outside the fleshy fruit. Animals that occupy the land have invariably, I believe, the skeleton within the body.

The fecundity of nature, too, seems to be without limit. No circumstances, no matter how different, prevent her from giving effect to her operations. Life springs up on every side—on the land, in the sea, under the land, and in the air, so that the command given—'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven; and let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind'—has been literally fulfilled. Let us consider, too, how diversified nature is—how, out of a few materials, she can produce endless variety. Take, for instance, the features of the human face: how few these are, and yet out of millions and millions of men how rarely, if ever, do you find two faces

in every detail alike. Again, consider in how many ways you can distinguish one man from another; the voice, the fall of the foot, the handwriting, all are different. So, too, with painters. No two painters paint alike. An expert connoisseur can easily distinguish the paintings of one master from another. Each man throws naturally into his voice, his walk, his writing, his painting, some portion of his own personality, if he is a true man. Mr Walter Besant, in his *Children of Gibeon*, says that even the lines of one man's thumb differ from the lines of every other man's. Nature never repeats herself. Consider the birds of the air: each species builds its nest after its own pattern; the eggs of each are marked differently; their notes are different; the taste of the flesh is different; the plumage is different. But more wonderful still is the difference in the vegetable world; no two leaves, even on the same tree, are exactly the same. The ordinary observer can see no difference in the faces of a flock of sheep, but the shepherd can tell one sheep from another. These dissimilarities are endless.

The more we allow our minds to dwell upon the wonders contained in this world, the more we are impressed with the might, the wisdom, the intelligence of that inscrutable Power to which we give the name of God. When our wonder culminates in our admiration of the complex construction of man, his hands as instruments adapted to every variety of work, and his brain so adapted as to guide his hands to the performance of that work, we readily exclaim with the poet Young: 'How wonderful is man! How passing wonder He that made him such!' All that I have written has reference to this world only. When we let our minds contemplate the grand universe of which our globe is a mere point in space, and its history a mere point in time, then, indeed, our wonder should be translated into a reverential awe.

THE AMONTILLADO.

It is true that I left Curry Lodge in a hurry—some might even term it in indecent haste—but could I, the most sensitive of men, remain after what transpired? Like Mr Wilkie Collins, I Say No.

It is also true that, a month or two afterwards, the following appeared in the marriage column of the *Standard*: 'April 20th, at Great Cromley parish church, by the Rev. — Tyham, M.A., BENJAMIN PUFFER of the Grange, Great Cromley, to ALICIA MAUD, daughter of Major Chumsett of Curry Lodge, Great Cromley.' Yes; there it was, in the plainest of type. It glared viciously at me, for it was the triumph of Puffer. Puffer, allow me to state, is a barrister. I have the consolation of knowing that he is a briefless one.

My name is Tattam Solomons, junior member of the firm of Hidalgo, Bibham, & Solomons, importers of Spanish wine. I received an invitation to visit the Major at Curry Lodge. I accepted it, and went. Alicia Maud was the magnet which drew me there. I arrived at the Lodge in a state of exhilaration; but misery seized me

directly my eye fell upon Puffer. I will not deny it—I hate Puffer. He not only boasts—in the most public manner—that I was his ‘fag’ at Eton, but he makes it a continual practice to address me as if I were a serf. I don’t like it. A very few days sufficed to assure me that I was not alone in my worship of the adorable Being who drew me to the Lodge; I had a rival, and that rival was Puffer.

Alicia Maud was the stake, and Puffer and I played for it. To my sorrow, it soon became apparent that Puffer was pegging most of the holes. He had that peculiarity of the ‘Devil’s Own,’ of always painting himself a Solomon, and every one else an ass. I saw that he was making a deep impression upon the Major, if not upon Alicia Maud. At length he attacked me, so to speak, in my own vineyard; he boasted of his knowledge of wine—sherry especially. A worm will turn—I turned; I said ‘Pah!’

Puffer smiled. ‘Very well,’ he said. ‘Come over to the Grange to-morrow with the Major and try my Amontillado. If you have tasted better, I will pay five pounds to an Asylum for Idiots. If not, you shall pay it instead of me.—Agreed?’

I answered exultantly that it was; though, if my taste had been consulted, I should have preferred any other charitable institution. My rival, I may here remark, was the younger son of one of the Great Cromley magnates—a county magistrate.

The next day the Major and I walked over to the Grange. It was not far, for Cromley was little more than a village. Puffer awaited us. We were ushered into his room, and gravely we took our seats beside his mahogany; the Jury of Three was complete. The Amontillado I noticed was already on the table. With—I am sure I noticed it—a shaking hand, Puffer filled the glasses. We all solemnly and almost simultaneously raised the wine to our lips. Puffer immediately afterwards gave a loudish and vulgar smack. The Major was more cautious. I glanced at him, and saw that he had cocked one eye, and was looking through what remained in his glass with the other. With a husky voice, Puffer asked us for our verdict. The Major coughed uneasily and gazed at me. I was quite calm and collected, for I had sentenced the Amontillado, without trial, before I came there. Not for the sake of the paltry five pounds—Oh dear, no! It was a duty I owed to myself and Alicia Maud.

‘Puffer,’ I said slowly and with judicial emphasis, ‘you have been taken in: this is not sherry.’

The Major started as if I had thrown the decanter at him. He pushed away his glass as if it contained arsenic. Puffer’s face assumed that aspect of imbecile incredulity common to members of the bar when their case is hopeless.

‘This liquid,’ I went on, ‘to which some unscrupulous firm has given the name of Amontillado, is largely adulterated with the villainous German potato spirit, and is quite unfit for human consumption. I believe,’ I added supremely, ‘that I know what I am talking about; I am considered to have a tidy palate.’

The Major, who had been looking at the sherry with marked aversion, was beginning in an apologetic tone to take part in the debate, when Puffer suddenly interrupted him. ‘Enough, Major,’ he cried. ‘I have lost. Mr Solomons is, as he has told us, an experienced judge, and I stand by his verdict. I owe the Asylum five pounds.—Yet,’ he said musingly, ‘it is a pity.’

‘What is a pity?’ I asked eagerly, for I thought he meant that he was sorry to part with his money.

‘Why,’ he answered blandly, ‘that a hitherto irreproachable firm of wine-merchants should so deceive me.’

‘It’s a confounded shame!’ cried the Major warmly, ‘and social ostracism is too good for ‘em.—Who are they, Puffer?’

Puffer made no reply, but placing his hand in a side-pocket, he drew out a bill-head and passed it to the Major. The latter fixed his glass in his eye and began to peruse it. Almost directly he stopped and looked round at us with an air of the most intense bewilderment. He drew a deep breath. ‘Hang it!’ he exclaimed helplessly, ‘it can’t be.’ He looked at us again, and his stock perceptibly stiffened. ‘Gentlemen,’ he said in an awful voice, ‘you must excuse me;’ and without saying another word, he got up, opened the door and left us.

What *did* it mean? I glared wildly at Puffer, and with a cool smile he pushed the bill-head over to me. A glance at it told me all—the firm from which Puffer had bought the Amontillado was that of Hidalgo, Biblam, & Solomons!

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

‘It is a little vanity of no harm, and may tempt others to follow my example, in thinking more of the nation and less of themselves.’ These noble words occur in the will of Mr William White, who died in the year 1823, and they refer to his wish that the large sum which he left to the nation for enlarging the British Museum should be utilised on the condition that the new buildings should bear his name. The money fell in nine years ago, and what is called the White wing of the Museum is now opened to the public. It gives accommodation to a great many exhibits which for want of space were previously hidden away. Among these are the glass and ceramic collections, and the Chinese and Japanese drawings, all of which are of the greatest interest. The Japanese work is especially worthy of careful study; and there has of late years been such a mania among art students and collectors for everything of Japanese character, that these splendid examples are sure to attract many visitors. Perhaps the most interesting series of drawings in the gallery is that by an unknown painter of the seventeenth century. It consists of twenty-three pictures which illustrate one of the most familiar of Japanese tales. The pictures describe the search for and destruction of an ogre or demon by

a hero of the name of Raikō. The date given to this wonderful story is 947 A.D., and it reminds us of one of the wholesome old-fashioned fairy tales of our childhood. These drawings exhibit the usual careful and delicate work peculiar to the Japanese, together with brilliant colouring; and they show also a wonderful play of fancy on the part of the unknown artist. Visitors to London should not fail to see these new galleries.

The smallpox epidemic at Preston, which is of a very serious character, has brought forth a great many suggestions from different sources. Vaccination and re-vaccination, the efficacy of which has been abundantly proved, have been going forward rapidly; but it has been necessary to postpone many public meetings, and more than one school has had to be closed. Among the recommendations which have been published is one from Mr Rollinson, a sanitary engineer, who urges the advisability of removing smallpox patients from buildings, and providing sheds or huts of a temporary character for their accommodation. He urges that by this treatment the patients can be surrounded with fresh air, care being of course taken to prevent exposure to direct draughts. He tells us that he has seen smallpox patients placed under open sheds and barns in the summer-time sleeping on straw and nursed by cottagers; the result being that not one patient so treated died, neither did the disease spread. The advice given is worthy of careful consideration by our civic authorities. We are all too prone as a nation to look upon fresh air as an injurious rather than a health-giving agent.

It has often been reasonably contested by inventors and designers that Exhibition honours should be awarded to them, and not to those by whom, by an accident of fortune, their products are exhibited. An effort in this direction is represented by an Exhibition of Arts and Crafts which will be open in London during next October. All exhibits here will be shown under the name of the designer. The Society which has been formed for the promotion of this worthy scheme includes names of many well-known artists. It will not undertake the sale of any work exhibited, but will refer intending purchasers direct to the exhibitors. The products shown will consist of textiles, metal and iron work, gold and silver smiths' work, decorative painting, bookbinding, wood and stone carving, &c. Further information can be obtained of Mr Radford, the Secretary, at 121 Regent Street, London, where the Exhibition will be held.

A sad but interesting relic of the lamentable Zulu war has recently come to light: this is the back of the gold case of a watch, which, by the number stamped upon it, as well as the crown and monogram of N, is proved by its makers, Messrs Dent & Co., to have belonged to the Prince Imperial of France, who lost his life in that campaign. It seems that this memento of the unfortunate Prince was purchased about six years ago from a Zulu at Kimberley, Africa.

Particulars have been sent to us of a useful and new invention by Mr St John Allison of Parracombe, North Devon. This invention consists in a method of using common galvanised iron for the

covering of hay and corn ricks. These metal sheets rest upon wooden beams, which are so made that they will admit of necessary ventilation, and will also allow the sheets to slide one over the other as the rick subsides. The cost of this covering, including all fittings, is about equal to the cost of thatching for five or six seasons. But it is represented that as the iron will last about six times that time and can be so readily applied, its use will represent an economy as well as a convenience to agriculturists. We presume that the inventor has foreseen the necessity of connecting the metal plates with the earth, so as to prevent danger from lightning.

According to an American Homœopathic Journal, the passion-flower has a great therapeutical value, and is one of the best hypnotics known. It is said to produce a quiet pleasant sleep, different from the stupor of many better-known narcotics, and from which the subject can be awakened at any moment. In the worst forms of insomnia this drug is said to produce quiet refreshing sleep, and is of great value in the treatment of Tetanus and other diseases.

An ornithological occurrence of interest is the visit of a fine cormorant to the heart of London. This stranger, which may in truth be described as *rara avis*, was found in St James's Park on the 30th of May. He was tame and hungry enough to accept food from the keepers. The same bird was noticed some days later flying over the Serpentine water in Hyde Park.

We lately had the opportunity of inspecting a very wonderful machine called the Cyclone Pulveriser, which has the power of reducing to impalpable powder the hardest substances brought within its reach. It seems that the inventors of this machine derived their original ideas of its structure from observing the great havoc caused in many parts of America by cyclone storms. It consists essentially of an iron box, in which two powerful cast-iron fans face one another, with a few inches between them. These fans are not unlike six-shafted screw propellers, and are not more than a foot in diameter. They are caused to rotate in opposite directions at about two thousand revolutions per minute, air being admitted to them from two apertures behind each. In the space between these powerful blowers an artificial cyclone is created, and into this miniature storm the material to be pulverised is fed, with the curious result, that although it does not touch the iron blades—and this is proved by their freedom from scratches or dents after months of work—the particles of the material are torn asunder and pulverised by attrition among themselves. At the time of our visit the machine was breaking up an extremely hard ore, which was quickly reduced to the finest powder. By a system of screens attached to the machine, the powdered product is delivered in several grades of fineness. The Cyclone Pulveriser has been in use for some time in America, but has only just been introduced into this country, where it will probably be found useful in a great many industries.

We glean from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* some interesting results of Dr Wagner's experiments on the value of basic slag as a manure. It is found to be more economical and better in every way than such old-fashioned manures as

guano, bone, or coprolites, and is far cheaper. The slag is found to be particularly suitable for grass, clover, and lucerne, and acts well on most soils.

Sir Thomas Brodie has recently arrived at Hobart, Tasmania, with a quantity of salmon ova in splendid condition. These ova were kept on the voyage out from Ireland in a special ice-house; and owing to the care with which they were treated, the loss has only been one per cent. out of four hundred thousand. Many of the ova were hatched during the voyage, and the young fish remained alive and vigorous on board ship. Sir Thomas also took some larger fish with him, but they died directly the tropics were reached, owing, it is supposed, to their having been deposited in London water instead of their native element. It is gratifying to learn from another source that the salmon ova introduced upon a former occasion into the Tasmanian rivers have answered expectations. A large salmon, the product of former consignments, has recently been caught in one of these waters.

A great many suggestions have been made from time to time for 'deafening' floors, as the process is named. Among the substances used have been sawdust, dry ashes, cork-chippings, &c.; and many different things and compounds have been found buried in the floors of old houses for the purpose of deadening noise. The last suggestion of the kind comes from a French journal, and consists in filling the space between the floors with wood-shavings which have been dipped in a tub of thick whitewash. This treatment, it is said, would render the shavings quite incombustible, and would at the same time form an excellent non-conducting material to sound. It is also suggested that where it is desirable to disinfect the space between the floor and ceiling, as in hospitals, the shavings may be saturated with chloride of zinc, or this salt may be added to the whitewash. This plan would have the advantage of not increasing the weight of the floors to any appreciable extent.

We are all interested in the progress of electric lighting; and as we have often been told that its cost is a great obstacle to its general introduction, certain particulars given in the annual Report to the Science and Art Department of the Privy Council regarding the electric lighting of the South Kensington Museum, will be read with interest. The working expenses of the electric light at this large building amounted last year to £1224, and it is stated that if gas had been used instead, the cost would have been more than double. If these figures be correct, it is clear that public buildings generally will soon be lighted by the new lamps, even if dwelling-houses must for the present be content with a weaker illuminant. We may mention in connection with this matter that on one night lately many buildings in the west end of London were suddenly thrown into darkness by the extinction of their electric lamps; and this failure was attributed by consumers to some deficiency in the system employed. But the Secretary of the Electric Lighting Company who furnished the lamps has given the real cause of the disaster. It seems that the stokers employed deserted their posts and allowed the fires feeding the engines to go down. These men 'took offence that a gra-

tuitous meal of roast beef, &c., was served to them cold instead of hot!'

A new lifeboat has recently been tried with success at St George's Dock, Liverpool. This boat is built of galvanised steel sheets, is sixteen feet in length, with a beam of five feet. When not in the sea, the boat can be used as a deck seat; but directly it is lowered into the sea, it is transformed into a boat capable of holding from twenty-five to thirty passengers. It is furnished with water-tight compartments, which are so built that they can be used for storing food and other necessities. It is said that in whatever position the boat reaches the water, it will instantly right itself and be available for use. Another life-saving device likely to be of value is a raft-buoy which has been invented by a United States naval officer. This buoy is big enough to support the weight of a man, and is during use attached to the vessel by a long wire-rope. It contains a supply of provisions, and is furnished with a chemical lamp which upon contact with the water ignites and burns brilliantly for about twenty minutes. In the case of a man falling overboard, this buoy would be immediately thrown into the water, and the light would guide him to its whereabouts. Should he reach it, he would be drawn by the wire-rope to his ship; but should the line from any cause break, the provisions carried by the buoy will enable him to sustain life for a time, and so give him another chance.

From some recent experiments on the Lake of Geneva, it is found that its water is far clearer in winter than in summer, owing to contamination during the latter season by suspended matter. In the winter-time, white discs, submerged, can be seen to the depth of twenty-two yards; while in summer they cease to be visible at a quarter of that depth. It is also found that photographic action, which extends to a depth of nearly fifty yards in summer, is increased to over one hundred yards in winter.

A new application of photography has been made in France by M. Weddiny. Microscopical examination of steel shows that it is composed of an agglomeration of crystals, and the quality of the metal may be determined very accurately by the difference in appearance of these crystals. The experimenter referred to, in order to render the observation more complete, heated the steel under examination until it was white-hot; but as these conditions prevented the use of the microscope, he photographed the white-hot metal, and then examined with the microscope the negative so obtained.

M. Pasteur's inoculation system has recently been tried at Odessa as a preventive of the Siberian cattle-plague. One hundred merino sheep have been inoculated, and so far with the most hopeful results, although time is of course required to prove the value of the treatment in this disease. Should Pasteur's method succeed, it will be a great boon to the whole of Southern Russia. In a single province it is stated that the losses to proprietors by this plague have amounted to more than three millions of roubles; and its annual recurrence has brought poverty to numbers of peasant proprietors and owners of sheep and cattle runs.

Although we no longer hide our savings in stockings, as our forefathers used to do, it is astonishing how much gold in the shape of coins

is laid by and out of use in the cabinets of collectors. It has been calculated, for instance, that the result of issuing a Jubilee coinage has been to withhold from circulation about half a million of gold. The Mint lately issued a quarter of a million pounds-worth of five-pound pieces, and nearly the same value of two-pound pieces, and these are never seen except as curiosities in the collector's cabinet. It is also certain that a number of minor coins will be also preserved as memorials of the Jubilee year.

An interesting account of a new process for preserving wood was lately given in a paper read before the Western Society of Engineers, Chicago. The method referred to is known as the Zinc-creosote process, dead oil and chloride of zinc being the active agents employed. It is specially suitable for railway sleepers, bridge-timbers, and for situations where wood is exposed to any great degree of moisture. The timber is first of all steamed in a vacuum; the oil is then injected into the cylinder in which the wood is placed; after which the chloride of zinc is applied by pressure. It is said that the oil penetrates the pores of the wood to a certain extent, and the chloride of zinc goes to those portions unreachd by the oil. According to the writer of the paper, Mr J. P. Card, the method will give the best results of any process for the money spent.

A new antiseptic has been recommended by Dr Schneider. It consists of one part carbolic acid, in crystals, to three parts of camphor well incorporated together. This mixture is said to possess all the good qualities of carbolic acid, while its irritating and caustic properties are removed and its peculiar odour considerably modified.

We some time ago referred to the grand scheme of charting the stars, which originated at Paris. Twelve observatories will be ready next year to commence upon the work, and other observatories are only waiting for funds for the necessary instruments. According to the Report of the Astronomer-royal to the Greenwich Board of Visitors, the Treasury has not yet decided whether Greenwich is to take part in this international work, and a question since asked in the House of Commons elicited the information that the matter was still under consideration. We trust, for the credit of British science, that the comparatively small sum required will not be withheld.

A lecture was lately delivered in London by Mr Julius Wolf upon that distressing affection known as Writers' Cramp. The lecturer has achieved great success in Germany and in other continental countries by his treatment of this disease, the cure for which has hitherto baffled medical science. This treatment consists in the subjection of the affected muscles to massage, a treatment which includes a variety of manipulations, such as stroking, pressing, kneading, rubbing, &c. Many writers and pianists who have been victims to this painful muscular affection will be glad to hear that this treatment has been in most cases found successful.

A curious trial, which was designed to test the speed of the telegraph as against the telephone, was recently undertaken at a newspaper office in New York. The test was between New York and Boston, and lasted ten minutes. In this short

period, Boston received three hundred and thirty words by telegraph ready for the printer; while at the same time three hundred and forty-six words were transmitted by telephone; but as many of the words sent by the latter instrument were incorrectly received, the telegraph was declared the victor.

An artificial chamois leather has been introduced by Messrs Hothersall of Manchester, who claim that the fabric is superior to that which it imitates in remaining supple after immersion in water, and being in other respects more serviceable than the real article. From an examination of the specimens sent to us we can endorse the favourable opinion. The material is in appearance exactly like leather, and can be produced at a much lower price. It will be found serviceable for the thousand-and-one uses to which wash-leather is applied.

Professor Netts of Dresden is said to have discovered a new method of making aluminium, which has recently been patented in this country. The ore used is cryolite, which is ground to powder, and after being mixed with common salt, is melted in a furnace. Sodium is now added in such a way that its vapour rises through the molten mass and displaces a part of the aluminium contained in the ore, which ultimately appears in the metallic form. Three and a half pounds of sodium so added are necessary to the production of one pound of aluminium. The new process as published seems to bear a great resemblance to the method of obtaining aluminium which was perfected by Messrs Bell of Newcastle many years ago.

SONNET.

I SAW her once, once only, long ago;
Yet now she often comes to me by night
Known by the hair, so silken-soft and bright,
That veils warm cheeks where crimson roses throw
A tender flush o'er pallid lily-snow.
She speaks not; only her golden head is light
Above my heart, that throbs with wild delight—
Dreaming she takes the love she cannot know.

Dear distant love, doth some sweet spirit-voice
Breathe in thine ear, when slumber is most deep,
All I were fain to tell if we should meet?
And dost thou come, because the word is sweet,
By shadowy paths we tread not save in sleep,
To bid me trust the future, and rejoice?

** TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
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A SUNSET CRUISE.

THERE is no prettier picture in this world than a smart cutter going free, when a fresh breeze sends her swishing through the waves like a veritable ocean nymph. And such is the *Pride*, bowling bravely down the upper reaches of Morecambe Bay; her sharp stem cutting through the wavelets which hiss past her smooth white sides, and stream away aft in a long wake of bubbling foam; whilst her lee scuppers are all awash as she heels over under a sky-scraping topsail. But never a white-winged yacht yet had such a crew as the witching maidens who are clustered on her weather quarter; nor was ever any tiller held by daintier hands than those of the handsome naïad who is at the helm, steering deftly 'full and bye' with many a toss of her sun-glinted head as the mischievous zephyrs flutter swinging locks of waving hair about her winsome face.

The sinking sun is flushing the western horizon a deep rich pink, and throwing long slants of primrose light across the dancing water. He has left the distant Yorkshire hills to slumber in purple shadow, and his fleeting beams have slipped silently over the bowed head of Arnside Knot and are racing down its steep wooded slopes, eager to reach the golden sands below and welcome the cutter as she stands out from the curving shores of Grange across towards Holm Island, in whose rocky chasms and clefts the water laps and sighs, like the sobbing of sorrowful mermaids imprisoned in the depths below; whilst the trees which crown its steep slopes form a dense background to a so-called temple of Vesta which gleams a gray beacon upon the outermost point. Beneath, the tide runs like a mill-race, and swirls round two islet crags standing like outposts to warn the pilot of shoaling waters.

'Ready!'

'About!'

Snowy arms of exquisite rounding put the tiller hard down, the long boom swings over, soft dimpled hands haul in the jib and foresail sheets, and the *Pride* sweeps round in a magnifi-

cent curve; then, with a coquettish shake of her topsail and a coy quiver at her mainsail's throat, she springs forward on her new course.

Away on the port beam is Silverdale, whose fine new red-tiled church stands like a sentinel on guard at one end of the long straggling village, where the houses are dotted up and down in picturesque disorder, and seem on fire as the sunset glows upon the window-panes. Farther on, the distant furnaces of Carnforth flicker and shoot up their lurid flame-wreaths high into the clouds; recalling somewhat the days of old, when the beacons blazed fiercely to warn the country-side of the coming foe. Beyond, the line of the land runs low for miles, and a flashing diamond marks where the sunlight catches the glass roof of the Winter Gardens at Morecambe, the Margate of the north.

'Keep her away.'

The mainsheet squirls melodiously as it is eased a trifle, and away she slips over the tide full towards the setting sun, whose last rays wrap the sweet *damoiselles* in soft golden light, and sparkle in the bright eyes of the skipper-maiden.

Little recks the *Pride*, as she glides on, of the treacherous sands below her keel, for ten feet of water is over them, and hours will elapse before their dread banks gleam wet and drear under a chill moon. But dry they will before the night is old, for between each tide Ocean draws himself back, and leaves a vast plain of a hundred thousand sandy acres filling this noble estuary, over which the river Kent winds a shallow channel. Before the Furness Railway was built along its shores, the main road from Lancaster to the north crossed this dreary plain, a distance of from seven to eleven miles, according as the currents shifted the banks. A dismal and dangerous track enough, as the registers of neighbouring churches show—Cartmel alone recording the burial of one hundred and twenty bodies, out of whom the life had been battered by the sea as it swept over the cruel sands; for here the tide does not flow gently, darting forward for a dozen paces, and then half shyly drawing back, as if undecided

whether to advance or not ; but it dashes on with a defiant heave, and rushes resistlessly and pitilessly in a curling wall of water, carrying everything before it ; and woe to the loiterer overtaken, or to the craft whose moorings are not strong ! A hush falls upon laughter-loving voyagers as the pilot tells how one fatal night a bridal party set out to cross from shore to shore, and were drowned in a deep sullen pool into which they floundered. Once, too, a stagecoach sank out of sight for ever in the greedy quicksands, taking down with it all the doomed passengers and struggling horses. If venturesome folk will look, they may see in the wreathing storm-mists dread figures—so it is said—wandering up and down, and rushing madly to or fro—the ghosts of those who have lost their lives on the sands—and above the howling of the gale and in the moaning of the sea may hear the cries of drowned men ; though unbelieving scoffers aver that they are nothing but the shrill screams of seabirds.

But whilst the 'watch below' have been spinning yarns, the fair 'helmsman' has been skilfully keeping away over to the northern shore, and now close on the starboard hand is Humphrey Head, from whose crest one of the loveliest views of mountain and of sea can be seen.

'Luff! lady, luff!'

The cutter comes up smartly into the wind, the sails flap, her way stops ; the dingey which has been towing madly astern is hauled alongside, and into it the crew are piped. But somehow the *Pride* falls off, fills, and forges ahead, and the bo'sun has to let go his hold of the cutter's quarter to prevent her dragging the little boat under ; and away she stands, leaving one fair 'hand' and himself adrift.

'What fun to leave them.'

But milder counsels prevail ; the cruiser is gybed, and bears down upon the castaways, who little think, as they scull three pretty passengers ashore, how near they have been to pulling all the way home up the bay. Running the boat on to a shelving slab of limestone and hauling her out of the tide, the crew scramble up through the thick hazel woods and under stunted oak-trees, where the rabbits scamper and dive into the honeycombed turf, on to the long rolling ridge.

Rising up in a smooth rounded slope on its eastern side, Humphrey Head shows a bold precipitous front to the westward, buttressed by great tumbled rocks, against which the waves are breaking ninety feet below with a muffled roar like distant thunder. In the face of the cliff is a great jagged archway, leading to the Fairies' Cavern, a somewhat dolorous rendezvous for light-hearted joyous sprites ; and beneath it on the shore, a so-called Holy Well, to which of old the Cumberland miners used to resort and hold high carnival as they drank its waters to cure the ill effects of lead-poisoning. But it is the grand prospect from the summit of

the Head which repays the climb. To the right lies Morecambe Bay, circled by wooded shores and rounded knolls. To the left is the estuary of the Leven, alternately a waste of melancholy sands and a great reach of heaving water, as the tide is out or in. To the north, and immediately beneath, stretches a narrow plain, shut in at the northern end by the great beech-trees of Holker, his Grace of Devonshire's favourite seat, and having in the foreground the ancient tower of Wraysholme, where once the knightly Herringtons dwelt. Then away beyond, far as the eye can reach, are the glorious mountains of the Lake-country. On the right flank is Conistone Old Man, looking bare and bold, with Wetherlam beside him ; then the ragged crest of Scafell, with a suspicion of Great Gable just beyond. Nearer the middle of that wall of crags, the Langdale Pikes tower up against a band of ruby cloud ; and then dauntless peaks and rugged ridges die down to the great hollow of Dunmail Raise, which bends low, to let the coach-road to Keswick pass over its neck, and then rises up to greet the 'dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn,' and make obeisance to the calm and dignified Fairfield. There they stand, those grand old giants, calmly gazing out across the world below them, utterly heedless of the clatter and racket, the hurry and bustle of that puny creature man ; silently bidding him look up from the dull level of routine and custom, and climb steep paths to heights of loftier and nobler manhood.

But the sun has long since sunk into the western sea, and the uplifted heads of those everlasting hills are growing gray and grayer in the rich afterglow, which is fast changing from crimson to ruddy orange, and fading into pale primrose ; and it is time to get down to the beach and aboard the cutter, which is standing off and on waiting for her boat.

A few minutes more and the *Pride* is away on a homeward course, the water coming merrily over her bows in sheets, as, with another fayre hand doing her 'trick at the helm,' she drives gallantly at the white-capped surges, rushing up their curving fronts, leaping their tumbling crests, and plunging down into the hollows with maddening glee, scattering the sparkling spray ; whilst the wind laughs in the taut shrouds and running rigging.

Suddenly a vessel looms out of the gloom to windward, her black hull and dark sails giving her an uncanny look ; and the absence of any sign of living being aboard, and the grim silent way she glides astern, recall that weird tradition of the Flying Dutchman. Readers of Marryat's *Phantom Ship* are of course familiar with the story of Captain Vanderdecken, who impiously swore that he would round Cape Horn in his brig if it took him until doomsday to do it, and is therefore condemned to sail for evermore with a fell crew of lost souls and to haunt the storm-lashed seas. But the crew of the *Pride* fear not their spectre-looking neighbour, for she is no supernatural brig or haunted lugger, but a staunch sloop with trawl-net down, drifting on the top of the ebb, which has begun to set.

The wind is falling with the tide and hauling

more into the north ; so the sheet is paid out, and the cutter, lifting herself with an easy roll, glides on an even keel with the boom well over her quarter. The daylight has altogether died ; the stars are twinkling faintly in the steel-blue sky, and a young moon is hanging her horns in the south-western heavens and bathing the crags of Yewbarrow and its fretted plume of waving fir-trees in soft splendour. The fitful breeze, laden with the scent of juniper bushes from the land, lingers round the hushed group on the moonlight deck, loth to waft them onward out of its reach ; and shyly kisses damask cheeks and toys with soft dusky hair, until it almost forgets to give bare steerage-way to the cutter, though the pilot cheerily 'whistles for the wind.' When and where did this popular superstition first take hold of the nautical mind ? All the world over and for generations, sailors have believed that a breeze can be thus induced, though in many localities this musical charm is banned as likely to produce too much of a good thing. On the Yorkshire coast the fisher-folk do not like to hear any whistle aboard their boats, for they say it brings both bad winds and bad luck ; though Filey men will do so when the 'wind is asleep,' to waken it. Around St Ives it is held to be unlucky to pipe up at night ; and Irish fishers are careful to abstain from whistling if they happen to be in a dangerous spot, lest a gale should spring up and catch their boats there. Nor is it only uneducated minds which are affected by these beliefs, for there is a certain gallant commander of one of Her Majesty's ships, on whose breast hangs a long row of medals, who, easy-going in many things, will yet never allow his blue-jackets to whistle about the decks, for it 'never brings any good.'

Nor are the lower orders of creation without their influence on the weather, so old salts believe—curlews, porpoises, and dogs, to wit ; and yet they all yield the palm in this respect to the domestic cat. Why she should exert such a baleful power it is hard to imagine ; yet certain is it that the crew of many a lost ship have distinctly traced their misfortunes to feline influence ; and one only needs to recall one or two of the commoner phrases current in the forecabin to see how intimately puss is associated with nautical creeds ; such, for instance, as a 'cat's-paw' of wind, 'cat's-nap' (of sleep), 'cat's-lap' (weak tea), 'raining cats and dogs,' 'cats can smell the wind.' Some one has ingeniously suggested that Friday is an unlucky day because of its being dedicated to the Norse goddess Frigg, whose favourite attendants were cats.

But both hostile and friendly wind-spirits are alike out of call to-night, and the yacht seems as though she never would round Berner's Point, and the minutes slip away fast ere she gets it well abeam and opens the lights of Grange, shining out from the dark hillside in long quivering paths of brightness upon the gurgling tide. At last the shadowy pier looms out eerily from the dim wave-washed beach, and the *Pride* steals past it to her moorings just beyond. There is the plunge of an anchor, a rattle of the cable over the bows, a squeaking of blocks, a squirling of running ropes, a flapping of canvas, the sound of oars in the rowlocks, a gentle plashing of unseen waters, the grating of a boat's keel on the

sand, then a musical chorus of 'good-night,' white figures vanishing into the silver haze, and our sunset cruise has become but a golden memory of the past.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—PROVING HIS CASE.

At the *pension* Hugh had engaged in haste a dull private sitting-room on the second floor, with bedroom and dressing-room adjoining at the side ; and here he laid Winifred down on the horse-hair sofa, wearied out with her long journey and her fit of delirium. The waiter brought her up refreshments on a tray, soup and sweetbreads and country wine—the plain sound generous Ligurian claret—and she ate and drank with an apparent avidity which fairly took her husband's breath away. The food supplied her with a sudden access of hectic energy. 'Wheel me over to the window,' she cried in a stronger voice to Hugh. And Hugh wheeled the sofa over as he was bid to a point where she could see across the town and the hills and the villas and the lemon-gardens.

It was beautiful, beautiful, very beautiful. For the moment, the sight soothed Winifred. She was content now to die where she lay. Her wounded heart asked nothing further from unkind fortune. She looked up at her husband with a stony gaze. 'Hugh,' she said, in firm but grimly resolute tones, with no trace of tenderness or softening in her voice, 'bury me here. I like the place. Don't try to take me home in a box to Whitstrand.'

Her very callousness, if callousness it were, cut him to the heart. That so young and frail and delicate a girl should talk of her own death with such seeming insensibility was indeed terrible. The proud hard man was broken at last. Shame and remorse had touched his soul. He burst into tears, and kneeling by her side, tried to take her hand with some passing show of affection in his. Winifred withdrew it, coldly and silently, as his own approached it. 'Winnie,' he cried, bending over her face, 'I don't ask you to forgive me. You can't forgive me. You could never forgive me for the wrong I've done you. But I do ask you, from my soul I do ask you, in this last extremity, to believe me and to listen to me. I did not lie to you last night. It was all true, what I told you in the *coupé*. I've never intrigued against you in the way you believe. I've never deceived you for the purpose you suppose. I've treated you cruelly, heartlessly, wickedly—I acknowledge that ; but oh, Winnie, I can't bear you to die as you will, believing what you do believe about me.—This is the hardest part of all my punishment. Don't leave me so ! My wife, my wife, don't kill me with this coldness !'

Winifred looked over at him more stonily than ever. 'Hugh,' she said with a very slow and distinct utterance, 'every word you say to me in this hateful strain only increases and deepens my loathing and contempt for you.—You see I'm dying—you know I'm dying. You've tried to hound me and to drive me to my grave, that

you might marry Elsie.—You've tried to murder me by slow degrees, that you might marry Elsie.—Well, you've carried your point: you've succeeded at last.—You've killed me now, or as good as killed me; and when I'm dead and gone, you can marry Elsie.—I don't mind that. Marry her and be done with it.—But if ever you dare to tell me again that lying story you concocted last night so glibly in the *coupé*—Hugh Massinger, I'll tell you in earnest what I'll do: I'll jump out of that window before your very face, and dash myself to pieces on the ground in front of you.'

She spoke with feverish and lurid energy. Hugh Massinger bent his head to his knees in abject wretchedness.

'Winifred, Winifred, my poor wronged and injured Winifred,' he cried at last, in another wild outburst, 'I can do or say nothing, I know, to convince you. But one thing perhaps will make you hesitate to disbelieve me. Look here, Winifred; watch me closely!'

A happy inspiration had come to his aid. He brought over the little round table from the corner of the room and planted it full in front of the sofa where Winifred was lying. Then he set a chair close by the side, and selecting a pen from his writing-case, began to produce on a sheet of note-paper, under Winifred's very eyes, some lines of manuscript—in Elsie's handwriting. Slowly and carefully he framed each letter in poor dead Elsie's bold and large-limbed angular character. He didn't need now any copy to go by; long practice had taught him to absolute perfection each twist and curl and flourish of her pen—the very tails of her *g*'s, the black downstroke of her *f*'s, the peculiar unsteadiness of her *s*'s and her *w*'s. Winifred, sitting by in haughty disdain, pretended not even to notice his strange proceeding. But as the tell-tale letter grew on apace beneath his practised pen—Elsie all over, past human conceiving—she condescended at last, by an occasional hasty glimpse or side-glance, to manifest her interest in this singular pantomime. Hugh persevered to the end in solemn silence, and when he had finished the whole short letter, he handed it to her in a sort of subdued triumph. She took it with a gesture of supreme unconcern. 'Did any man ever take such pains before,' she cried ironically, as she glanced at it with an assumption of profound indifference, 'to make himself out to his wife a liar, a forger, and perhaps a murderer!'

Hugh bit his lip with mortification, and watched her closely. The tables were turned. How strange that he should now be all eager anxiety for her to learn the truth he had tried so long and so successfully with all his might to conceal from her keenest and most prying scrutiny!

Winifred scanned the forged letter for a minute with apparent carelessness. He had written over again from memory the single note of Elsie's—or rather of his own in Elsie's hand—that Winifred had never happened at all to show him—the second note of the series, the one he despatched on the day of her father's death. It had reached her at Invertnar Castle, redirected from Whitestrاند, two mornings later. Winifred had read the few lines as soon as they arrived, and then burnt the page in haste, in the heat and flurry of that tearful time. But now, as the letter lay before her in fac-simile once more, the very

words and phrases came back to her memory, as they had come back to Hugh's, with all the abnormal vividness and distinctness of such morbid moments. Ill as she was—nay, rather dying—he had fairly aroused her feminine curiosity. 'How did you ever come to know what Elsie wrote me that day?' she asked coldly.

'Because I wrote it myself,' Hugh answered with an eager forward movement.

Winifred looked hard at him, half doubtful still. Could any man be quite so false and heartless? Admirably as he acted, could he act like this? What tragedian had ever such command of his countenance? Might not that strange story of his, so pat and straight, so consonant with the facts, so neatly adapted in every detail to the known circumstances, perhaps after all be actually true? Could Elsie be really and truly dead? Could ring and letters and circumstantial evidence have fallen out, not as she conceived, but as Hugh pretended?

'I can't make my mind up,' she muttered slowly. 'It's hard to believe that Elsie's dead. But for Elsie's sake, I hope so! I hope so!—That you have deceived me, I know and am sure. That Elsie's deceived me, I should be sorry to think, though I've often thought it. Your story, incredible as it may be, brings home all the baseness and cruelty to yourself. It exculpates Elsie. And I wish I could believe that Elsie was innocent. I could endure your wickedness if only I knew Elsie didn't share it!'

Hugh leaped from his chair with his hands clasped. 'Believe what you will about me,' he cried. 'I deserve it all. I deserve everything. But not of her—not of her, I beg of you. Believe no ill of poor dead Elsie!'

Winifred smiled a coldly satirical smile. 'So much devotion does you honour indeed,' she said in a scathing voice. 'Your consideration for dead Elsie's reputation is truly touching.—I only see one flaw in the case. If Elsie's dead, how did Mr Relf come to tell me, I should like to know, she was living at San Remo?'

'Relf!' Hugh cried, taken aback once more. 'Relf! Always! That serpent! That wriggling, insinuating, back-stairs intriguer! I hate the wretch. If I had him here now, I'd wring his neck for him with the greatest pleasure.—He's at the bottom of everything that turns up against me. He told you a lie, that's the plain explanation, and he told it to baffle me. He hates me, the cur, and he wanted to make my game harder. He knew it would sow distrust between you and me if he told you that lie; and he had no pity, like an unmanly sneak that he is, even on a poor weak helpless woman.'

'I see,' Winifred murmured with exasperating calmness. 'He told me the truth. It's his habit to tell it. And the truth happens to be very disconcerting to you, by making what you're frank enough to describe as your game a little harder. The word's sufficient. You can never do anything but play a game. That's very clear. I understand now. I prefer Mr Relf's assurance to yours, thank you!'

'Winifred,' Hugh cried, in an agony of despair, 'let me tell you the whole story again, bit by bit, act by act, scene by scene'—Winifred smiled derisively at the theatrical phrase—and you may question me out on every part of it. Cross-

examine me, please, like a hostile lawyer, to the minutest detail.—O Winnie, I want you to know the truth now. I wish you'd believe me. I can't endure to think that you should die mistaking me.'

His imploring look and his evident earnestness shook Winifred's wavering mind again. Even the worst of men has his truthful moments. Her resolution faltered. She began, as he suggested, cross-questioning him at full. He gave his replies plainly and straightforwardly. The fever of confession had seized hold of him once more. The pent-up secret had burst its bounds. He revealed his inmost soul to Winifred—he even admitted, with shame and agony, his abiding love and remorse for Elsie.

Overcome by her feelings, Winifred leaned back on the sofa and cried. Thank heaven, thank heaven, she could cry now. He was glad of that. She could cry, after all. That poor little cramped and cabined nature, turned in upon itself so long for lack of an outlet, found vent at last. Hugh cried himself, and held her hand. In her momentary impulse of womanly softening, she allowed him to hold it. Her wan small face pleaded piteously with his heart. 'Dare I, Winnie?' he asked with a faint tremor, and leaning forward, he kissed her forehead. She did not withdraw it. He thrilled at the concession. Then he thought with a pang how cruelly he had worn her young life out. She never reproached him; her feelings went far too deep for reproach. But she cried—silently.

At length she spoke. 'When I'm gone,' she said in a fainter voice now, 'you must put up a stone by Elsie's grave. I'm glad Elsie at least was true to me!'

Hugh's heart gave a bound. Then she wavered at last! She accepted his account! She knew that Elsie was dead and buried! He had carried his point. She believed him!—she believed him!

Winifred rose, and staggered feebly to her feet. 'I shall go to bed now,' she said in husky accents. 'You may send for a doctor. I shan't last long. But on the whole, I feel better so. I wanted Elsie to be alive indeed, because I hunger and thirst for sympathy, and Elsie would give it me. But I'm glad at least Elsie didn't deceive me!' She paused for a moment and wiped her eyes; then she steadied herself by the bar of the window—the air blew in so warm and fresh. She looked out at the palms and the blue, blue sea. It seemed to calm her, the beautiful south. She gazed long and wearily at the glassy water. But her dream didn't last undisturbed for many minutes. Of a sudden, a shade came over her face. Something below seemed to sting and appal her. She started back, tottering, from the open window. 'Hugh, Hugh!' she cried, ghastly pale and quivering, 'you said she was dead!—you said she was dead! You lie to me still. O heaven, how terrible!'

'So she is,' Hugh groaned out, half catching her in his arms for fear she should fall. 'Dead and buried, on my honour, at Orfordness, Winifred!'

'Hugh, Hugh! can you *never* tell me the truth?' And she stretched out one thin white bony forefinger towards the street beyond. One second she gasped a terrible gasp; then she flung

out the words with a last wild effort: 'That's she!—that's Elsie!'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—GHOST OR WOMAN?

Winifred spoke with such concentrated force of inner conviction that, absurd and incredible as he knew it to be—for had he not seen Elsie's own grave that day at Orfordness?—Hugh rushed over to the window in a fever of sudden suspense and anxiety, and gazed across the street to the exact spot where Winifred's ghost-like finger pointed eagerly to some person or thing on the pavement opposite. He was almost too late, however, to prove her wrong. As he neared the window, he caught but a glimpse of a graceful figure in light half-mourning—like Elsie's, to be sure, in general outline, though distinctly a trifle older and fuller—disappearing in haste round the corner by the pharmacy.

The figure gave him none the less a shock of surprise. It was certainly a very strange and awkward coincidence. He glanced at Winifred. She stood triumphant there—triumphant but heart-broken—exulting over his defeat with one dying 'I told you so,' and chuckling out inarticulately in her thin small voice, with womanish persistence: 'That's she!—that's Elsie!'

'It's very like her!' he moaned in his agony.

'Very like her!' Winifred cried with a fresh burst of unnatural strength. 'Very like her!—O Hugh, I despise you! I tell you I saw her face to face! It's Elsie—it's Elsie!'

His brain reeled and whirled with the unexpected shock; the universe turned round on him as on a pivot. 'Winifred,' he cried, 'you're right! you're right! There can't be anybody else on earth so like her! I don't know how she's come back to life! She's dead and buried at Orfordness! It's a miracle! a miracle! But that's she that we saw! I can't deny it. That's she!—that's Elsie!'

His hat lay thrown down on the table by his side. He snatched it up in his eager haste to follow and track down this mysterious resemblance. He couldn't let Elsie's double, her bodily simulacrum, walk down the street unnoticed and unquestioned. A profound horror possessed his soul. A doubter by nature, he seemed to feel the solid earth failing beneath his feet. He had never before in all his life drawn so perilously close to the very verge and margin of the unseen universe. It was Elsie herself, or else—the grave had yielded up its shadowy occupant.

He rushed to the door, on fire with his sense of mystery and astonishment. A loud laugh by his side held him back as he went. He turned round. It was Winifred, laughing, choking, exultant, hysterical. She had flung herself down on the sofa now, and was catching her breath in spasmodic bursts with unnatural merriment. That was the awful kind of laughter that bodes no good to those who laugh it—hollow, horrible, mocking, delusive. Hugh saw at a glance she was dangerously ill. Her mirth was the mirth of mania, and worse. With a burning soul and a chafing heart, he turned back, as in duty bound, to her side again. He must leave Elsie's wraith to walk by itself, unexplained and uninvestigated, its ghostly way down the streets of San Remo.

He had more than enough to do at home. Winifred was dying!—dying of laughter.

And yet her laugh seemed almost hilarious. In spite of all, it had a ghastly ring of victory and boisterous joy in it. 'O Hugh,' she cried, with little choking chuckles, in the brief intervals of her spasmodic peals, 'you're *too* absurd! You'll kill me! you'll kill me!—I can't help laughing; it's *so* ridiculous.—You tell me one minute, with solemn oaths and ingenious lies, you've seen her grave—you know she's dead and buried: you pull long faces till you almost force me to believe you—you positively cry and moan and groan over her—and then the next second, when she passes the window before my very eyes, alive and well, and in her right mind, you seize your hat, you want to rush out and find her and embrace her—here, this moment, right under my face—and leave me alone to die by myself, without one soul on earth to wait upon me or help me! Oh, you make me laugh! You've broken my heart; but you'll be the death of me.—Puck and Don Juan rolled into one!—"Elsie's dead!—Why, there's dear Elsie!"—It's too incongruous; it's too ridiculous.' And she exploded once more in a hideous semblance of laughter.

Hugh gazed at her blankly, sobered with alarm. Was she going mad? or was he mad himself?—that he should see visions, and meet dead Elsie! Could it really be Elsie? He had heard strange stories of appearances and second-sight, such as mystics among us love to dwell upon; and in all of them the appearances were closely connected with death-bed scenes. Could any truth lurk, after all, in those discredited tales of wraiths and visions? Could Elsie's ghost have come from the grave to prepare him betimes for Winifred's funeral? Or did Winifred's dying mind, by some strange alchemy, project, as it were, an image of Elsie, who filled her soul, on to his own eye and brain, as he sat there beside her?

He brushed away these metaphysical cobwebs with a dash of his hand. Fool that he was to be led away thus by a mere accidental coincidence or resemblance! He was tired with sleeplessness; emotion had unmanned him.

Winifred's laugh dissolved itself into tears. She broke down now, hysterically, utterly. She sobbed and moaned in agony on the sofa. Deep sighs and loud laughter alternated horribly in her storm of emotion. The worst had come. She was dangerously ill. Hugh feared in his heart she was on the point of dying.

'Go!' she burst out, in one spasmodic effort, thrusting him away from her side with the palm of her open hand. 'I don't want you here. Go—go—to Elsie! I can die now. I've found you all out. You're both of you alike; you've both of you deceived me.'

Hugh rang the bell wildly for the Swiss waiter. 'Send the chambermaid!' he cried in his broken Italian. 'The patroness! A lady! The signora is ill. No time to be lost. I must run at once and find the English doctor.'

When Winifred looked around her again, she found two or three strange faces crowded beside the bed on which they had laid her, and a fresh young Italian girl, the landlady's daughter, holding her head and bathing her brows with that universal specific, orange-flower water. The faint

perfume revived her a little. The landlady's daughter was a comely girl, with sympathetic eyes, and she smiled the winsome Italian smile as the poor pale child opened her lids and looked vaguely up at her. 'Don't cry, signorina,' she said soothingly. Then her glance fell, woman-like, upon the plain gold ring on Winifred's thin and wasted fourth finger, and she corrected herself half unconsciously: 'Don't cry, signora. Your husband will soon be back by your side: he's gone to fetch the English doctor.'

'I don't want him,' Winifred cried, with intense yearning, in her boarding-school French, for she knew barely enough Italian to understand her new little friend. 'I don't want my husband; I want Elsie. Keep him away from me—keep him away, I pray.—Hold my hand yourself, and send away my husband! Je ne l'aime pas, cet homme-là!' And she burst once more into a discordant peal of hysterical laughter.

'The poor signora!' the girl murmured, with wide open eyes, to the others around. 'Her husband is cruel. Ah, wicked wretch! Hear what she says! She says she doesn't want any more to see him. She wants her sister!'

As she spoke, a white face appeared suddenly at the door—a bearded man's face, silent and sympathetic. Warren Relf had heard the commotion down-stairs, from his room above, and had seen Massinger rush in hot haste for the doctor. He had come down now with eager inquiry for poor wasted Winifred, whose face and figure had impressed him much as he saw her borne out by the porters at the railway station.

'Is the signora very ill?' he asked in a low voice of the nearest woman. 'She speaks no Italian, I fear. Can I be of any use to her?'

'Ecco! 'tis Signor Relf, the English artist!' the woman cried, in surprise; for all San Remo knew Warren well as an old inhabitant.—'Come in, signor,' she continued, with Italian frankness—for bedrooms in Italy are less sacred than in England. 'You know the signora? She is ill—very ill: she is faint—she is dying.'

At the name, Winifred turned her eyes languidly to the door, and raised herself, still dressed in her travelling dress, on her elbows on the bed. She yearned for sympathy. If only she could fling herself on Elsie's shoulder! Elsie, who had wronged her, would at least pity her. 'Mr Relf,' she cried, too weak to be surprised, but glad to welcome a fellow-countryman and acquaintance among so many strangers—and with Hugh himself worse than a stranger—'I'm going to die. But I want to speak to you. You know the truth. Tell me about Elsie. Why did Elsie Challoner deceive me?'

'Deceive you!' Warren answered, drawing nearer in his horror. 'She didn't deceive you. She couldn't deceive you. She only wished to spare your heart from suffering all her own heart had suffered. Elsie could never deceive any one!'

'But why did she write to say she was in Australia, when she was really living here in San Remo?' Winifred asked piteously. 'And why did she keep up a correspondence with my husband?'

'Write she was in Australia! She never wrote,' Warren cried in haste, seizing the poor dying girl's thin hand in his.—'Mrs Massinger,

this is no time to conceal anything. I dare not speak to you against your husband, but still'—

'I hate him!' Winifred gasped out, with concentrated loathing. 'He has done nothing since I knew him but lie to me and deceive me. Don't mind speaking ill of him; I don't object to that. What kills me is that Elsie has helped him! Elsie has helped him!'

'Elsie has not,' Warren answered, lifting up her white little hand to his lips and kissing it respectfully. 'Elsie and I are very close friends. Elsie has always loved you dearly. If she's hidden anything from you, she hid it for your own sake alone.—It was Hugh Massinger who forged those letters.—I can't let you die thinking ill of Elsie. Elsie has never, never written to him.—I know it all.—I'll tell you the truth. Your husband thought she was drowned at Whitestrand!'

'Then Hugh doesn't know she's living here?' Winifred cried eagerly.

Warren Relf hardly knew how to answer her in this unexpected crisis. It was a terrible moment. He couldn't expose Elsie to the chance of meeting Hugh face to face. The shock and strain, he knew, would be hard for her to bear. But, on the other hand, he couldn't let that poor broken-hearted little woman die with this fearful load of misery unlightened on her bosom. The truth was best. The truth is always safest. 'Hugh doesn't know she's living here,' he answered slowly. 'But if I could only be sure that Hugh and she would not meet, I'd bring her round, before she leaves San Remo, this very day, and let you hear from her own lips, beyond dispute, her true story.'

Winifred clenched her thin hands hard and tight. 'He shall never enter this room again,' she whispered hoarsely, 'till he enters it to see me laid out for burial.'

COURTS-MARTIAL.

THE public mind was some months ago seriously disquieted by a court-martial held at Brompton Barracks, Chatham, on Major Templer, of the King's Own Royal Rifles. That officer was charged with the serious offence of betraying certain State secrets with regard to ballooning and balloon-making, and with telling lies to his superior officers. The Major was not only fully and honourably acquitted, but has returned to his duty; he has also received the approval of all sections of the press, and the practical sympathy of the Government, who have paid all the expenses—about six hundred pounds—which he necessarily incurred in his defence. The Secretary of State for War has not only personally apologised to the gallant officer, but also from his place in the House of Commons. So large a section of the public have taken a deep interest in the above case, that probably many readers will be glad to learn something of the constitution and powers of courts-martial.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, it may be mentioned that neither officers nor soldiers lose their rights as civilians by being in the army; but they are bound also by the sterner codes of the Mutiny Act, Articles of War, and Army Judicature Act. The decisions or findings on all the cases to which we presently refer having been

officially promulgated, none are of a debatable nature.

Courts-martial have probably derived their name and much of their jurisdiction from the Marshal's Court or court-martial of our ancient organisation. Their modern form—ensuring the benefits of trial by jury—was established in the reign of Charles I. A strong resemblance to the 'Articles and Military Laws' of Gustavus Adolphus and the military jurisprudence of Germany and the Low Countries, is apparent in our courts-martial system of the present day. The ordinary jurisdiction of courts-martial extends to taking cognisance of offences committed either at home or abroad, by land or sea, by those who are subject to the Army or Mutiny Act. The courts not only have the powers of a court of general assize, but are essentially courts of equity and honour; and no appeal lies from the sentence of a court-martial either to the Court of Queen's Bench or to any other court in the British dominions. This apparently remarkable anomaly is accounted for by the fact that the Judge Advocate-General personally submits to the sovereign, for approval, the proceedings of general courts-martial, and therefore it would be unconstitutional for a court of law to revise or review the personal approval of the queen or king.

Courts-martial are of five denominations: (1) General, (2) Detachment General, (3) District (or Garrison), (4) Detachment (or Regimental), and (5) Drum Head; and the number of commissioned officers required to form them varies from three to eleven, according to their denomination, and according to the part of the world in which they may be assembled. Their internal working is remarkable, and instructive, when compared with that of ordinary courts of law, and may be illustrated by reference to cases which have taken place since 1862, when much regimental dirty linen was washed before the public. In that year, the non-military world had its newspapers filled with a scandal to which a distinguished regiment, then in Dublin, treated the public. A Captain of that regiment was tried upon the following charges: 'For not having submitted the matter of Colonel —'s insult to be dealt with by superior authority, in compliance with the 17th Article of War; for not having taken proper lawful steps to vindicate his character; and also for having, in his final letter, stated that he had submitted his application to retire from the army "entirely through intimidation," knowing the statement to be false.'

The court-martial was held in barracks in Dublin, in a room once a schoolroom, which still retained its wall ornaments of maps and diagrams. Near the entrance door was a general miscellaneous collection of Irish jaunting-cars and seedy cabs, plenty of idlers, a few officers, and many orderlies and other soldiers on duty. Inside the room, the officers comprising the court, arrayed in scarlet (or blue), edged with gold, *not* ermine, sat at a long table covered with green baize. When a witness was called, there being no witness-box, he usually took up his own position. The Captain—whose trial, by the way, took twenty-nine days—had comfortably ensconced himself in a corner behind a neat table, and added materially to his own comfort, and, as events proved, 'confounded the knavish tricks' of his enemies

by 'taking to himself' two or three gentlemen in neat black dress, who sat near him. These were his solicitors and counsel; but, according to military rule of 1862, the judges in scarlet had to be 'colour-blind' regarding these personages, who were assumed to convey their professional assistance in a surreptitious and mysterious manner. After the court had been sworn 'to duly administer justice according to the rules and articles for the better government of Her Majesty's forces, and according to an Act then in force for the punishment of Mutiny and Desertion and other crimes therein specified, without partiality, favour, or affection,' &c., the witnesses were duly called, and then the court became a 'spectacle,' in its happy mimicry of a genuine trial, by the strangeness of the procedure, the length and sluggishness of this *cause célèbre*. The court-martial system with its measured pace and grave tediousness, however, put to shame the indecent haste in which, inside the genuine temples of law, cases are sometimes unduly rushed or scampered through, regardless of their merits; but the scarlet judge and jury who sat at the table in happy equality, no doubt felt themselves to be trustees of the court-martial system, and having apparently no fixed idea as to what evidence was to be excluded or admitted, administered justice with all proper scrupulousness and deliberation. When the prisoner, the Captain, wished to put a question, either he or one of his legal advisers wrote it on a slip of paper, handed it to an orderly, who took it to the President (or supreme judge of the court), who first read it to himself. If he thought there was anything wrong in the question, he probably had a friendly colloquy with the prisoner and suggested an alteration; but if the Captain was obstinate, the 'docket' went on to the Judge Advocate-General, and after antagonistic trimming or shaping, the question was either put, or the court cleared that the judges might sit with closed doors to deliberate on it. In the latter event, the professional amateur brethren who had crowded in from the four courts of Dublin, the prisoner and his advisers, newspaper reporters, and all the tag-rag and bobtail, were hastily hunted out, and the door of the court shut while the members held counsel. In about a quarter of an hour the door was opened, and in scampered, with much rushing and stamping, the excluded heterogeneous human mass. Order and silence having been restored, the military chief-justice reads in a sonorous impressive voice the decision of the court on the question. The decision was that it might be put, and it ran as follows:

Question. Did Colonel Touchemsup state to you, in the presence of Cornet Snaffle, that the prisoner rode improperly, and needed a back-board?

Heavy Dragoon Captain, witness, deliberately replied: 'I do not remember positively.'

After the answer had been written down, the (acting) Judge Advocate-General read it out in measured terms. The slip of paper on which the question had been written was now impaled on a 'bill-file,' and the transaction ended, only to be recommenced in similar fashion.

Question by the Prisoner. Do you consider the Colonel persecuted me?

After this question had travelled safely through the stages we have enumerated, the Heavy

Dragoon Captain replied: 'I respectfully object to answer.'

A member of the court who was making a surreptitious and caricature sketch, stopped short with astonishment, and the court, through its President, gently pressed Heavy Dragoon Captain to reply. The Heavy Dragoon Captain positively refused, and as before, the court was, to the disgust of its occupiers, again cleared. After an interval of twenty minutes, the debate with closed doors is over, and the public are readmitted.

Result.—The court decide that the Heavy Dragoon Captain must answer.

The Deputy Judge Advocate-General reads the question aloud. The Heavy Dragoon Captain, after looking at the ceiling, the map on the wall, the prisoner, and the court, replies in measured voice: 'I do not know.'

The pens once more took up the burden, and so this punctilious method went on. This is no over-drawn sketch; it had been the system of court-martial procedure for over a hundred years; indeed, it is only within the last four or five years that the system has been altered, and assimilated to the practice of ordinary law-courts. A witty writer of 1862 thus analyses the manner in which the different days of this court-martial were occupied, and there is really no over-colouring:

	Days.
Case for the prosecution.....	7
Defence and evidence for the prisoner.....	7½
Inquiry whether or not Colonel — tampered with a witness.....	1½
Witness to contradict the defence.....	5
Witness to contradict the witnesses who contradicted the defence.....	2
Witness to contradict the witnesses who contradicted the witnesses who contradicted the defence.....	2
Witness to contradict the last-mentioned witness.....	1
Concluding speech of Captain —, who had spoken twice before.....	1
Concluding speech of the prosecutor.....	1
Fragments of days.....	1

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Of course, if the trial had been before a judge, the greater part of the evidence and the contradictions of the witnesses, like the House that Jack built, would have been rejected as irrelevant to the question at issue; in point of fact, this regimental squabble really occupied as much time as all the four trials of Palmer, Madeleine Smith, Smeethurst, and Rush. In these trials of intense intricacy and importance, where the parties were tried for their lives, the judges satisfactorily got over all the cases within the period this one court-martial occupied. The end of the above long trial was that the Captain in question was acquitted of the first and third charges, found guilty of the second, and sentenced to be turned out of the service. He had, however, as previously explained, artfully provided himself with those skillful weapons, a good solicitor and advocate; and as a final result, the court-martial was not confirmed, on the ground of some legal irregularity, and the officer thus became an acquitted man.

A few years after, the public were treated to two more decidedly scandalous courts-martial, and accusations enough were freely exchanged to render the small and select society to which the

accused belonged the reverse of comfortable. One of the officers involved, a Captain, was A.D.C. to the Commander-in-chief in India, and had the reputation of being a zealous and good officer; but differences between him and his chief arose somehow, and the result was a court-martial which was a public scandal all over India and England, both from the time it occupied and the nature of the evidence. The War Office authorities took up the case, and a correspondence took place between them and the Indian authorities, in which both parties indulged in the pastime of pelting each other with adjectives.

With regard to the other officer, a Colonel, the accusations were so framed, and the feeling in India so strong against him, that the venue was changed from India to England, so that the Colonel and his accusers and a multitude of witnesses were brought at the public expense from India to England, where the trial took place. At that court-martial, more regard was had as to conditions of space for the public and the reporters, and the newspapers had, as the Americans say, 'a high good time' in reporting the case for many days. The public also were gratified by all sorts of imputations of conspiracy and malice, with so much hunting after regimental squabbles, foreign to the issue, that the original charge against the Colonel seemed to fade into insignificance. The court-martial lasted a good many weeks, and the Colonel was acquitted. The battle, however, was an expensive one, and the public had to pay about fifty thousand pounds for the pastime. Since that court-martial, however, the War Office have not indulged in a similar financial exploit of bringing accused, accuser, and all the witnesses from a distant land to England for the purpose of holding the trial.

In 1876, when there had been, as it were, a Rip-van-Winkle interval of eight or ten years, the War Office woke up from its slumbers, and indulged the public with a court-martial on one of the officers of a marching regiment. That gentleman was tried at Belfast on charges which it is unnecessary to specify. It was considered to be a remarkable fact at the time, that many people who gave evidence before the court and flatly contradicted each other were supposed to be models of honour and veracity. This trial only lasted twelve days, but an enormous amount of mud was thrown, and the 'scarlet inquisition' had no easy task in hunting down the right parties. The same system as to writing down questions on slips of paper was pursued; the defence was printed and read aloud in court, which was anything but a 'harbour of repose,' from the number of objections made to the line adopted by the prosecution, and also other points raised by the solicitor for the prisoner. Finally, the officer was acquitted of the whole of the first charge; but he was convicted of a portion of the second charge; and a few days after, the *Irish Times* astonished the public by publishing the sentence of the court, and hinting at the votes of the members, apparently by a very narrow majority, adverse to the prisoner.

As an oath is taken by all the members neither to divulge the sentence until the court-martial has been confirmed, nor 'on any account at any time whatsoever to disclose or discover' the vote or opinion of any particular member of the court,

this incident excited much comment and inquiry; but the press as usual kept its own counsel, and nothing was proved against any one. The officer had to leave the army; but Her Majesty was graciously pleased to order the price of his commission to be paid him.

In the Templer court-martial recently held at Chatham, the prosecutor and the prisoner were permitted to be represented in the ordinary way by counsels and solicitors. The Major took full advantage of his powers, and provided himself with an astute solicitor, and a very clever cross-examining counsel, Mr Winch, Q.C. The latter gentleman considerably edified the court, the witnesses, and the public, by the free use of his sharp scalping-knife of cross-examination, which he applied somewhat ruthlessly all round to the hostile witnesses, springing a mine from time to time on the Treasury Advocate who prosecuted. It is a step in the right direction that the advocate of a prisoner may, like the French advocate who addresses a *conseil de guerre* when a French prisoner is tried, address a court-martial.

In accordance with rule, the court was closed after the defence had ended, and the President asked each officer to vote 'guilty or not guilty' according to his conscience and his oath, beginning with the junior member of the court. As the Major was acquitted, he was at once released. Had he been found guilty, the proceedings of the court-martial, after being examined in the office of the Judge Advocate-General, would have been laid before the Queen for final approval or disapproval. As a proof of the value of the 'new system,' we may mention that this court-martial occupied only four days. Probably, had it come before a judge, he would have stopped the case in a few hours.

MRS FARQUHARSON'S NIECE.

By WILLIAM GALBRAITH.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAP. I.—AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

WHEN I first left home to act as companion to Mrs Farquharson at Shuttleton Manor, I was only eighteen, and very simple and inexperienced; but, unlike many who long to try their wings outside the home circle, my first flight into the great world beyond tended nothing to diminish the bright visions in which young hearts are prone to indulge, for, in Mrs Farquharson's house, I was from the beginning treated more like a daughter than a hired companion; and though I missed the home faces very much, yet I was seldom subject to those fits of loneliness and depression which are the general experience of those launched out on the busy world for the first time and separated from all family ties.

Mrs Farquharson was a widow, with no children; two she had had, but both died in infancy out in India, where her husband had held a post under government. She had been but two years in England when I first went to her, having come home after her husband's death. Possessed of ample means—for she had a private fortune of her own, inherited from an aunt, besides what her

husband left—she yet lived in a very quiet style, keeping but four servants and seeing little company; indeed, but for an occasional visit from the rector or his wife, and a chance one from the curate, we would have seen almost nobody save ourselves. The house was large, commodious, and old-fashioned, and had been known as the Manor for ages back. It had been for some time untenanted before Mrs Farquharson entered into possession, the owner being unmarried and resident abroad. It was a larger house than Mrs Farquharson at first contemplated renting; but the rent was very moderate, and she conceived a liking for it when first she saw it, which finally led to her leasing it for a period of five years. A good many of the rooms were unfurnished, because not required. I may add here that, beyond its antiquity, there was nothing romantic about the house—no thrilling, blood-curdling stories of restless ghosts roaming the gloomy corridors aimlessly through the silent watches of the night, or of haunted chambers and dark deeds committed in days gone by, but, on the contrary, everything was very prosaic and matter of fact, as befitted the nineteenth century. The Manor stood about a quarter of a mile off the main road which led to the village of Shuttleton, and was approached by a long avenue of beeches. The grounds around it were pretty extensive, though much less so than in days long since past.

My duties as companion were very light. Sometimes I read to Mrs Farquharson while she sewed; wrote letters to her dictation, or occupied myself with some fancy-work while we both sat and chatted. At other times we drove out occasionally, hiring from the village inn for this purpose—Mrs Farquharson keeping neither horse nor carriage—or strolled about the grounds together, she being still strong and active for her years. My lines had certainly fallen in pleasant places; and although many of my age would have considered the life we led somewhat dull, yet I never found it so, as at home I had been used to a very quiet humdrum life and had small inclination for gaiety of any kind. I had always been of a quiet disposition—too much so for my years, my dear mother often said. We had recently had a new member added to our household at the Manor in the shape of an old bachelor brother of Mrs Farquharson's—Mr Vaughan, a Professor of Theology from one of the universities, who, through failing health, had felt himself obliged to resign his professorship, and, at his sister's request, had been prevailed on to give up his own bachelor establishment and come and live with her. His presence made little difference in our mode of living, however, as he buried himself in his books from morning till night, and spent most of his time in his own room, generally having his meals sent up to him, so that sometimes for days together I scarcely saw him. He was engaged writing a work on theology, which took up a great portion of his time. He never joined us in our walks or drives, and seldom left the house except when he went up to town for a day to purchase some new book or visit some old acquaintance.

One bright sunny afternoon in June, about six months after my arrival at the Manor, I started for the village, a book under my arm, borrowed from the village library, which Mrs Farquharson and I had been reading together, and which I

intended to return. Here in the darkened avenue the sun's strong heat did not penetrate, and my white sunshade hung carelessly in my hand as I walked along. When I came within view of the east gate, I caught sight of a figure approaching, evidently making for the house. It was that of a woman, dressed entirely from head to foot in gray, and carrying a cloak of the same Quaker-like hue over her arm. In her hand she carried a small travelling bag. She was advancing along the avenue at a swinging pace, and flourishing the bag backwards and forwards in her hand, as though its weight were nothing. On first observing me, she seemed somewhat taken aback; her swinging pace dwindled down into a graceful walk, and her hand with the bag dropped to her side very demurely, and remained stationary. As she came nearer, I saw that she was of fair complexion, had on a short veil, and wore her hair cut short behind and in a fringe over her brow. She was remarkably tall, I thought, for a woman, but carried her figure gracefully. When she stopped beside me, I felt like a pigmy beside a giantess.

'I beg your pardon,' said she, in a soft deep musical voice, 'but am I right in thinking this avenue leads to the Manor—to Mrs Farquharson's?'

'You are perfectly right,' I answered. 'This leads you direct to the Hall entrance. You cannot go wrong.'

She thanked me, and walked on, not without an admiring glance at my soft white dress and light straw hat. For my life I could not help turning to look after her. Perhaps she suspected this, for she never turned her head or resumed her swinging walk, although I watched her till she went out of sight round a turn of the avenue. 'Who can she be?' I wondered. 'Certainly, not a visitor to the servants; and yet Mrs Farquharson was expecting no one, and this girl seems as though she had come to stay.'

When I got back to the house it was nearly six o'clock. The door was opened by Mrs Glass the housekeeper, with whom I was a great favourite. I saw instantly by her face that she had something to tell me. She followed me up-stairs to my room. 'Mrs Farquharson has a visitor this afternoon, miss,' she began, shutting the door behind her carefully, 'a niece of hers—a Miss Selwyn. She has come to stay for a day or two. We are having tea at half-past six.'

'Is she a tall young lady dressed in gray?' I inquired, much interested. 'For if so, I met her in the avenue, coming here.'

'Yes, miss, that is her,' replied Mrs Glass, 'tall and fair.—I don't think Mrs Farquharson expected her, for she appeared much surprised when she arrived.'

'I suppose I had better not go down till Mrs Farquharson sends for me, then,' I said. 'She will have a lot of things to say to her niece, probably, that she may not wish a stranger to hear. I wonder she did not mention her coming to me, if she knew.'

'I don't think she did, miss; but I will have to go down and see after things. I don't want Mrs Farquharson to catch me gossiping.'

After she left me, I stood gazing abstractedly out of the window into the garden beyond, my thoughts full of the unexpected visitor. I hoped

if she were going to stay for any length of time, she would prove nice and agreeable; for, if not, I might be made very uncomfortable in my position of companion. Mrs Farquharson had a sister down in one of the southern counties, I knew, whose married name was Selwyn; but of the existence of a Miss Selwyn I had never previously heard. My impression, indeed, had been that she had none of a family; but evidently I was mistaken. There had also been another sister married, who had died many years ago, leaving a son, who was in business somewhere in London. I had never seen Mrs Selwyn at the Manor.

I washed my face and hands, changed my dress for one of black grenadine—a present from Mrs Farquharson—placed a few flowers in my hair and dress, and then my toilet was complete. Mrs Farquharson and I always dined together, as a matter of course; but to-night I hesitated about going down till sent for. I felt my position slightly altered by the arrival of Miss Selwyn. About half-past six, however, a message was brought me by one of the maids that Mrs Farquharson wished me to go down-stairs to join her and Miss Selwyn at tea. Somewhat fluttered, I descended the broad stairway leading to the hall. I found Mrs Farquharson and her niece in her favourite sitting-room, at the back of the large drawing-room, where we generally dined when alone. Our dinner-hour was three o'clock, and tea at six. We kept somewhat primitive hours.

As I entered the room, Miss Selwyn was standing admiring herself in a large mirror which stood over the mantel-piece. She still wore her gray dress, and looked even taller without her hat. She came forward with a smile.

'Doris, my friend Miss Stuart.—Naomi, this is my niece, Doris Selwyn. I daresay you have heard me speak of her.' Mrs Farquharson seemed to perform this introduction with an effort. As a matter of fact, I had never previously heard Miss Selwyn mentioned; but I let that pass.

'Miss Stuart and I have already met, aunt,' Miss Selwyn said frankly, holding out her hand and dropping a light kiss on my cheek. As she did so, I happened to glance towards Mrs Farquharson, and was astonished at the expression of something almost like fear which her countenance betrayed; but it was but momentary; an instant later, I concluded I was mistaken.

'I hope we shall be great friends,' continued Miss Selwyn. 'I always know at first whether I shall like a person or not, and I think I shall like you.—And so your name is Naomi! It is very quaint and pretty, I think, and just suits you.'

'Not so pretty as your own,' said I. 'Mine is rather old-maidish and sedate; while yours'—

'Puts you in mind of a giddy romp, as I am,' interrupted she in a gay tone.—'Are you not surprised at seeing me, Miss Stuart? The fact is, I was returning home from a visit to some friends in Scotland, and passing by this place, thought I would look aunt and uncle up on the way.—Uncle has not yet put in an appearance, though.—You will have to excuse my dress, for all the rest of my luggage has been sent on, and I have only this with me, and one for the mornings; but I knew aunt lived very quietly, so I daresay it will not matter.'

'I am sure, Doris, both Naomi and I are very

pleased to see you,' said Mrs Farquharson, rather more cordially, I thought; 'only, perhaps you will find it dull.—As for the dress, if necessary that can easily be remedied; but probably you will not need, as you are sure to tire of our quiet life.—But here comes tea at last.'

During the meal, which Professor Vaughan did not honour with his presence, Miss Selwyn talked incessantly, rattling on at such a rate and using so many slang terms that I was rather amazed, but nevertheless enjoyed her conversation very much. Mrs Farquharson, too, appeared to unbend towards her niece. At first, by her manner, I had judged the visitor to be unwelcome, but attributed this to Mrs Farquharson's dislike to anything which disturbed our retired way of living. I must say that Miss Selwyn was blest with an extraordinarily good appetite, for I did think she never would have finished; while Mrs Farquharson and I merely dawdled over our meal to keep her in countenance.

'I was dreadfully famishing, aunt,' she said at length, pushing back her cup. 'I should so like to have a stroll about the grounds'—rising and walking towards the long window which opened outwards into the garden.—'If you do not care for coming, perhaps Miss Stuart will accompany me, or I can go alone.'

A little to my surprise, for she never went out after sunset, Mrs Farquharson rose at once, wrapping round her a white shawl, which hung over the back of her chair.—Miss Selwyn had snatched up an antimacassar from the couch, and gracefully flung it over her shoulders.—'I will go with you, Doris,' Mrs Farquharson said; 'Naomi will be tired after her walk.'

I was about to disclaim all feeling of weariness; but without waiting, Miss Selwyn swung open the window, and a minute later they were outside amongst the flowers. Seen from the window, there was a strong resemblance between them; both were tall, though Miss Selwyn had decidedly the advantage, and their features were very similar. Miss Selwyn's were if anything too large for a woman; and her closely cropped hair gave her a boyish appearance, which well suited the hoydenish character she affected. She might be somewhere about three or four and twenty, judging by her looks. She interested me greatly; her frank careless manner was very winning; she was such a complete contrast to myself in every way, for I was small and dark, and had little to say to any one until I was well acquainted. The habit she had of interlarding her conversation with slang terms gave a piquancy to it that seemed to render her smallest remarks brilliant and witty. She was undeniably handsome; while I had never considered myself a beauty at the best of times. I longed to join them, and for the first time felt as if Mrs Farquharson might consider me an intruder, since she had not asked me to accompany them.

Next morning I rose early as usual, for I liked a half-hour amongst the flowers before breakfast. I was busy arranging a small bouquet from my own particular plot for the breakfast table, when I heard footsteps approaching, and looking up, beheld Miss Selwyn, arrayed in a crimson morning gown, with Mrs Farquharson's white shawl round her shoulders, and on her head an old

garden hat of my own, which she had picked up in the hall.

'Good-morning,' she cried gaily. 'I saw you from the window, and thought it a pity to let you pine in solitude and alone. So here I am.'

'I wasn't pining; but I am glad to see you all the same.—Isn't it a lovely morning? I hope you slept well, Miss Selwyn?'

'Thanks. I slept better than I expected.—By the way, where did you disappear to last night? When aunt and I came in, you had gone off.—I hope you will not let my being here make any difference to you, Miss Stuart. I should like to call you Naomi, and you can call me Doris. May I?'

'Certainly, if you wish,' I stammered, colouring a little. 'You are very kind.—I had some letters to write last night, and took the opportunity of doing so when Mrs Farquharson would not be likely to miss me.'

'Oh, that is all right, then. I was afraid I had driven you away.—Uncle came down-stairs after aunt and I came in last night, and I had "quite a time" with him, as the Americans say.—What a comical old boy he is; he seems half asleep most of the time. I must try and rouse him up; see if I don't! I told him he must come down to breakfast this morning, as I wouldn't enjoy the meal without him; and if he doesn't turn up, I'll let him hear of it. He'll have to give up his beloved books for one morning at least.—Is this your own particular garden, Naomi? Aunt tells me you take chief charge of the flowers.'

'Yes; this is my own little plot,' I replied, twisting a long blade of grass round the stalks of my bouquet and then holding the flowers up to her for inspection. 'Did you ever see anything so pretty?'

'I think I have,' she answered smiling, glancing at me meaningly as she spoke. 'A great deal prettier, too. But they are very nice.—I should like that rose you have, it is so sweet.—Thank you, I shall keep it for your sake.—There is aunt looking from the window; perhaps we had better go in.' And in we went, my face flushing rosy red at the compliment her eyes had paid me. Had she been a man, I do not think I could have been more confused.

SMUGGLING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

SINCE the repeal of the Malt Tax in 1880, an increase of smuggling has gradually taken place in the Highlands, and this increase is beginning to assume formidable proportions, in spite of the utmost endeavours of the revenue authorities. About the middle of the present century smuggling was very common in the wild isolated parts of the country; but owing to the restrictions placed on the materials used in the manufacture of spirits, and the vigilance and zeal of the revenue officers, illicit distillation was practically suppressed; and although a few working bothies or huts still existed, the quantity of spirits made in them did not seriously affect the interests of the revenue.

The stations formed by the Board of Inland Revenue for the suppression of smuggling are of

two kinds, called Preventive Stations and Preventive Rides respectively. The former are established in parts where smuggling is known to be extensively practised, the staff consisting of an Inland Revenue officer and one or two 'Preventive men.' These have also the occasional assistance of a supervisor, who has generally four or five stations under his charge, each station being visited by him, on an average, once a week. The officer and his men always search in company; and as they are required to sleep away from home eight times per fortnight, a special allowance is made to them, to meet the expenses incurred for lodgings and subsistence. Preventive Rides are made in places where illicit distillation is not carried on, but where, owing to the smuggling inclinations of the people, and where the geographical formation of the country favours the unlawful making of spirits being carried on with some chances of secrecy, smuggling would be certain to commence if an official was not at hand to check it. One officer is considered sufficient for this; and in addition to the usual work of securing the license duties in his station, he has to endeavour to find out, by means of inquiries or searching, if any illicit practices are carried on in his neighbourhood.

It will thus be seen that the Preventive Station with its comparatively large staff is much more expensive than the Ride, and as smuggling was gradually suppressed, many of the stations were abolished for the sake of economy, and Rides established in their places.

Owing to the Malt Duty regulations, and the considerable time it takes to change barley into malt, and the consequent risk of being detected in its illicit manufacture, the decreased staff was able to prevent the revival of smuggling; but as soon as the Malt Duty was repealed, the smugglers seized the opportunity of recommencing operations, as they were quite aware of the reduced strength of the revenue establishments, it being impossible for a single officer to enter a bothy, seize the offenders, and destroy the utensils. It is only recently that the authorities recognised the gravity of the crisis that had arisen, and steps are being taken to re-establish some of the Preventive Stations, and deal with the smuggling in a determined manner.

The smuggler generally figures in novels and in the imagination as a highly interesting and romantic creature; but on a personal acquaintance, these ideas respecting him soon give place to others of an entirely different character. Instead of the generous and high-spirited individual one expects to meet, the smuggler is seen to be a very low type of a Highlander, much addicted to drinking, laziness, and lying, and bearing a great similarity in character to the poacher of the South. He generally pretends to follow some employment, such as a diker, fencer, stone-breaker, &c.; but it is on very rare occasions that he can be found engaged in his professed trade. He is generally to be seen lounging about

the village in a listless manner, as if he were one of the most innocent beings and quite incapable of breaking any law. At intervals he disappears from his haunts for five or six days; and when he returns, there is an unmistakable odour of 'peat-reek' (peat-smoke) about him; and the redness of his eyes at once gives evidence that he was a great deal among smoke during his absence. A few days' dissipation will follow, then a period of lounging, and he will again disappear for another short time.

As it is well known that whisky cannot be made without a plentiful supply of cold water, the smuggler usually selects for his operations a secluded spot in the side of a well-wooded burn with high banks. A square part is dug out till the bottom is nearly level with the water. The front is now built up with rough stones, a space being left for entry and exit. The bank forms the other three sides of the bothy, and the roof is made with crossed sticks covered with tarpaulin, the whole being concealed with brushwood and heather so cunningly adjusted and sloped that it requires the minutest scrutiny to ascertain that nature has not been disturbed. This building is necessary to protect the workers from the inclemency of the weather, and to conceal the light of the distilling fire from the watchful eyes of the revenue officials. The manufacture of whisky requires two distinct operations—namely, brewing and distilling. Brewing consists in placing ground malt in a vessel, pouring boiling water over it, and stirring the mixture till the strength of the malt is transferred to the water, which then receives the name of 'wort.' The wort is now removed from the grains and placed in another vessel, and to this yeast is added. Fermentation then takes place, which gradually reduces the specific gravity; and when it has attenuated, or reduced in gravity, to a certain point, it is ready for distilling. This process consists in separating the alcohol from the other ingredients of which the wort is composed; and for this purpose the liquor is placed in a vessel called a 'still,' which is of peculiar construction. It is made of copper, as a cheaper material will impart its taste to the spirits, is generally of a round shape, and of considerable capacity at the lower part, but gradually growing narrower towards the upper end, which has a closely fitting cover or head with a hole, into which a small pipe fits accurately, this pipe soon taking a downward course. Fire is now applied to the bottom of the still; and when the liquor is sufficiently heated, the alcohol having the property of assuming the form of vapour at a lower temperature than any of the other ingredients, escapes into the pipe at the top in the form of steam. This pipe is of considerable length, but of zigzag form, and is called the 'worm.' As it is necessary to condense the steam quickly, this is done by laying the worm in cold water, which accounts for its crooked shape, as it would be very inconvenient to cover a long straight pipe with a continuous stream of cold water. The condensed steam runs into a vessel from the end of the worm in the form of whisky; and when all the spirits are run off, the operation is finished. The time taken by the brewing and distilling processes is generally from five to six days. The 'peat-reek' odour of the smuggler and the redness of his eyes, which

were previously mentioned as being peculiar to him on his return home after the completion of his illegal work, are caused by working in the close smoke-laden atmosphere of the bothy. As the smoke is apt to draw attention to their labour, the peats are generally charred in their houses before being used in the bothy, as peats thus treated do not give off so much smoke during consumption as fresh ones.

The most valuable part of a smuggler's plant is the still and worm; and great precautions are used to prevent these from falling into the hands of the excise staff. A special hiding-place is prepared at a considerable distance from the bothy, this place generally being a deep pool of water or an artfully excavated hole. As they are only taken to the bothy when required for distillation, and removed to their hiding-place when the operation is finished, the only vessels that are destroyed or seized by the officials when a bothy is discovered—except the seizure be made during the distilling process—are the mashing and fermenting vessels, which, being made of wood, are of little value, and are easily replaced. Another point on which the ingenuity of the smuggler is exercised is to dispose of the 'draff,' or mashed malt, without being discovered. In places very difficult of access, it is sometimes allowed to remain near the scene of operations; but as there is always a danger of the accumulations being seen by prying eyes, it is safer when it can be completely destroyed. It is dangerous to put it into the burn, as some particles would be certain to lodge at the sides and thus betray the presence of smuggling; and the plan adopted, if at all possible, is to bring cattle to the vicinity and give them the grains to eat, thus destroying all traces through the presence of draff by which their secret place may be discovered.

The only way that smugglers can be captured in the midst of their labours is to make a raid on them by night, as watchers are placed during the day on commanding positions, and the alarm is at once given when enemies are seen in the neighbourhood. The position of a bothy must be pretty accurately known to the officers before they attempt to look for it at night, as it would be a hopeless task to commence a vague search among the hills and glens during the darkness; and they generally learn the whereabouts of the smuggling ground from informers, who give the information for the sake of a reward or from motives of revenge. The following instances of the capture of smuggling material came under the personal observation of the writer during an extended stay in the Highlands.

One day the officer of a Preventive Ride received notice that distilling was being carried on in a certain burn, and that the operation would be completed during the coming night. The burn was not in his own station, so he telegraphed to the proper officer and to his own supervisor to meet him that evening at a certain place. The supervisor duly appeared; but the other did not come, as he did not receive the telegram in time, being absent from home. As the district was not known to the two, and the informer was afraid to accompany them in case he should be recognised, they had not much hope of being able to find the place; but they resolved to do their best, as prompt action had to

be taken, or the opportunity would be lost. The night was very wet and cold; and after a drive of sixteen miles, they arrived at an hotel about four miles from the burn, where the horse was put up, and the officers set out to complete the rest of the journey on foot. They arrived at the lower end of the burn about one A.M., and immediately commenced their search. Their progress up the stream was very slow, owing to the darkness and the uneven nature of the ground, but they toiled on till six o'clock, when, to their chagrin, they reached the source of the rivulet without being successful. Day was then breaking, and they resolved to give up the search, and accordingly commenced their homeward journey.

After walking about three miles, still keeping near the stream, they saw some people moving about; and on going in their direction, a very nicely constructed bothy was discovered, with the fermenting vessels and mash tub inside and a fire burning. The spirits, the still, and the worm had, however, been removed during the night, and though an elaborate search was made, no trace of them could be found. The only consolation the officers had for their arduous night's toil was the demolition of the bothy and the wooden vessels. During this work of destruction, the smugglers crowded round them, as they knew they were safe, not having been found inside, and taunted the officers with their want of success, and told them that they had arrived too late. The mark of the smoky still was seen on the back of one who had evidently carried it to its hiding-place; but of course no evidence could be produced against him, though it was well known that he was the chief of the gang. The reason why the discovery was not made on the upward search was owing to the fact that the bothy was not built in the bed of the burn, but in a hollow that ran parallel to it, at a distance of nearly three hundred yards, water having been conveyed into the hollow from a higher point of the stream by means of a drain which had been cut by the smugglers. Three nights after this expedition, the officers returned to see if things were quiet, and observing a light in the chief smuggler's house, approached the window, and on looking in saw him coolly engaged making new tubs to replace those so recently destroyed.

About a month later, word was received that the same gang was again at work, but in a different place. A strong party was organised on this occasion, and a thorough search commenced during the night. As the precise spot was not accurately known, daylight again began to break before they met with any success; then the rumbling of a cart was heard, which on a close inspection was seen to be loaded with peat. As soon as the driver saw them, he took off his coat and commenced to wave it round his head, at the same time yelling at the top of his voice. The officers, aware that he was giving the alarm to some one, soon saw several men steal out of an old disused farm-steading, and rush at full speed towards the hills, over which they disappeared. Although chase was at once given, it was soon seen to be in vain, as the fugitives had received too long a start; and the officers turned their attention to the old building, in which they found the distillery in full working order, with the still, worm, and other utensils. The spirits

were poured out, the casks and tubs burned, and the copper articles carried off as prizes.

This seizure put an end to the operations of the gang for a considerable time, as they could not afford to buy new plant, the smuggler being generally poor in spite of his illegal dealings. This state of poverty is a little surprising, when one considers that the duty on spirits is about five times the cost of the manufactured article; but he makes a great many bad debts when selling his liquor, as his customers are quite aware that he dare not enforce payment.

It will thus be seen that smuggling is not a money-making trade; and if the smuggler were to display as much ingenuity in honest labour as he does in evading the law, he would have a great chance of becoming a prosperous and respected citizen, instead of being a worthless and dissolute character, and living and working in continual fear of punishment for his misdeeds.

PUTTING ONE'S FOOT IN IT.

'I NEVER open my mouth but I put my foot in it,' was the curious complaint of some unlucky wight, who might have received consolation had he reflected on the number of offenders that daily keep him company. The Guardsman's remark to the English nobleman who was in the habit of affably conversing with soldiers, 'I like you, my lord; there's nothing of the gentleman about you,' offers an example of the kind.—'How many deaths?' asked a hospital physician. 'Nine.' 'Why, I ordered medicine for ten.' 'Yes; but one would not take it,' was the startling reply.—'Hillo! where are you going at this time of night?' said a gentleman to his servant. 'You are after no good, I'll warrant.' 'Please, sir, mistress sent me for you, sir,' was the response.—A gentleman said to the waiter of his club: 'Michael, if I should die, would you attend my funeral?' 'Willingly, sir,' was the hasty answer. 'Well, Michael, that isn't very complimentary.' 'No, sir; I didn't mane that, sir: I wouldn't be seen there, sir,' was the waiter's consolatory reply.

A child may often be expected to put his or her heedless little foot in it, as the phrase goes. For instance, a youngster one day begged an invitation to dinner at the house of a little friend with whom he had been playing. At the table, his hostess anxiously inquired: 'Charley, can you cut your own meat?' 'Humph!' said the youngster, who was sawing away; 'can't I? I've cut up quite as tough meat as this at home.' People who are destitute of tact might take warning from such juvenile malaprops, but such does not often appear to be the case, judging by the numerous examples to the contrary.

A millionaire railway-king has a brother who is hard of hearing, while he himself is remarkable as having a very prominent nose. Once this railway-king dined at a friend's house where he sat between two young ladies, who talked to him very loudly, rather to his annoyance, but he said nothing. Finally, one of them shouted a commonplace remark, and then said in an ordinary tone to the other: 'Did you ever see such a nose in all your life?' 'Pardon me, ladies,' said the millionaire; 'it is my brother who is deaf!' We can imagine the horror of the lady who indulged in such

personal remarks, yet she was no more awkwardly placed than the hero of the following. When dining at a certain castle a Mr T—, after the ladies retired, remarked to a gentleman present that the lady who had sat on his right was the ugliest woman he had ever seen. 'I am sorry to hear,' said the gentleman, 'that you think my wife so ill-looking.' 'O no, sir; I meant the lady who sat on my left; I made a mistake.' 'Well, sir, she is my sister.'

Alluding to newspapers, it may be remarked that advertisers and unpractised writers therein, through ambiguity of words and phrases often commit absurdities that may be touched on as further illustrating our subject. A country paper once related how 'during the celebration a child was run over wearing a short red dress, which never spoke afterwards.'—In the description of the doings of a mad dog, it is said that 'he bit a horse on the leg which has since died.'—An account of a funeral says: 'The remains were committed to that bourne from which no traveller returns attended by his friends.'

It is not surprising that foreigners sometimes fail to catch all the shades of meaning belonging to our words. A Frenchman translated Shakespeare's line, 'Out, brief candle,' by, 'Get out, you short candle.' And the expression, 'With my sword I will carve my way to fortune,' was rendered, 'With my sword I will make my fortune cutting meat.'

Advertisers often give us amusing specimens of composition, of which this is an example: 'Lost by a poor lad tied up in a brown paper with a white string a German flute with an overcoat on and several other articles of wearing apparel.'—A miller attempted to testify to the merits of a powder for destroying vermin by saying, 'A fortnight ago I was full of rats, and now I don't think I have one.'

Examples more of the 'bull' genus also come under the title of this paper as cases in point. For instance, a newspaper was running a serial story called 'The Truth.' One week, so much space being devoted to other matters, the editor was unable to continue the story, so made the following announcement, containing perhaps more truth than any other item in the paper: "'The Truth' was crowded out of this issue on account of the press of more important matter.'

A bashful gentleman who visited a school kept by a young lady was asked by the teacher to say a few words to the pupils. This was his speech: 'Scholars, I hope you will always love your school and your teacher as much as I do.' A tableau of giggling pupils and a blushing teacher attested the effectiveness of his words.

The lecturer put his foot in it as thoroughly when he prefaced his discourse upon the rhinoceros with, 'I must beg you to give me your undivided attention; indeed, it is absolutely impossible that you could form a true idea of the hideous animal of which we are about to speak, unless you keep your eyes fixed on me.'—A certain preacher discoursing upon Bunyan and his works, caused a titter among his hearers by exclaiming, 'In these days, my brethren, we want more Bunyans.'—Another clergyman pleading earnestly with his parishioners for the construction of a cemetery for their parish, asked them to consider the 'deplorable condition of thirty

thousand Christian Englishmen living without Christian burial.'—Still more curious was the clerical slip with which we conclude. A gentleman said to the minister, 'When do you expect to see Deacon S— again?' 'Never,' said the reverend gentleman solemnly; 'the deacon is in heaven.'

GARNERED SUNSHINE.

THESE early autumn days have a peculiar charm all their own. Almost all the birds have ceased to sing; the busy hum of summer's multitudinous life has languished, and finally died away; the Earth is brooding over her perfected harvests, murmuring the while a dreamy lullaby which cannot be attuned to our measured words. As I walk to-day between dusty hedgerows along a white glare of sunlit highway leading to the harvest-fields, I can hear the sound of the reaping-machine on every side. It is a moaning sound, and seems to presage the autumn winds. But there is no wind, no cooling breeze to-day; the air is sultry, and so very still that the spinning vibrations caused by the wings of unfortunate flies, entangled in the glistening festoons of the spiders' webs, is distinctly audible. An ominous dark-blue cloud with a lurid electric light in its centre is coming up from the north. We shall have thunder ere long, although the basking sunshine still slants upon the mellow fields of golden grain, flecked with scarlet poppies. Tremulous movements in the hedges betray the presence of the silent birds; but a restless bullfinch flits before me, hurriedly pausing to whistle his abruptly terminating song; and a landrail sends his monotonous 'Crake, crake!' over a distant clover-field. I wonder if the landrail is a ventriloquist? Certainly, he is oftener heard than seen.

I follow the road past an old farmhouse, and immediately strike into a wheat-field in which the reapers are busy. A row of standing stooks redolent with the narcotic scent of withering poppies fringes the half uncut grain, and under one of these I rest awhile. How unswervingly, how regularly does the reaping-machine cut down the proud ranks of grain; how swiftly do the stooping reapers follow behind, binding the swaths into sheaves, and arranging them with picturesque precision at intervals along the crackling stubble. One could fancy that the sunshine of the summer had not fled after all, but had taken tangible form in this field of golden wheat. It is more than harvested grain, for it is garnered sunshine: summer is imprisoned in the sunny wheat. The sparrows which I have missed from the woodlands are here in chirping flocks; cheeriest of gleaners, how they revel among the stubble. I, too, will pluck a gleaner's handful of the embodied sunshine, to brighten my wall at home when the firelight flickers, and the snow taps at the windows with soft, treacherous fingers.

On a day like this, one envies the farmer and his men their close proximity to Nature. True, they wait upon her to further their own ends, and they must be ever at her beck and call; but think of the band of aerial forces she sends to aid the farmer in his toil! The sun, the wind, the rain,

the moon, the dew—these are the willing spirits he tethers to his ploughshare. He is at once their slave and their master. He must do their bidding if he would guide those sovereign forces to help him to win the harvest of the earth. Do they tarry in their coming? Then must the farmer be patient, and not in haste. He must work late or early; he must hurry or he must pause as his omnipotent servants decree. They will only serve him if he walks in the inflexible grooves of their natural laws; then only will the farmer prosper.

In the next field the thrashing-machine is at work, and women are engaged in filling their mattresses with the fresh light chaff. The hedge which separates the two fields is brilliant with the polished scarlet fruit of the dog-rose, and with many-coloured bramble sprays laden with berries in every stage of ripening, from the first faint blush of red to the luscious purple bloom of complete fruition. The thistle-down is floating like fairy shuttlecocks on the still air; and with every darting movement of the birds in the hedges, the ripe thistle-heads are shaken free of their buoyant winged seeds. The umbelliferous plants have lost their crowns of white florets and are now seeding. They are an ambitious race, and are not content with their five feet of summer growth, but must needs hurry after the departing summer with awkward lengths of useless stalk and sickly flower-umbels which will never reach perfection. These unsightly late sprouts are the hasty after-thoughts and parentheses of an over-prolific parent stem, and are destined to be overtaken and killed by the early frosts. The foliage of the lowly herb-Robert brightens the dusty grass beneath the hedges, sending a crimson wandering fire along the verdant line that fringes the sun-baked highway; and the camomile flower with its feathery foliage has supplanted the ox-eyed daisy.

I have almost trodden upon a quaint little ball of withered grass blades deftly and compactly plaited together and fastened to some ears of cut wheat. This I am told by a reaper is the tiny nest of a field-mouse. As far as I can see, there is no apparent ingress or egress; it is merely a round soft ball. A quaint and wonderful piece of architecture it seems to my astonished eyes, especially when I learn that these tiny homes sometimes contain seven young mice. I also find and carry off as a treasure a deserted linnet's nest. It was placed in the bushy hollow of a hawthorn hedge; and so beautifully dainty is it in structure and in colour, that I may be pardoned the passing thought that birds may possibly possess more or less of an artistic feeling for colour and form.

But now the portentous calm of the afternoon is broken by a distant muttering of thunder. The cloud was nearer, or has travelled quicker than I reckoned upon; the birds leave the stubble and fly low, hastening to their leafy coverts; and I make my way to the shelter of the ancient doorway of the farmhouse and there stand watching the gathering storm. The sun has disappeared behind the rising sullen blue clouds, and swift, with a heavy pattering fall, the big raindrops strike the hissing dust. There is a flash of zigzag lightning, followed by a peal of thunder that cracks overhead as if the sky was rending. Faster

falls the rain in a deluge of plashing water. How quick the dust licks up the welcome torrent! Again and yet again the lightning flashes and the thunder growls; but the cloud is very local, and gradually it moves across the sky, carrying with it a last peal of thunder, which dies in the distance just as the azure sky escapes once more from the ragged edge of the retreating cloud. Once more the sun shines forth through still falling rain, and lo! a gorgeous rainbow flings its arching span against the dark cloud, and shines with sevenfold radiance in the face of the golden sun. Upward rises a lark from a gleaming wet clover-field, singing as he climbs into the sunny air. See how white his sun-flecked breast looks against the thunder-cloud! Now he has reached the centre of the rainbow arch, and there he hangs, as if suspended by an invisible thread, singing in an ecstasy of joy.

I issue from my shelter and turn homeward; but the hedges are indistinct, and the road almost lost within a fragrant mist of incense sent up by the grateful earth. Gradually the warm vapour is absorbed by the strong sun; the delicious odour of earth fills the air, and mingles with the clammy sweetness of a hidden honeysuckle. I walk upon enchanted ground, picking my steps among pools of water which look like broken fragments of the rainbow overhead, and fallen sapphires from the blue. My path is radiant with jewels; for the raindrops that twinkle on hedgerow and grass have become emeralds and rubies and flashing diamonds by the magic power of the sun.

THE LAME BOY.

BEHIND the ridge of Primrose Hill,

On summer evenings cool and bright,

Gay crowds of careless urchins fill

The air with sounds of laughter light.

There once I strolled in thoughtful mood,

Delighted busy life to scan,

For seldom sweet is solitude

To one that loves his fellow-man.

A cricket-match! From canvas tent,

That spread bright banners to the day,

With bat in hand and body bent,

A tiny cripple came to play.

'Well hit, well hit! Bob wins the game!'

Soon rose in many a lusty shout,

While flushed and proud, with eager aim

He drove the lazy balls about.

The fielders must have lost their strength;

The bowler bowls with errant eye;

It dawns on little Bob at length

The melancholy reason why.

A moment's pause—and then, all gone

The glory of the ringing cheers;

He drew his little jacket on,

And burst into a storm of tears.

G. W. T.

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A DAY WITH THE MISERECORDIE.

It is Sunday morning, and our ship steams slowly into Leghorn harbour under the bluest of Italian skies. We hire a wherry, and go ashore, glad to escape for a time the monotonous roll of the wave-washed vessel. Hardly have we crossed the city's threshold, when we come upon a weird procession of hooded men, carrying on their shoulders an empty litter. We are told they are the famous Miserecordie; so we follow until they reach their chapel, and go in after them. Our questions are kindly answered by a 'brother' whose face we cannot see, and we are soon investigating for ourselves the mysteries of this solemn brotherhood. It goes without saying that no religious body anywhere is held in greater respect and veneration than the Italian Miserecordie. While distinctly Roman Catholic in denomination, it ministers to the wants and sufferings of all creeds and classes. We are unable to ascertain exactly the date of its foundation; but there can be no doubt, from all accounts, that it has been in active operation for upwards of a century. It was founded by a Florentine, who sought in a humble way to alleviate the sufferings of his poorer townsmen; but little did the good Samaritan imagine the extent to which his ideas were destined to be carried out long after his bones were crumbling dust.

The Order of Miserecordie embraces both men and women. The former at their initiation pay an entrance fee of six francs and an annual sum of four francs by way of dues. The latter pay four francs at initiation and yearly dues to the amount of two francs. There are honorary members also, who do no active work and who pay five francs a year. The only direct benefit these brethren receive from their membership is that their bodies and those of their families are buried in the private and beautiful cemetery belonging to the Order. There is no fund upon which they may draw in times of sickness; no superannuation on which they may retire in old age; there are no mystic signs or

secret words; and politics are unknown in the ranks.

The mission of the Miserecordie is to relieve suffering, to watch by the sick and dying, to convey the wounded to the hospitals, to carry the dead to the tomb, and to be impartial always in their services to whosoever may require them. The dress of the Order consists of a long black frock and hood, in the latter being cut two eye-holes. Save for these, the wearer is completely enveloped, and is absolutely unrecognisable. The idea of this is that individual pomp and vanity may be sunk and crucified, and so the brethren go about in the performance of their good work unknown. The amount of labour overtaken by the Order is not easily calculated. It is for ever 'on duty,' and the demands made upon it are enormous.

The public ambulance is a thing as yet unknown to the Italian police, and in order themselves to escape the unpleasant duty of caring for and conveying the sick and wounded to the hospitals, the authorities are only too glad that it should be performed by the Miserecordie. So thoroughly is the work established, so widely the brethren known, that the people come directly to them with their messages and demands, without applying to the authorities at all. If a man is hurt in the street, the Miserecordie turn out at once and take him tenderly, in the cleanest and whitest of stretchers, to the nearest hospital; or to his own house, if he has one. If a weak or bedridden householder has to be moved from one room to another, a message to the Miserecordie will bring strong men to do the work. If a doctor has a dying patient too poor to afford the luxury of a nurse, he leaves word with the Miserecordie, and nurses are at once sent out in turn to tend and nurse him back to convalescence, or until death relieves them of their weary vigils.

It must not be imagined that because the Order is a Roman Catholic one, its services are offered only to its co-religionists. It goes anywhere, at any time, to do what good it can to fellow-men, and church and creed give way before the sacred

call of humanity. Many an English sailor crushed and hurt in Italian harbours, and many a friendless foreigner, have good reason to remember and bless the Miserecordie for their gracious and most timely help. Payment for its labours is sternly refused; the rule is imperative that not even a cup of cold water shall be asked or taken by a brother while services are being rendered. Through the crowded streets, however, and passing in and out of shops and houses, may be seen the grim black figures with their poor-boxes, soliciting contributions; and there are few who pass them by without a blessing and a coin.

During the day, a few taps on their huge alarm-bell suffice to bring together a sufficient number of brethren for the performance of any ordinary duty. During the night, however, a relief is always kept on the premises, ready to issue forth at a moment's notice. On the sound of an alarm, the brethren run quickly to headquarters, don their black robes, and give their names to the senior member present, who notes and marshals them. When the duty is performed, the brethren are dismissed, and the case attended to is carefully entered in the Society's books. Whenever a brother has completed one hundred and fifty such services, he receives the Society's bronze medal, which is highly prized, and worn at the girdle. When he has answered five thousand calls, he is entitled to the silver medal, which is worn on the breast; but as such a course of duties must necessarily be spread over a long period of years, the wearers are few and far between, and always old and venerable men.

The ranks are composed of all classes of society, and it is well known that during his lifetime the late Grand-duke of Tuscany was himself the most active of this noble band. During the cholera plagues, the labours of the Society were almost superhuman; and it speaks volumes for the respect in which it is held, when it is remembered that during the most stirring times in Italian history, when no processions or bodies dared walk abroad unguarded or unarmed, the members of the Miserecordie went everywhere, alone, doing their quiet good work under the shadow of their uplifted crucifix.

Everything connected with the Society is neat and scrupulously plain, and there is an utter absence of display, which more pretentious orders would do well to imitate. Behind the chapel are kept the hearses, stretchers, portable beds, country ambulances, and other appliances used. All are clean and fresh and ready for immediate use.

We re-enter the little chapel, where a mass is being sung for the souls of the departed brethren, and we see on all sides ghastly skulls and covered coffins to remind us of our latter end. The incense-swingers perfume the air, and our ears are ravished with enchanting music sung by the choir overhead. The priests go round the people and distribute candles; and we light ours, that we may not appear singular, and gaze curiously on the scene, as if in wonderland. As we pass out, the gray-haired sexton tells us it is the festival of 'All-Souls,' and a day of mourning. He advises us to visit the cemetery, telling us the sight is worth the trouble; and we resolve at once to go. It is the custom in Italy to mourn eight days from the 1st of November for the souls of

the dead. The graves of the loved ones are visited and covered with flowers and wreaths and pretty gifts, while masses are sung for them in all the churches. At the end of eight days the decorations are removed, the priests put off their brodered robes, and the graveyard gates are closed again until next year's mourning-time comes round.

A drive of fifteen minutes through pretty hedgerows banked with nodding daisies brings us to the cemetery. The road is crowded with pedestrians, and at some points blocked with vehicles. So great, indeed, is the confusion that special squads of police are strung out to preserve order, while mounted gendarmes, resplendent in plumes and clanking sabres, gallop about to direct the traffic. The women's dresses, in spite of the solemn occasion, are of the gayest colours; the peasant girls, with their uncovered heads, striped petticoats, and dangling earrings being particularly conspicuous. There are beggars, too, by the score, exhibiting mutilated limbs and festering sores, and calling loudly for the alms not often refused them. An Italian festival of any kind without its beggars would be incomplete. Where they come from or where they go to, how they live and who they are, nobody knows; but they are the most persistent and irrepressible class of beings to be met with in the wide world. They will positively not take a refusal, and this is well illustrated by the lame man, who, forgetful of his infirmities, runs a mile beside our carriage for the copper coin we toss him, and still finds breath to bless us for our charity. At the gate stand two of the Miserecordie, clad in their sombre robes, shaking their poor-boxes at the passing multitude. So weird and silent are they, that but for their eyes, which peer and twinkle through the holes cut in their hoods, they might themselves belong to the sheeted and forgotten dead.

The burying-ground into which we pass lies just outside the Leghorn gates, and almost under the shadow of the Montenero heights. It is laid out with charming nicety, and kept with scrupulous care. The boxwood thickets which form the avenues are neatly trimmed; and above them tower high swinging cypress trees, which yield a grateful shade and cool the gravel footpaths underneath. Of the ground-work and architecture within, too much cannot be said; not that it in any way aims at or approaches grandeur, but because it is full of beauty and always fair to see. We see here chapels within chapels, and gardens within gardens; and there are high vaulted arches and heavy swinging lamps, and dainty flowers that blossom everywhere. Except in the case of family vaults, which are specially prepared and paid for, no man in this quaint resting-place may choose beforehand the spot where he will be laid. This is done for him by the ground committee, with a view to the symmetry and beauty of the establishment. Thus, gravestones lie in shape of stars and crosses and intersected squares; whilst others are built into the walls one above the other, till the rough masonry gives place to smooth and polished marble.

The rich and poor lie here together, sleeping their common sleep; brethren in life, in death they are not divided, and pomp and vanity give

place to the memory of simple worth. The marble slabs and monuments that mark the graves are of various shapes and sizes. This is a matter in which the tastes and pockets of the surviving relatives may be consulted without reference to the Society or its committees. The simple slab, the stately cross, the broken pillar, the mass of marble rock, may all be seen, and some of them are veritable works of art. But it would seem to be an understood, if, indeed, it is not a written rule, that the epitaphs upon them shall at any-rate be short and simple. Here are to be found no eulogies, or histories, or sounding phrases; little but the names of the silent sleepers meet the eye, unless it be the 'Pray for him' with which most of the inscriptions end.

On every grave we see floral decorations and tributes of affection, brought by loving hands. The gifts and garlands vary with the station in life of the givers; but as far as we can see, after a long and careful visit, none are quite forgotten. On many of the tombstones are the photographs of the departed, some of them let cunningly into the marble in neat metal frames, and in no way affected by the exposure to light or storm. Here are graves smothered in a wealth of rare exotics, while beside them stand exquisitely worked tablets in silk and plush and satin, scrolled with endearing terms. There are gloomy lamps or burning candles beside each sepulchre, and the air is laden with the sweet perfume of incense.

The graves of the poor have simpler flowers; occasionally, only artificial garlands and little oil-lamps. On some are scattered merely a handful of rose-leaves, whilst on others are jars of common clay with a single bud bending to the breeze. On one mound is the bottom of a broken vase, and from it there rises a carefully cut and prettily trimmed maize-cane, the delicate flowers being doubtless beyond the reach of the humble giver. On another heap is a little cross rudely fashioned out of a piece of decaying wood. The size is infinitesimal, and the work suggestive of a boy's penknife; but it speaks volumes of love and sympathy. Indeed, the offerings of the poor have a pathetic tenderness never to be found in those of the rich.

Beside the flickering lamps and guttering candles, on all sides are kneeling men and women, whispering their prayers for the loved ones they may see no more. Here bends a little lad beside his mother's tomb, stroking the marble headstone, and thinking of the dear voice hushed for ever; and here a gray-haired couple are gazing at the grave of the son who has been taken from them all too soon. Here is a woman in an agony of grief over a little mound on which the grass has not yet grown. Her grief is pitiable to behold, and her cries attract a sympathising crowd, and cause many a tear to start from eyes whose fountains open responsive to chords struck in aching hearts. 'Bianca, my little love,' she cries, 'I am here beside you! It is your mother, darling, who speaks to you, and longs to see you! The world is dark without you, darling! Oh, speak to me. Come back to me, my love, my love!' Her face is swollen with the hot tears which chase each other down her cheeks; her lips are smeared with the damp earth to which she presses them. She is but a peasant woman, this sorrowing mother; her hands

are large and coarse and tanned by the burning sun, under which she labours day by day; her hair is matted with the wind; but her heart is pure and tender and true, and her tears are an index of a gentleness that wealth can never buy.

The family vaults are built into and underneath the inner walls of this pretty labyrinth, and are models of neatness. Most of them contain little chapels and neat *priedieus*, and the floors shine with polished marble. The walls and ceilings are exquisitely frescoed, and the sunbeams play upon the silver altar ornaments and rob the grave of gloom. Beneath, where the coffins lie in their metal caskets, oil-lamps are kept perpetually burning; whilst huge bronze crosses stretch out their arms, as if to cover with their shadows the slumbering dead.

Not a laugh is to be heard through all the multitude as we pass round. The sightseer and the tourist seem to catch the general sadness and talk in whispers as they go. The day has been one, indeed, of sad reflection and bitter memory, and laughter would grate harshly here.

We near the gate again as the sun is sinking, and we look back upon the congregated mourners. We see the belted soldier and the sandalled monk, the nobleman and the beggar, side by side; we see white faces and raining tears and looks of sorrow everywhere. We stand a moment ere we go, apart, alone, and feel better and purer for the sight. If it be true that the dead have knowledge of the living, the dreamers in this little garden must be gladdened at the loving recollection of their friends.

The horse-bells jingle as we canter homewards and beat a strange accompaniment to our thoughts. Verily, we have lingered in another land with the dead themselves. We have been reminded of a day in which we will ourselves be laid away, and our resting-places visited by those we loved. We have looked on grief and sorrow, the part of all men woman-born. But even as we think, the sun goes down, hiding his head in the blue waters close at hand; and crimson tints shoot up and fall across the land. The birds sing out their even-song, the distant spires are lighted up in yellow glory, and in the distance is heard the soft chiming of the Sabbath bells.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—AFTER LONG GRIEF AND PAIN.

THE time to stand upon trifles was past. Let him run the risk of meeting Massinger by the way or not, Warren Relf must needs go round and fetch Elsie to comfort and console poor dying Winifred. He hastened away at the top of his speed to the Villa Rossa. At the door, both girls together met him. Elsie had just returned, basket in hand, from the Avenue Vittorio-Emmanuele, and had learnt from Edie so much of the contents of Warren's hasty letter as had been intended from the first for her edification.

Warren drew her aside gently into the tiny salon, and motioned to Edie not to follow them. Elsie's heart beat high with wonder. She was aware how much it made her pulse quicken to see Warren again—with something more than the mere fraternal greeting she pretended. Her little

self-deception broke down at last: she knew she loved him—in an unpractical way; and she was almost sorry she could never, never make him happy.

But Warren's grave face bade her heart stand still for a beat or two next moment. He had clearly something most serious to communicate—something that he knew would profoundly distress her. A womanly alarm came over her with a vague surmise. Could Warren be going to tell her?—Oh no! Impossible. She knew dear Warren too well for that; he at least could never be cruel.

If Warren was going to tell her *that*, her faith in her kind would die out for ever.

'Well, Warren?' she asked with tremulous eagerness, drawing closer up to him in her sweet womanly confidence, and gazing into his eyes, half afraid, half affectionate. How could she ever have doubted him, were it only for a second?

'Elsie,' Warren cried, laying his hand with unspoken tenderness on her shapely shoulder, 'I want you to come round at once to the *pension* on the piazza.—It's better to tell it all out at once. Winifred Massinger's come to San Remo, very ill—dying, I fear. She knows you're here, and she's asked to see you.'

Elsie's face grew red and then white for a moment, and she trembled visibly. 'Is *he* there?' she asked, after a short pause. Then, with a sudden burst of uncontrollable tears, she buried her face in her hands on the table.

Warren soothed her with his hand tenderly, and leaning over her, told her, in haste and in a very low voice, the whole sad story. 'I don't think he'll be there,' he added at the end. 'Mrs Massinger said she wouldn't allow him to enter the room. But in any case—for that poor girl's sake—you won't refuse to go to her now, will you, Elsie?'

'No,' Elsie answered, rising calmly with womanly dignity, to face it all out. 'I *must* go. It would be cruel and wicked of course to shirk it. For Winifred's sake, I'll go in any case.—But Warren, before I dare to go'—She broke off suddenly, and with a woman's impulse held up her pale face to him in mute submission.

A thrill coursed through Warren Relf's nerves; he stooped down and pressed his lips fervently to hers. 'Before you go, you are mine then, Elsie!' he cried eagerly.

Elsie pressed his hand faintly in reply. 'I am yours, Warren,' she answered at last very low, after a short pause. 'But I can't be yours as you wish it for a long time yet. No matter why. I shall be yours in heart.—I couldn't have gone on any other terms. And with that, I think, I can go and face it.'

At the *pension*, Hugh had already brought the English doctor, who went in alone to look after Winifred. Hugh had tried to accompany him into the bedroom; but Winifred, true to her terrible threat, lifted one stern forefinger before his swimming eyes and cried out 'Never!' in a voice so doggedly determined that Hugh slunk away abashed into the anteroom.

The English doctor stopped for several minutes in consultation, and Winifred spoke to him, simply and unreservedly, about her husband.

'Send that man away!' she cried, pointing to Hugh, as he stood still peering across from the gloom of the doorway. 'I won't have him in here to see me die! I won't have him in here! It makes me worse to see him about the place. I hate him!—I hate him!'

'You'd better go,' the doctor whispered softly, looking him hard in the face with his inquiring eyes. 'She's in a very excited, hysterical condition. She's best alone, with only the women.—A husband's presence often does more harm than good in such nervous crises. Nobody should be near to increase her excitement.—Have the kindness to shut the door, if you please. You needn't come back for the present, thank you.'

And then Winifred unburdened once more her poor laden soul in convulsive sobs. 'I want to see Elsie! I want to see Elsie!'

'Miss Challoner?' the doctor asked suggestively. He knew her well as the tenderest and best of amateur nurses.

Winifred explained to him with broken little cries and eager words that she wished to see Elsie in Hugh's absence.

At the end of five minutes' soothing talk, the doctor read it all to the very bottom with professional acuteness. The poor girl was dying. Her husband and she had never got on. She hungered and thirsted for human sympathy. Why not gratify her yearning little soul? He stepped back into the bare and dingily lighted sitting-room. 'I think,' he said persuasively to Hugh, with authoritative suggestion, 'your wife would be all the better in the end if she were left entirely alone with the womenkind for a little. Your presence here evidently disturbs and excites her. Her condition's critical, distinctly critical. I won't conceal it from you. She's over-fatigued with the journey and with mental exhaustion. The slightest aggravation of the hysterical symptoms, might carry her off at any moment. If I were you, I'd stroll out for an hour. Lounge along by the shore or up the hills a bit. I'll stop and look after her. She's quieter now. You needn't come back for at least an hour.'

Hugh knew in his heart it was best so. Winifred hated him, not without cause. He took up his hat, crushed it fiercely on his head, and strolling down by himself to the water's edge, sat in the listless calm of utter despair on a bare bench in the cool fresh air of an Italian evening. He thought in a hopeless, helpless, irresponsible way about poor dead Elsie and poor dying Winifred.

Five minutes after Hugh had left the *pension*, Warren Relf and Elsie mounted the big centre staircase and knocked at the door of Winifred's bare and dingy salon. The *patron* had already informed them that the signor was gone out, and that the signora was up in her room alone with the women of the hotel and the English doctor.

Warren Relf remained by himself in the anteroom. Elsie went in unannounced to Winifred.

Oh the joy and relief of that final meeting! The poor dying girl rose up on the bed with a bound to greet her. A sudden flush crimsoned her sunken cheeks. As her eyes rested once more upon Elsie's face—that earnest, serious, beautiful face she had loved and trusted—every shadow of fear and misery faded from her look,

and she cried aloud in a fever of delight: 'O Elsie, Elsie, I'm glad you've come. I'm glad to hold your hand in mine again; now I can die happy!'

Elsie saw at a glance that she spoke the truth. That bright red spot in the centre of each wan and pallid cheek told its own sad tale with unmistakable eloquence. She flung her arms fervently round her feeble little friend. 'Winnie, Winnie!' she cried—'my own sweet Winnie! Why didn't you let me know before? If I'd thought you were like this, I'd have come to you long ago!'

'Then you love me still?' Winifred murmured low, clinging tight and hard to her recovered friend with a feverish longing.

'I've always loved you; I shall always love you,' Elsie answered slowly. 'My love doesn't come and go, Winnie. If I hadn't loved you more than I can say, I'd have come long since. It was for your own sake I kept so long away from you.'

The English doctor rose with a sign from the chair by the bedside and motioned the women out of the room.—'We'll leave you alone,' he said in a quiet voice to Elsie.—'Don't excite her too much, if you please, Miss Challoner. But I know I can trust you. I leave her in the very best of hands. You can only be soothing and restful anywhere.'

The doctor's confidence was perhaps ill advised. As soon as those two were left by themselves—the two women who had loved Hugh Massinger best in the world, and whom Hugh Massinger had so deeply wronged and so cruelly injured—they fell upon one another's necks with a great cry, and wept, and caressed one another long in silence. Then Winifred, leaning back in fatigue, said with a sudden burst: 'O Elsie, Elsie! I can't die now without confessing it, all, every word to you: once, do you know—more than once I distrusted you!'

'I know, my darling,' Elsie answered with a tearful smile, kissing her pale white fingers many times tenderly. 'I know, I understand. You couldn't help it. You needn't explain. It was no wonder.'

Winifred gazed at her transparent eyes and truthful face. No one who saw them could ever distrust them, at least while he looked at them. 'Elsie,' she said, gripping her tight in her grasp—the one being on earth who could truly sympathise with her—'I'll tell you why: he kept your letters all in a box—your letters and the little gold watch he gave you.'

'No, not the watch, darling,' Elsie answered, starting back.—'Winnie, I'll tell you what I did with that watch: I threw it into the sea off the pier at Lowestoft.'

A light broke suddenly over Winifred's mind; she knew now Hugh had told her the truth for once. 'He picked it up at Orfordness,' she mused simply. 'It was carried there by the tide with a woman's body—a body that he took for yours, Elsie.'

'He doesn't know I'm alive even now, dearest,' Elsie whispered by her side. 'I hope while I live he may never know it; though I don't know now how we're to keep it from him, I confess, much longer.'

Then Winifred, emboldened by Elsie's hand, poured out her full grief in her friend's ear, and

told Elsie the tale of her long, long sorrow. Elsie listened with a burning cheek. 'If only I'd known!' she cried at last. 'If only I'd known all this ever so much sooner! But I didn't want to come between you two. I thought perhaps I would spoil all: I fancied you were happy with one another.'

'And after I'm dead, Elsie, will you—see him?'

Elsie started. 'Never, darling,' she cried. 'Never, never!'

'Then you don't love him any longer, dear?'

'Love him? Oh no! That's all dead and buried long ago. I mourned too many months for my dead love, Winifred; but after the way Hugh's treated you—how could I love him? how could I help feeling harshly towards him?'

Winifred pressed her friend in her arms harder than ever. 'O Elsie!' she cried, 'I love you better than anybody else in the whole world. I wish I'd had you always with me. If you'd been near, I might have been happier. How on earth could I ever have ventured to mistrust you!'

They talked long and low in their confidences to one another, each pouring out her whole arrears of time, and each understanding for the first moment many things that had long been strangely obscure to them. At last Winifred repeated the tale of her two or three late stormy interviews with her husband. She told them truthfully, just as they occurred—extenuating nothing on either side—down to the very words she had used to Hugh: 'You've tried to murder me by slow torture, that you might marry Elsie:' and that other terrible sentence she had spoken out that very evening to Warren: 'He shall not enter this room again till he enters it to see me laid out for burial.'

Elsie shuddered with unspeakable awe and horror when that frail young girl, so delicate of mould and so graceful of feature even still, uttered those awful words of vindictive rancour against the man she had pledged her troth to love and to honour. 'O Winifred!' she cried, looking down at her with mingled pity and terror traced in every line of her compassionate face, 'you didn't say that! You could never have meant it!'

Winifred clenched her white hands yet harder once more. 'Yes, I did,' she cried. 'I meant it, and I mean it. He's hounded me to death; and now that I'm dying, he shan't gloat over me!'

'Winnie, Winnie, he's your husband, your husband! Remember what you promised to do when you married him. Oh, for my sake, and for your own sake, Winnie, if not for his—do see him and speak to him, just once, forgivingly.'

'Never!' Winifred answered, starting up on the bed once more with a ghastly energy. 'He's driven me to the grave: let him have his punishment!'

Elsie drew back, more horrified than ever. Her face spoke better than her words to Winifred. 'My darling,' she cried, 'you *must* see him. You must never die and leave him so.' Then in a gentler voice she added imploringly: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

Winifred buried her face wildly in her bloodless hands. 'I can't,' she moaned out; 'I haven't

the power. It's too late now. He's been too cruel to me.'

For many minutes together, Elsie bent tenderly over her, whispering words of consolation and comfort in her ears, while Winifred listened and cried silently. At last, after Elsie had soothed her long, and wept over her much with soft loving touches, Winifred looked up in her face with a wistful gaze. 'I think, Elsie,' she said slowly, 'I could bear to see him, if you would stop with me here and help me.'

Elsie shrank into herself with a sudden horror. That would be a crucial trial, indeed, of her own forgiveness for the man who had wronged her, and her own affection for poor dying Winifred. Meet Hugh again, so painfully, so unexpectedly! Come back to him at once, from the tomb, as it were, to remind him of his crime, and before Winifred's eyes—poor dying Winifred's! The very idea made her shudder with alarm. 'O Winnie,' she cried, looking down upon her friend with her great gray eyes, 'I couldn't face him. I thought I should never see him again. I daren't do it. You mustn't ask me.'

'Then you haven't forgiven him yourself!' Winifred burst out eagerly. 'You love him still! You love him—and you hate him!—Elsie, that's just the same as me. I hate him—but I love him; oh! how I do love him!'

She spoke no more than the simple truth. She was judging Elsie by her own heart. With that strange womanly paradox we so often see, she loved her husband even now, much as she hated him. It was that indeed that made her hate him so much: her love gave point to her hatred and her jealousy.

'No, darling,' Elsie answered, bending over her closer and speaking lower in her ear than she had yet spoken. 'I don't love him; and I don't hate him. I forgive him all! I've forgiven him long ago.—Winnie, I love some one else now. I've given my heart away at last, and I've given it to a better man than Hugh Massinger.'

'Then why won't you wait and help me to see him?' Winifred cried once more in her fiery energy.

'Because—I'm ashamed. I can't look him in the face; that's all, Winnie.'

Winifred clung to her like a frightened child to its mother's skirts. 'Elsie,' she burst out, with childish vehemence, 'stop with me now to the end! Don't ever leave me!'

Elsie's heart sank deep into her bosom. A horrible dread possessed her soul. She saw one ghastly possibility looming before them that Winifred never seemed to recognise. Hugh kept her letters, her watch, her relics. Suppose he should come and—recognising her at once—betray his surviving passion for herself before poor dying Winifred! She dared hardly face so hideous a chance. And yet, she couldn't bear to untwine herself from Winifred's arms, that clung so tight and so tenderly around her. There was no time to lose, however: she must make up her mind. 'Winifred,' she murmured, laying her head close down by the dying girl's, 'I'll do as you say. I'll stop here still. I'll see Hugh. As long as you live, I'll never leave you!'

Winifred loosed her arms one moment again, and then flung them in a fresh access of feverish fervour round her recovered friend—her dear

beautiful Elsie. 'You'll stop here,' she cried through her sobs and tears; 'you'll help me to tell Hugh I forgive him.'

'I'll stop here,' Elsie answered low, 'and I'll help you to forgive him.'

SOME OLD BRITISH BALLADS.

I.—OUDENARDE.

IN noticing some of our old national ballads we do not intend to touch upon the early and richer stores with which our literature is abundantly provided; it is with an offshoot of the earlier ballads that we shall briefly deal—minor ballads, of a much later date, but also having an historical setting. When the printing-press began to be really established in our country, an immense number of booksellers started up in London and the provinces, and from their presses were issued numberless Merrie, Sad, Trew, or Excellente ballads, meant expressly for the perusal or edification of the people. These productions were published, many of them in black-letter, in broad-sheet form, on bad paper, and were sold for a halfpenny or a penny. Some of these were merely reprints of older ballads; others were re-dressed by the booksellers' scribes; and others, again, were original productions relating to past or contemporary events. Many of these ballads have true merit, and seem to fire us with some of the ardour of the heroes about whom we are reading. They were all written to the tune of some well-known melody; and they must have had a decided hold on the minds of the attentive audience. The morality of most of them is nearly irreproachable, and in many instances of a high order. There were also a goodly number of ballads recording 'the deeds of daring-do' of highwaymen, vicious apprentices, and the 'last scaffold confessions' of notorious malefactors. Still, even in these instances, though there was many a screw loose in the narration, yet they generally terminated with a sound moral. Most of the offenders repented at last, or were overtaken by retributive justice.

The wars of Marlborough may to a great extent be said to have been popular in England, and probably the best proof of this is to be found in the number of songs and ballads which the wars called forth from our common presses. Marlborough, Prince Eugene, and their generals, met with fulsome praise, descending often to extravagance. The battle of Oudenarde, fought on the 11th of July 1708, appears to have made a special impression on the public at home. We find two old black-letter ballads celebrating the event. The first—*A Happy Memorable Ballad, on the fight near Audenarde, between the Duke of Marlborough of Great Britain and the Duke of Vendome of France: as also the strange and wonderful manner how the Princes of the Blood-royal of France were found in a wood*—is

interesting, romantic, and extremely patriotic and loyal :

God prosper long our gracious Queen,
Our lives and safeties all,
A woeful fight of late did
Near Audenarde befall.

It was to drive the French army away from Oudenarde that the Great Duke went with gun and sword ; and the valiant commander called heaven to witness that Vendome should have to 'pay full dear' for the capture of Ghent and Bruges, even before the fame of these events should reach fair France. With this intent, he advanced with his 'eighty thousand bold and chosen men of might' against the hundred thousand Frenchmen, to 'a charge and bloody fight.'

The gallant Britons swiftly ran,
The French away to chase ;
On Wednesday they began to fight,
When daylight did decrease ;
And long before high night, they had
Ten thousand Frenchmen slain,
And all the rivers crimson flowed,
As they were dyed in grain.

Now, the Britons, in eager pursuit of the flying foes, came to certain woods ; and in order the nimble French to take, made both hills and dales and every tree shake with the roar of their musketry. The Duke made his way to these woods in the hope of meeting Vendome ; but instead, he found the Prince de Carignan, one of the French generals, who

Fell at His Grace's feet—
'Oh ! gentle Duke, forbear, forbear
Into that wood to shoot.'

For, it would seem, His Grace would there find the hopes of the royal line of France, Great Louis's heirs, lying fast asleep.

What heart of flint but must relent,
Like wax before the sun,
To see their glory at an end,
Ere yet it was begun.

When Vendome saw the battle was about to commence, said Carignan, and in order to please the two grandsons of Louis, who had been entrusted to his care, he straightway sent them to the top of a church spire—

Where they might see and yet be safe
From swords, and guns, and fire.

He first kissed them tenderly, and then went about his business, unheeding the tears in their little eyes, which seemed 'to forecast events,' but promising to return after the big fight was done. But, alas, when he saw his men give way, away he basely ran, leaving the children all alone. They, 'as babes wanting relief,' grew frightened, came down from their high perch, and wandered about hand-in-hand until they came to the wood, where they sat down and cried 'when they saw the night grow dark.' At this piteous narrative the good Duke was inwardly moved:

His breast fast pity beat,
And so he straightway ordered
His men for to retreat.

But now the ballad leaves the children, and gives us a brief glimpse of the fight :

And now, but that my pen is blunt,
I might with ease relate
How fifteen thousand French were took,
Besides what found their fate.
Nor would the Prince of Hanover
In silence be forgot,
Who like a lion fought on foot,
After his horse was shot.
And what strange chance likewise befell
Unto the children dear,
But that your patience is too much
Already tired, I fear.
And so God bless the Queen and Duke,
And send us lasting peace,
That wars and foul debate henceforth
In all the world may cease.

If we read this ballad by the light of chronology, we must perforce come to the conclusion that the pretty tale of the royal babes is a figment of romance. As a matter of fact, Louis XIV. did send his two grandsons to the wars: the Duke of Burgundy, who was sixteen, as commander ; and the Duke of Berry, who was twelve years old, as a pupil. To say the least of it, it is unlikely that youths of that age brought up to martial habits, would have sat down and cried when their dry-nurse was not forthcoming. Both the young princes met with untimely and cruel deaths, it is said, at the hands of their uncle, the Duke of Orleans.

In *Old England's New Triumph ; or the Battle of Audenarde*, published soon after the event, we have a rather malicious account of it :

Ye Britons, give ear
To my story, and hear
How Churchill, the chief of commanders,
Has gained new renown
To himself and the crown
By outwitting the Monsieurs in Flanders.

The third stanza tells us :

As his troops did advance,
The young squire of France
On a church, with his brother, was seated ;
And fearless from far
Saw the terrible war,
And in order, when routed, retreated.

Sad to say :

The knight of St George,
A tale I don't forge,
Achieved no great matters to brag on ;
The youth did not fight,
Like St George, or his knight,
Though young Hanover did like a dragon.

'Young Hanover,' whose character, sooth to say, will not bear very strict investigation, was a great favourite with these merry bards.

But we have a more biting and amusing account of the fight in a ballad entitled *The Frenchman's Defeat*. It is not so romantic, and rather more libellous and braggadocio in tone :

Ye Commons and Peers,
Pray, lend me your ears ;
I'll sing you a song if I can,
How Louis le Grand
Was put to a stand
By the arms of our Gracious Queen Anne.

How his army so great
Had a total defeat
Not far from the river Dender ;
Where his grandchildren twain,
For fear of being slain,
Galloped off with the popish Pretender.

To a steeple on high,
The battle to spy,
Up mounted these clever young men ;
And when from the spire
They saw so much fire,
They cleverly came down again.

They then got on horseback, at the advice of Vendome, who cried to Burgundy : ' I wish you and your brother were at home.' And the trio immediately made their escape—the rhymester comparing their heels to cork and their hearts to lead. But we must turn to the song again, and see that

Not so did behave
The Young Hanover brave
In this bloody field, I assure you ;
When his mare-horse was shot,
Yet he mattered it not,
But charged still on foot like a fury.

And so it runs on, cracking up ' Young Hanover :'

This gallant young man,
Being kin to Queen Anne,
Fought, as were she a man, she would do.

Perhaps this latter ballad sticks closer to historical accuracy—at all events, it seems more probable. Still, we must not forget that although all historians do ample homage to the Electoral Prince of Hanover—who was afterwards our George II.—there are writers who have defended the young Pretender, and declare he proved his mettle that day on the bloody field of battle.

The warlike spirit of the nation in those days is well represented in *The Courageous Boys of several Trades and Callings*, whom the ballad in a lengthy sub-title defines 'as weavers, shoemakers, butchers, dyers, and hatters, in city and country, whose resolution is to march into Flanders after King William, to relieve that country from the French cruelty, and from thence march with him to the conquest of France.' It commences :

Brave boys, we shall soon have an army of those
That will both the French and the papists oppose ;

and goes on to say what grand things they will do—

For every tradesman his calling will leave,
And bright shining armour he resolves to receive.

And, moreover—

The valiant shoemakers in hundreds come,
Resolving to follow the true martial drum,
With flourishing colours to enter the field,
Not fearing to make the proud enemy yield.
Through every country all over the west,
Their loyalty to their good king is exprest,
And under his banner they'll fight till they die,
Or otherwise make our proud enemies flee.

No doubt this ballad would be a favourite with the boys, with the bold and ambitious apprentices. It is a somewhat rickety but bellicose production, conceived in the spirit of those celebrated verses :

Two skinny Frenchmen and one Portugee,
One jolly Englishman can lick 'em all three.

Perhaps, the spirit was a wholesome one in its way, and may account for much in our history which to us seems almost miraculous.

MRS FARQUHARSON'S NIECE.

CHAP. II.—DISCOVERIES.

A COUPLE of weeks glided by. Miss Selwyn was still with us, and, to all appearance, intended to remain. She declared she could not tear herself away ; and I had begun to feel that without her the place would be very dull, though before she came I had never thought of it. I certainly had never met such a lively girl as Doris. She seemed naturally a bit of a wit, and was remarkably quick at repartee. She was, however, astonishingly ignorant of some things. She could scarcely play a note of music, could paint only a very little, seemed to know or care nothing about the modern languages, except the language of flowers, in which she was well versed ; and as for sewing and light fancy-work, her knowledge thereof was nil. I had never seen her use a needle since she came.

Nothing surprised me more than the change her presence had effected in Professor Vaughan. His niece seemed to have acquired an unbounded influence over him, and she used it most unmercifully. Only in the evenings, and not always then, would she allow him to retire to the solitude of his own room and the society of his beloved books, as she called them. Poor old gentleman ! his life was made a burden to him. She would rally him on his bachelor condition, and say that she knew lots of nice 'old girls' who would just suit him. She ordered him, as her cavalier, to attend her in her walks through the Manor grounds, and would not let him off on any excuse ; and if he did succeed in escaping to his room, would sometimes follow him there, and spend with him the greater part of the day, though she must have been a decided hindrance to him. From the first, to use her own expression, she constituted him her own peculiar 'chum ;' and, truth to tell, he was favoured with much more of her society than either her aunt or myself. Privately, I thought Miss Selwyn a bit of a flirt, as she showed such a predilection for masculine society ; but Mrs Farquharson seemed quite well pleased, more so, indeed, I fancied, than on the occasions when Miss Selwyn and I were out together. Perhaps she thought the Professor required to be roused up a little, which he certainly did. The constrained manner towards her niece which I had at first observed in her had, moreover, to a great extent disappeared.

In the evenings, if Miss Selwyn were not out about the grounds or disturbing her uncle, she would generally sit and read to us while we sewed, occasionally stopping to make some light remark, which caused her aunt and me to smile ; or stand looking over me while I played and sang. She never sang herself ; she said she had no voice. Altogether, things were more lively since her arrival.

'What a pretty dress you have on !' said she one evening. 'What kind of material do you call it ? I never can remember the names of stuffs.'

'This is a grenadine,' I answered, a little aston-

ished. 'It is a present from your aunt. She is very kind to me.'

'Not more so than you deserve, I imagine. I have often thought you must feel it very dull—you so young and pretty—pardon me—to be shut up here. Have you any brothers or sisters, Naomi?'

'Only one brother, and he is very young; but I have four sisters—two older, and two younger than myself. Papa is a clergyman in one of the poorest of the London suburbs. His salary is not large enough for us all, and that is the reason I am here.'

'And your sisters, are they also in situations?' she asked.

'The two eldest are; the others are not old enough, and mamma requires one of them at home, for we keep only a very small servant.'

She did not ask more. I longed to inquire something about herself or her people, but did not like. In spite of her frankness, she could be very reticent when she chose, and she never alluded to her home in any way.

Although so fond of walking about the grounds, she had never yet been outside the gates, nor did she manifest any desire to see the village or go to the church on Sundays. I had tried to persuade her to accompany me the first Sunday, but she laughingly said she got quite enough of religion at home; and her aunt did not press her to go, but seemed rather relieved at her staying in. She, like the Professor, allowed her niece her own way almost in everything.

Our rooms were on the first landing. Miss Selwyn's was on the opposite side of the corridor from her uncle's and from Mrs Farquharson's, and looked to the back, as did mine also. Between her room and mine was a large room used for storing lumber. There was no balcony on this side, but only in the front. The servants slept above.

One morning I rose as usual before breakfast and went out into the garden. Miss Selwyn frequently joined me; but this morning she had apparently slept in. In my gardening operations I had slightly soiled my hands, and before going in to breakfast, went up-stairs to wash them and tidy myself generally. To gain my own room I had to pass the door of Miss Selwyn's, which I noticed to be ajar. In passing, I caught a glimpse of Miss Selwyn in her crimson morning gown standing before the toilet-table in her room, gazing into the looking-glass. In her hand she held what, to my astonishment, appeared to be a razor. She looked precisely like a person who had finished the operation of shaving, for I had seen papa look just like that. I was so surprised that I almost uttered an exclamation, but recovered myself, walked on, and gained my own room, shutting the door very softly.

It might be perhaps a day or two later. I retired to my room in the evening earlier than my wont, as I wished to finish a letter I was writing to mamma. My window was open half-way, for the evening was warm. My letter being finished, but not feeling inclined for sleep, I was sitting at the window gazing idly into the moonlight. Every one was up-stairs, and I believed myself to be the only one awake in the house. The Professor had gone to his room after tea, and nearly an hour before I had heard Mrs Farquharson and her niece bid each other good-

night as they entered their separate rooms. They seemed always to finish their conversation downstairs, for Miss Selwyn never sat and chatted with her aunt in her room after coming up, but went straight to her own. I would have liked an occasional cosy chat with her by our bedroom fires; but as she never invited me into her room, I did not venture to ask her into mine.

It was a lovely moonlight night. Our side of the house, however, lay completely in shadow. I do not know how long I may have sat, when I heard the window of Miss Selwyn's room softly raised. I knew it must be hers, because the room between us was, as I have said, used only for lumber, and Mrs Farquharson's and her brother's rooms were on the other side of the corridor, their windows looking to the front. 'She is like myself,' thought I; 'she cannot sleep either.'

I was about to call to her softly to let her know that I also was awake, when I heard her strike a match, as if about to relight her bedroom candle. Apparently the light went out again, for I heard her mutter something which sounded like an oath, and immediately after another match was struck. I had not known swearing was one of Miss Selwyn's accomplishments, although she was addicted to using slang phrases. A minute or two later, wafted to my nostrils came the aroma of a cigar. I glanced downwards, my first impression being that the pleasant odour came from below; but there all was silent. Again I felt it, and this time was certain it came from the open window of Miss Selwyn's room. Cautiously, I put out my head once more. Miss Selwyn, doubtless believing herself the only one awake, was leaning carelessly out of her bedroom window, her eyes fixed on the stars, calmly enjoying either a cigar or a cigarette. I had heard that to smoke cigarettes was common amongst some ladies, yet this discovery nevertheless came upon me with almost a shock. Fortunately, my room being also in darkness, Miss Selwyn did not seem to have seen me. She must have sat there for nearly half an hour before I heard her close her window. I was glad when she did so, for I could not go to bed leaving my window open, and she was certain to hear me if I attempted to close it. I wondered if Mrs Farquharson knew of this accomplishment of her lively niece.

My sleep that night was disturbed by restless dreams, in one of which I saw Miss Selwyn seated calmly on the seashore watching the waves come lapping in, and smoking a huge clay pipe, while in her hand she held a razor, which she had just been sharpening against the rock on which she sat.

It is curious, when once one's attention is drawn to any particular fact, how soon thereafter something is sure to occur in connection therewith. The next day Mrs Glass waylaid me in the hall, Mrs Farquharson and her niece being then engaged in correspondence. Miss Selwyn had only one correspondent, and his letters—her correspondent was of the male sex—did not appear to give her much pleasure. Mrs Glass drew me into her own private parlour and closed the door carefully. 'I have something which I wanted to tell you, Miss Stuart,' said she. 'It is about Miss Selwyn. May I ask what you think of the young lady, miss?'

I was taken somewhat by surprise at the question. 'What do you mean? Do you refer to her appearance, or her conduct generally?'

'I mean her ways.—Don't you think she is a very strange young lady? She has such free and easy ways. And do you know, miss, I do believe she smokes!'

Had she not been an elderly woman, I would have cut short the conversation by telling her that it was neither my business nor hers to discuss Miss Selwyn's conduct; but she had always been very kind to me, and I did not wish to say anything to hurt her feelings. I think she must have read my thoughts, for her next words were half apologetic.

'I know it is none of my business, miss; but something I heard two days ago from Jane the housemaid, and from my cousin Mrs Jenkyns, who keeps the inn, you know, miss, has made me wonder if I should not tell what I heard to Mrs Farquharson; so I thought I might safely tell you, and leave you to judge, for I think she has something troubling her already just now; she has not been quite herself since her niece arrived.'

I had noticed this fact, but had been inclined to ascribe it to imagination; but Mrs Glass had evidently observed it also.

'But what is your reason for thinking Miss Selwyn smokes? You have not seen her do so, I suppose?'

'No, miss; but I have often felt the smell of cigars in her room in the mornings, and have found pieces of cigar ends in the grate and on the ground outside her window. It is not a very lady-like thing; and Mrs Farquharson would be wild if she knew, I am sure.—The Professor, as you know, does not smoke, so the cigar ends could not be his.'

'And what did Jane tell you, and your cousin?'

I again inquired, not wishing to tell what I had myself observed overnight.

Mrs Glass came a little nearer and spoke in a lower tone. 'You must have noticed, Miss Stuart, that Miss Selwyn has always kept very close to the house ever since she came. She has never been outside the grounds, to my knowledge; and you remember the strange way in which she arrived when no one expected her. It is my opinion she is here in hiding, and does not wish to be seen. I think she has run away from home, miss.'

I was so taken aback by this view of the matter, that for a minute or two I could not say a word. 'What should make her leave her home?' I asked at length.

'I don't know, miss, of course; but perhaps a lover may have had something to do with it. You can judge, after you hear what I am going to tell you.—From anything ever I have heard, any of Mrs Farquharson's relatives are in poorer circumstances than herself, and Mrs Selwyn may have wished her daughter to marry some one she did not care for, for the sake of his money. I don't think Mrs Selwyn and Mrs Farquharson are particularly friendly, for they don't visit; and I did not know there was a Miss Selwyn till she arrived here that day.—Of course I only came here eighteen months ago, and did not know Mrs Farquharson till then. Well, two days ago, Jane went down to the village to

order some things for the house. When she arrived at the end of the avenue, she saw a man gazing curiously over the gate into the Manor grounds, but he turned away in the direction of the village before she came up to him. When she was passing him, he spoke to her, and walked along by her side till they reached the village. He was rather an elderly man, and looked like a well-to-do gentleman, she says, or she would not have answered him when he first spoke. He seemed much interested in this house, and asked her a great many questions; and although he tried not to let her see it, was evidently especially interested when she mentioned Miss Selwyn's being here—asking particularly as to when she came, what she was like, and how long she intended staying.—Jane got annoyed at his questions at last, and left him abruptly when she reached Mrs Ball's. On coming home, she at once told me, and described the man. I advised her not to say anything to the others. Yesterday afternoon, I called on my cousin Mrs Jenkyns to hear what she could tell me, for Jane had seen the gentleman enter the inn. He was not in then, but was staying there, and had been doing so for a week past. He had also questioned my cousin as to the Manor-house, and had expressed a great desire to see it. My cousin told him it was not open for visitors to see through it. Fortunately, although she noticed his curiosity with regard to Miss Selwyn, she could tell him nothing about her; but she thought he might be an elderly lover of that young lady; and putting things together, I have come to the same conclusion.—What do you think of it, miss?'

'I cannot tell,' I answered, perplexed. 'He may be of a naturally inquisitive turn, as elderly gentlemen sometimes are, and may be asking these questions without any particular motive; and the Manor-house is certainly an interesting feature in the surroundings.—But stay. What is the man like? Is he short and stout, wearing a soft hat and light drab overcoat? I met such a man between the Manor and the village the other day; and now that I think of it, he did look at me rather curiously.'

'That is the very man, miss; but sometimes he wears a short blue jacket. I'm sure I do not know whether to tell Mrs Farquharson or not.'

'Better let things alone meantime. We have no evidence that the man is really in any way connected with Miss Selwyn, although I admit his questioning looks suspicious; and even though he does know her, it does not follow he is a lover of hers. She certainly did arrive here rather unexpectedly; but the account she herself gave on arrival was quite satisfactory to me at anyrate; and we must not jump to the conclusion that she has run away, unless we see some stronger reason than we have at present. Besides, even though he should be her lover, he can scarcely run away with her unless she is willing; and if ever there was a young lady perfectly capable of taking care of herself, I should think Miss Selwyn is that one.—I have to go to Shuttleton myself this afternoon, and will call on Mrs Jenkyns and ascertain if he is still there.'

She left me then; and I proceeded to take

my constitutional. Almost mechanically, my steps turned into the avenue leading to the village. The avenue took rather a sharp curve about two hundred yards from the gate, and near this gate there was a mass of shrubbery. Nearer to the Manor the grounds were very open, and the windings of the avenue alone hid the house from view. I was approaching this turn in the avenue, when I heard a sound as of a footstep. Not wishing to be seen, as I had still on my morning gown, I glided behind a large tree, and took shelter at the back of a spreading rhododendron bush which stood near. In another minute, whoever it was turned round the curve and then paused. I ventured to steal a glance from my hiding-place. Through the trees I saw him: it was the man of whom Mrs Glass had spoken—the supposed elderly lover of Mrs Farquharson's niece. He had his back to me, for I was on the side of the avenue farthest from the Manor, and he was gazing earnestly in its direction. He appeared as if afraid of being seen, as he kept glancing suspiciously around. He did not wait long, fortunately, for, after satisfying himself that no one was in sight, he turned and walked back the way he had come. I waited till he had gone, then hurried home as fast as my feet could carry me. Surely, after all, the man was here with some object; but that object might not be Miss Selwyn. A suspicion that he might be in league with a gang of thieves, though housebreaking was a thing unheard of amongst us, haunted me all the forenoon. He might wish to reconnoitre before making the attempt. Mrs Farquharson kept no man-servants, and there were many valuable articles in the house. What made matters worse, the Professor had that morning early left for town to visit a brother Professor who was at present laid up, and we did not expect him back till the next evening. I was, however, destined ere long to have the man's conduct explained, for that very afternoon I unexpectedly obtained light upon it.

ONE MORE CHEMICAL TRIUMPH.

To chemistry perhaps almost more than to any other science we of the present day are most deeply indebted. Through it we have become acquainted with the properties of the various elements which enter into the composition of this world of ours, and by studying their different actions upon each other the chemist has succeeded in producing those numerous artificial compounds which are daily used so extensively in the arts, and the manufacture of which contributes so largely to a nation's industry. By his skill, 'waste' substances have been converted into valuable matter; new occupations have consequently sprung into existence, and one result of all his labours therefore is, that to-day thousands of persons are earning their livelihood at trades which it was impossible for them to follow a few years ago, because such trades were then unknown. But the creation of these industries, though playing so important a part in the world's commercial history, cannot be regarded as being altogether an

unmixed blessing from a hygienic point of view; for wherever extensive chemical works are situated, the streams become more or less polluted with the waste products, and the air is charged with effluvia that are far from healthful.

The nuisances to which reference has just been made are perhaps more perceptible in connection with the alkali trade than with any other manufacture; and they have existed ever since Leblanc's method superseded the old-fashioned process of obtaining carbonate of soda from barilla—more than sixty years. By adopting what is known as the 'ammonia-soda' system—a comparatively recent invention—the foul odour is obviated; but since in this country one firm possesses a monopoly of the method, Leblanc's process has continued to be employed. Shortly stated, it consists in converting, by three principal operations, common salt into carbonate of soda. Chalk (carbonate of calcium) and sulphuric acid are among the agents used to effect such conversion, and in the course of the numerous chemical changes which take place, they react upon each other, and form sulphide of calcium, which, together with other impurities that come into existence during the process, is thrown aside, the mixed mass being known as 'alkali-waste' or 'soda-waste.' When brought into contact with an acid, sulphide of calcium is decomposed, with the evolution of sulphuretted hydrogen, a gas possessing a most offensive smell. Now the rain which falls in manufacturing towns is always highly acid, and consequently, when it becomes mixed with the huge mounds of alkali-waste which abound at such places as St Helens, in Lancashire, the sulphide of calcium is decomposed, and the atmosphere is filled with the odour of rotten eggs, whilst the drainage from the heaps causes any stream in the neighbourhood to smell most foully.

Enough has been said to show what a serious nuisance and detriment to health the alkali industry must be to those who are compelled to reside in the vicinity where it is carried on; and of late years, efforts have been made to remedy the evil by recovering from the waste the sulphur which is contained in the sulphide of calcium; but none of the methods proposed have come into practical use. To Mr Alexander Chance, of the well-known firm of Chance Brothers & Co., of Birmingham, there is, however, now no reason to doubt that sanitarians will be deeply indebted, as not only has he devised a process which removes the long-standing nuisance, but it at the same time affords considerable advantages from a commercial point of view; and the method is so simple that one is led to wonder how chemists can possibly have overlooked it for so many years. Perhaps 'happy idea' would be a better term to employ in connection with it than the word 'process,' seeing that it is based on facts well known to the most elementary student of chemistry. Among the many by-products, useful and otherwise, which are obtained during the manufacture of alkalis is carbonic anhydride, commonly called carbonic acid; and it is by means of this gas that Mr Chance annihilates the great nuisance now caused by alkali works. He saturates the waste with the hitherto useless carbonic anhydride, which acts on the sulphide of calcium

and causes sulphuretted hydrogen to be evolved. By burning this gas the sulphur it contains is converted into sulphurous anhydride. Now the formation of sulphurous anhydride is one of the first steps in the manufacture of sulphuric acid, and therefore the former when obtained *à la* Chance can be transformed into the latter by the ordinary method; so that the sulphuric acid employed in the first stage of the manufacture of carbonate of soda, and which has undergone so many changes, is recovered and can be again used for the same purpose as before, after which it can be once more obtained in its original state, and again pass through the processes to which it has been previously subjected; and so *ad infinitum*.

But economical as this must be to the alkali manufacturer, and beneficial as it must undoubtedly prove to those residing in the neighbourhood of alkali works, the new system of dealing with soda-waste affords another pecuniary advantage which will not be lost sight of. It is this: if, instead of igniting the sulphuretted hydrogen evolved from alkali-waste by Chance's process, it is subjected to the method devised by Mr C. F. Claus for obtaining the sulphur from sulphuretted hydrogen, and which is now adopted for this purpose at several chemical works where the foul-smelling gas is emitted, we get in its purest form the sulphur which was in combination in the pyrites used in the manufacture of the sulphuric acid employed in converting common salt into carbonate of soda, and which can either be again utilised for making oil of vitriol, or can be sent into the market to be devoted to those numerous purposes to which sulphur is applicable.

The commercial importance of the new method of dealing with soda-waste will readily be understood when it is stated that the quantity of sulphuric acid annually used in Great Britain in the alkali manufacture is something like one hundred thousand tons, and this has hitherto been thrown away in the shape of sulphide of calcium, which, as we have already shown, soon becomes an intolerable nuisance to the neighbourhood. By the new process all this will be changed; for not only can the sulphur be obtained at a very slight cost from the obnoxious sulphuretted hydrogen, but the latter can be converted into sulphuric acid at a comparatively inexpensive rate, and therefore little of the enormous quantity of pyrites now consumed in the manufacture of oil of vitriol will be required. Consequently, not only will a saving be effected in the cost of pyrites, but from the sulphur yielded by the alkali-waste, a handsome profit will be derived, as in the market it will sell at from three to six times the value of the pyrites. There is also the advantage from a health point of view that, after the waste has been subjected to the new treatment, it is perfectly innocuous, and may be deposited anywhere without becoming a nuisance or deleterious to health.

This latest outcome of chemistry is simply one more proof—and we have had many within recent years—that nothing is really 'waste,' and that substances we have regarded as useless turn out to be of the greatest value when we find the proper method of dealing with them. At Mr Chance's happy idea, all who are interested in the commercial welfare of the country must rejoice;

whilst those who look upon it simply in a sanitary light cannot fail to be well pleased that the long-standing alkali-waste nuisance will now be at an end.

THE PLEASURES OF FISHING.

BY AN UNSUCCESSFUL ANGLER.

'A SPLENDID day, Jones!' says Bilston (I am Bilston's guest), as I bid him good-morning. 'A perfect day; we couldn't have a better one.'

When I awoke that morning, I had observed with a feeling akin to relief that the Yorkshire landscape was shrouded in mist, and that the Yorkshire roads were canals of mud from the drizzling rain, which had been falling steadily all night and was still coming down from a dull murky sky. 'That precious fishing expedition is knocked on the head,' was my sleepy comment as I turned over for another nap before getting up; and really I never supposed that any sane man would think of going outside his own door if he could help it in such weather. And now Bilston tells me it is a perfect day and couldn't be improved upon! I'm glad some one is pleased, but fear that I echo Bilston's eulogy with faint fervour.

'You're late, Jones,' he continues in tones of cheery reproach. 'We've nearly finished breakfast, and the parson will be here with the trap in five minutes.'

'I hardly thought you would go to-day,' I reply, rather shamefacedly.

'Not go!' shrieks Bilston. 'My dear man, I wouldn't stay at home on a day like this for fifty pounds.'

A very modest consideration indeed would buy me off; but I am at Bilston's mercy. 'A day's fishing' was one of the attractions held out for my visit, and I can't very well back out of it now; I can only hope that the parson, who has undertaken to drive us out, will have more sense than to come.

'Here's Middleby,' says Bilston, rising from the table and going to the window.

The Rev. Mr Middleby looks moist, but jubilant. 'What a glorious day!' he says. 'Are you ready?'

We are not quite ready, so the parson comes into the dining-room and spends ten minutes comparing notes with Bilston on the respective merits of 'blue duns' and 'red roans' in such weather as this. He is a capital specimen of the country curate; a jovial, active man, who gives one the idea that he goes heart and soul into everything he takes in hand. 'I'll fix you up,' he says to me, when I mildly suggest that I haven't fished for some years, and, like Mr Winkle at skating, am rather out of practice. 'You'll get on capitally.—Worm? Nonsense; that's poor sport. I'll set you going properly.' He has got such a powerfully persuasive way with him, that I'm afraid he will.

'Did you bring any lunch?' asks Bilston.

The parson knits his brows and thinks; evidently, he has not thought of such a detail when trout-fishing is the business of the day. 'I've got three pork pies,' he says slowly, 'and a cold fowl; and half-a-dozen hard boiled eggs, and a good lot of sandwiches.—You said you'd bring your own lunch,' he adds apologetically, as though his little

store was intended to meet the wants of one slender appetite.

'Oh, we are all right,' says Bilston. 'My fishing-basket is full.'

This I find is literally true; Bilston's basket, moreover, is by no means a small one.

'When do you expect to be back?' I ask, as a dim vision of damp beds in a country inn flits before my mind's eye. The preparations are on such an extensive scale that I begin to feel anxious.

'We'll be home in time for dinner,' says the parson, holding up his flask to the light; 'but it's just as well to take a little with us.'

What noble appetites they have in Yorkshire!

'Are you making a long stay down here?' he asks as I climb into the dogcart beside him.

'Only a few days,' I reply, turning up my coat-collar.

'Then you *are* in luck.—I may safely say that you might stay here a month without getting such another day as this.' He closes one eye, and says this in an impressive undertone, befitting the importance of the revelation, and then draws back his head to watch the effect it has upon me. I am unresponsive, and the parson relapses into puzzled silence. He can't understand my feelings any more than I can appreciate his. I am very subject to cold, and my wife would be in a nice frame of mind if she knew what I was doing. We have eight miles to drive before we reach the stream; it does not look very formidable, though it is swollen by the rain to-day.

'Is there much wading to do?' I ask carelessly.

'Oh no,' says the parson. 'You need seldom go in as high as your knees.'

If the Rev. Mr Middleby or any one else catches me immersed as far as my ankles, I shall be very much surprised.

We have left the trap at a roadside inn, and are standing on the bank getting our rods ready; or, to be strictly accurate, I am watching the parson's deft fingers lash wild-looking flies on to invisible gut with fearful and wonderful knots. I have been forced to consent to use flies; he won't hear of my fishing with a worm. It's awfully unsportsmanlike, he says, so I give in.

Bilston has started to walk up the road for a mile or two to a point whence he will fish down to us.

'There you are now!' says the parson. 'You'll find a capital run a couple of hundred yards up; go and try a cast there, but mind the trees.'

I'm by no means sure that I know what a 'run' is, but take the rod from the parson's hand and start for my destination without acknowledging my ignorance. I daresay I shall know it by the trees I have been warned against; there are not many on the bank.

I make a very good commencement, and succeed in throwing the cast without catching the overhanging boughs. Now it is fairly in the water, I'll leave it there; I can't get into difficulties if I don't attempt too much. In the distance I can see the parson making throw after throw with the restless perseverance of an automaton. I conclude that is the proper way to fish with flies; but there aren't any trees near him to interfere with his line. I did not think the flies looked particularly lifelike when I began, and evidently the trout

don't think so either, for I have not even had a bite when the parson leaves his station and passes me on his way up-stream. I feel bound to make another cast as he stops to watch me.

'Your tackle is all mixed up,' he says, as I make a graceful sweep with my rod.

'Ah, so it is; thank you. Didn't notice it; a little short-sighted,' I reply disjointedly, and lay the rod down on the stones to clear the cast, which, now I come to look at it, has twisted itself into a collection of Gordian knots with a degree of talent I did not imagine two yards of gut possessed. I can't manage to unravel it completely, but get it into some sort of order, quite good enough to satisfy myself.

Bother the trees! Between the wind and the ridiculous flippancy of the rod, I have 'hung myself up' (I understand this to be the correct expression). I can't tug the line down; and after a few trials, resign myself to a scramble up the wet slippery trunk. I cut away enough small branches to furnish a moderate-sized garden with pea-sticks, and as the last one falls, taking the cast with it, my new fishing-knife drops neatly into a black-looking pool below the roots of the tree. I use an expletive, and descend. It takes a good quarter of an hour to disengage the line from the twigs, and by that time the parson is well out of sight. Whatever mistake I may fall into next, I won't fish near trees, and choose a nice clear piece of water with no obstructions about it.

How on earth any fellow can throw a fly in the face of this wind, I do not know; I can't get mine into the water at all except by the most unscientific and violent thrashing. There! I knew that would happen; I'd have bet any money on it. The tail-fly has caught in my coat between the shoulders: I can't reach it; I can't pull it out; and it doesn't take me long to discover that I can't break the gut. I daresay a stout man pawing feebly at his own back to release his fishing-tackle makes a very humorous picture. But that doesn't reconcile me to the situation when a labourer with a face like a cod-fish stops to grin, and by-and-by laughs outright. (How awfully rude the lower classes are in Yorkshire!)

'Whoy doan't thee tak off thoi cowut, maan?' he says with contemptuous pity.

Happy thought! Why didn't it occur to me before? I strip off my 'cowut,' and lay it on the grass; the hook is well in over the barb, and I can't withdraw it.

The labourer, who seems quite unnecessarily amused, comes to the rescue again. 'Hast noa gotten a knoife?' he asks.

I've lost mine, and tell him so—not how; and suffer him to operate on the cloth with an instrument like a small carver. Clear again at last. My friend in need has gone on his way, having accepted a shilling for his services in cutting a large hole in my coat, which breathes a very perceptible odour of strong cheese.

I set to work again, and fish diligently for an hour without doing anything worthy of note. I may be wanting in science, but in patience I yield to no man, and I have always been taught that this virtue is the attribute most valuable to the fisherman. My toil is rewarded at last: a beautiful trout, nearly five inches long, takes one of the flies—I don't know which—and with a tremen-

dous effort I swirl him out of the water, over my head, into a patch of furze bushes. It is a little difficult to find him, for the hook came out as soon as he fell. I shan't abandon the search in a hurry. If a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, a trout in the furze is worth two in the stream, and I hunt carefully, regardless of prickles until I find him. I wonder what he weighs, he can't be very heavy; but Bilston has brought his spring balance, so the fish can stay in my basket until I can weigh him at lunch-time. If it wasn't for the wind, I should get on capitally; but success has made me incautious, and before long a fly catches me somewhere again, not in my coat this time. Really, it is very awkward, a most embarrassing position if any one should happen to come this way. The hook has a frightfully sharp point, and tells me its exact locality if I make the slightest movement. What *am* I to do? It's all very well to take off one's coat in full sight of the public highway; but there's no knowing how long it may take to get the hook out without a knife, and I can't divest myself of this garment for an indefinite time; it's out of the question. Bother it all! here's somebody coming. I won't be caught in this predicament; and wet as the grass is, I sit down, and pretend to examine my reel.

'Any sport?' asks the stranger.

'Not much,' I reply, as serenely as can be expected of a man impaled on a fish-hook.

'Too cold?' he suggests after a very long pause. He hasn't much to say, but takes a very long time to say it, and is exasperatingly slow about moving off. He is out of sight at last, and I secure a couple of large stones to break the gut with. I bruise my fingers, lose my temper, and make awful havoc of the tackle before I get free, but it is done eventually, and I apply myself to piecing the fragments together again. It doesn't look quite right, somehow, when I have completed the repairs. The top fly is only six inches from the silk line, and the next one hangs about a foot below that; thereafter is a four-foot strand of plain gut, unencumbered by hooks, for the other fly clings unlovingly to my trousers.

The rain has passed off, and the sun is growing hot. Bilston said he was afraid the drizzle would not last all day. I can't say I regret it, though the change seems unfavourable to fishing, for another hour's assiduous work is unproductive of results. I must say I get on better without that tail-fly; there's nothing to catch in the trees and check one's freedom of action in making casts. It is past one o'clock; I shall stop and walk up to meet Bilston and the lunch. I go a good mile and a half before I desery him seated in the shade on the other side of the river, beside the parson, both of them busy with knives and flasks.

'Hillo, Jones!' shouts Bilston. 'Come along. You'll find a safe place to cross if you go fifty yards higher up, just round that bend.'

The place doesn't look very safe when I reach it, and nothing but hunger would urge me to try a crossing. As I have hinted before, I am a stout man, and start on a series of perilous leaps from rock to rock, with my heart in my mouth. I'm half-way over, and the widest leap has to be taken; the rock I'm standing on is awfully slippery, and the water looks unpleasantly deep. I screw up my courage and jump—into the brown stream nearly up to the waist! I don't want the friendly

help of the stepping-stones now, and drag myself to the bank, which I gain with my boots full of water, and the horribly uncomfortable feeling a man has after taking a bath in his clothes. What humbug it is to call this fishing business an amusement! Disgusting!

The parson has finished his lunch and is counting the basket when I arrive. 'Undersized,' he says severely to Bilston, holding up a fish much larger than the one in my basket. 'I thought you knew that the limit on this water is eight inches.'

Bilston asks if it isn't eight inches long, with the uneasily innocent air of a man pretending that he thinks he has done no wrong.

'A short seven,' says the parson, throwing the trout back into the water.—'I ought to have told you there's a penalty of two guineas for taking undersized fish, Mr Jones,' he adds, turning to me: 'the keepers are very stringent about it too, and quite rightly.'

I wish I had left my capture in the furze-bush, and register a vow to throw it away as soon as I can without being seen. I'm no judge of length, but if the trout in my basket is five inches long, I shall be astonished.

'You haven't spared yourself, old man,' says Bilston, surveying my wet clothes; 'but it was hardly worth while wading so far as that.'

Shall I tell him that I tumbled in, or let him suppose that I've been standing in the water almost up to my middle all day, in my zeal for sport? Looks well to have been working hard, though I have nothing to show for it.

'I hadn't much luck,' I say, throwing down my rod; 'the only one I got was a small one.'

The parson glares hard at my tackle, and then gets up to inspect it. 'Not surprising, if you've been fishing with this,' he remarks dryly.

'I lost the other fly,' I falter, turning to receive a packet of sandwiches from Bilston. I feel that the parson's searching eyes are upon me, and don't feel at all happy.

'Shall I take this off for you?' he says, taking the gut of that tenacious 'tail-fly' in his fingers and giving it a gentle pull.

'Funny way to *lose* a fly,' says Bilston gravely, as he sees what the Rev. Mr Middleby is doing.

I am bad at fibbing—notoriously unsuccessful with what people call the 'ready lie'; but it did occur to me as soon as I had spoken that it would have been as well not to have said that I didn't know it was there.

Bilston echoes, 'Didn't know it was there!' and breaks into a vulgarly loud roar of laughter. I stand looking foolish whilst the parson cuts out the hook in stern silence. He is an enthusiast himself, and doesn't seem pleased.

'If your friend doesn't care about fishing, perhaps we had better go home,' he says to Bilston.

'Oh! but he does,' says my host, choking down his risibility with an effort.—'Don't you, Jones?'

Regardless of the most elementary principles of truth, I solemnly aver that I know no sport like it (I hope I never shall), and that trout-fishing is a passion of mine. I attack the lunch, and Mr Middleby, who is as good-natured as he is earnest, sets to work to readjust my tackle, whilst Bilston leans against a tree, smoking, with his hat resting on his eyebrows.

'Here's the head-keeper,' says the parson in an undertone; 'it's lucky I threw away that little one you had.'

Bilston nods seriously, and having a clear conscience, gives the keeper a hearty 'good-day.'

'Day, gen'lemen,' says the keeper pleasantly. 'Any sport to-day, gen'lemen?'

This is awful! My companions promptly respond to the question by turning out their baskets on the grass. It is evidently a civil way of asking to examine the catch. He doesn't seem to notice me as I sit in the background with my basket behind me. I certainly won't volunteer to display its contents; my fish would be worth its weight in gold to him, very nearly.

The keeper turns over the little heap of trout with his stick. 'All right, Mr Bilson, sir.—A awful hot day, sir.'

A brilliant idea strikes me: I will make friends with the keeper. Perhaps he may put me up to a wrinkle or two by which I may redeem my character in the parson's eyes, if I have to go on with this wretched fishing business all the afternoon. I'll offer the keeper a drink: that's what he's hinting at.

'Have a nip of whisky, keeper?' I say with condescending affability, pulling round my basket in momentary obliviousness of the solitary companion my flask has therein.

'Thank 'ee, sir; much obliged.—Teetot'ler, sir,' says the man in velvet. 'Ope you 'ave 'ad some sport, too, sir?'

Oh, why didn't I hold my tongue? Why did I go and offer him a drink he didn't want? He comes over to my side as I try to shuffle the basket out of sight, pretending I didn't hear him, and coolly kneels down at my side in readiness to examine the dozens of fish his manner seems to indicate he is sure I have caught.

It is no use denying it; he mightn't believe me, and that would complicate matters. I pull the basket round again, and he opens it wide whilst I stare blankly at the top of his weather-beaten hat. It takes him fully half a minute to search that basket; and I'm beginning to hope that the fish may have tumbled out when I fell into the stream, but presently he emits a low chuckle, and draws out the now stiff and unwholesome-looking victim of my skill. He sits back on his heels, looking from it to me and from me to it again. My condescending affability is all gone. I hope I don't look so foolishly small as I feel. The keeper shakes his head solemnly, and coughs.

'This 'ere fish is hunder size, sir,' he observes at length.

'I didn't know how the'—

'The fine for takin' hunder-size fish is two guineas, sir,' he continues without noticing my interruption. 'Is lordship likewise gives 'arf the fine to us if we catches gen'lemen takin' such trout, sir;' and the hardened ruffian smiles softly as he turns the sorry object about in his hands.

'What does this mean?' I demand savagely of the parson.

'The keeper is quite right,' says the Rev. Mr Middleby. 'If you make a row about it, he'll just report the matter, and our leave to fish here will be withdrawn.'

'I oughter report it,' says the keeper doubtfully as he gets on his feet.

For myself, I shouldn't much care if he did, but I can't get Bilston into trouble, and deprive him of the 'amusement' he takes such unaccountable delight in. I swallow my wrath and look hard at the keeper; he must be a thought-reader, for he smiles again, knowingly this time.

'Don't report anything about it; I'll settle with you,' I say, and in desperation I force a sovereign into his hand. He doesn't look quite satisfied; so now, quite reckless, I add three half-crowns. That soothes the keeper's conscience.

'You may 'ave the fish, sir, if you wishes; it's dead,' he says, politely tendering it by the tail. (What tactless people one does meet at times!) I snatch the nasty thing from his hand and throw it into the river with a snort of rage. The keeper touches his hat and retires. Bilston, who has been grinning like a Cheshire cat all the time, composes his features. Heartless fellow that Bilston! I don't see anything funny about it. One pound seven shillings and sixpence for that—that reptile I have just thrown away; not counting that other shilling I paid the labourer this morning. I suppose I look as if I was going to use bad language, for the parson gets up hurriedly and goes to the river-bank out of hearing.

'A very expensive trout that,' says Bilston gravely.

But I am too angry to reply, too thoroughly annoyed even to tell him that if ever I want a fish of any kind or size again I will buy it in a civilised fashion.

N.B.—I have given away my rod.

WATERCRESS.

WITH the drawled-out cry of 'Watercreases, fine watercreases,' which is heard daily in the streets of our English towns, every one is familiar; and with the plant itself the majority of people are acquainted, for it is among the more generally distributed of our aquatic vegetable products, and its warm agreeable flavour has long caused it to be one of the most popular, whilst it is at the same time one of the most wholesome of table relishes. Botanically, it is known under the name of *Nasturtium officinale*, and it belongs to the natural order *Cruciferae*, all plants of which have their petals, or flower-leaves (four in number), arranged in the form of a cross. The characteristic of this order, to which the cabbage, cauliflower, and most of our culinary vegetables belong, is, that the bulk of its members possess antiscorbutic and pungent properties, and it does not contain a single plant which is poisonous. If, therefore, at any time in doubt as to whether a particular vegetable growth is edible or not, the obtaining of a flower will tend greatly to solve the problem; for if the bloom be composed of four leaves arranged in a cross-like form, and has six stamens, four of which are long and two short, it will be quite safe to use the plant as food, although the presence of more or fewer than four flower-leaves must not be invariably taken as indicating that a plant is non-eatable. When we say that a quartet of petals denotes that the vegetable bearing them may be eaten, it must not be interpreted as inferring that all such vegetables will be palatable; we simply wish to convey that they may be partaken of without serious results following.

Though watercress is a native of this country,

growing freely in rivulets and ditches, the greater portion of that which finds its way into the market is cultivated, immense quantities being grown for this purpose in Kent, Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, and other places. Its cultivation in Europe appears to have been begun about the middle of the sixteenth century at Erfurt, in Germany. But it was not until 1808 that its growing was undertaken in this country. In that year a market-gardener named Bradbury, of Springhead, near Gravesend, observed that the watercress of that place was of a finer quality than that produced elsewhere; and perceiving that when kept free from weeds, &c., it thrived well, he took to farming it for the market. Since then, it has become an object of regular cultivation, and large beds have been planted in various parts of the country. A few of the growers have become prosperous men; and to-day large numbers live by its culture, whilst many more daily earn their livelihood by its sale. In London alone it is computed that the street hawkers annually dispose of something like ten thousand pounds' worth of watercress; and the greengrocers of that city are credited with selling each year five thousand pounds' worth of the same plant. When, therefore, we come to consider the quantities which, in addition to the metropolis, must be consumed in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and other large centres of industry, we get some idea of the enormous sum annually spent on this relish. On the Continent it is also much esteemed, as may be gathered from the fact that the yearly rental of the beds at Erfurt reaches ten thousand pounds; and in Paris, *octroi* duties are annually levied on watercress, estimated to be worth forty thousand pounds. In New Zealand, whither it was imported by English settlers, it grows exceedingly well, the leaves attaining an extraordinary size; in fact, it is said to have become a somewhat troublesome weed. In India, according to Mr Main, it is cultivated under sheds erected for the purpose.

As is the case with most other plants, the cultivated watercress is of better quality than the wild; and besides this, there is the more important consideration, from a grower's point of view, that the cost of rearing the plant at will is less than that of searching for it under the difficulties which attend its spontaneous production. The method of cultivation is this: a clayey soil is selected, and in this beds of about a foot in depth are made. Each bed has a slight inclination from one end to the other, and into it a small stream of water is caused to flow. The bottom of the bed can either be made of a sandy or gravelly nature, or allowed to remain in its natural state, though the former is the better proceeding. At the bottom of the beds the watercress is planted in rows, in the direction of the current, at about six inches apart. Dams of half a foot in depth are made across each bed, their number and frequency being regulated by the length of the bed and its degree of inclination, in such a manner that when the dams are full, the water will rise at least three inches over the plants in each compartment. The water is thus caused to circulate throughout, and if it be not absorbed by the soil, a stream no larger than will fill a pipe of one-inch bore will be sufficient to irrigate an eighth of an acre of beds. If plants cultivated in this manner are not allowed

to flower, they will furnish an abundant supply of young tops for the market throughout the spring, summer, and autumn. All that is required for their successful growth is occasional replanting and keeping the beds free from mud and weeds.

As an article of food, watercress forms a wholesome adjunct to our dietary, by acting as a stimulant to the digestive organs. It is said to contain iodine, and on this account it has been recommended by the medical faculty as a remedial agent in cachectic affections, and in some instances it is said to have proved highly beneficial.

Occasionally we hear of persons being poisoned by mistaking some other aquatic plant for watercress. The only thing with which it can be confounded is the water-parsnip, a common inhabitant of rivulets, ditches, &c., and one which frequently grows in company with the wild cresses. But the two are very easily distinguished from each other. The leaflets of the watercress are smooth and shining, and are entire at their edges; whilst those of the parsnip, which is poisonous, are serrated or notched. When the flowering stems are up, they also serve as a mark of distinction, inasmuch as those of the watercress are in the form of a spike, and those of the water-parsnip are an umbel. Moreover, the flower of the former is composed of four petals, that of the latter has five. If the plants are bearing seed, there is an obvious distinction in the fact that the seeds of the parsnip are enclosed in capsules, those of the watercress in pods. It is clear, therefore, that with ordinary care, the two plants need not be confounded at any season.

FORGET ME NOT.

FORGET me not when, far away,
You wander at the close of day
'Mid other roses, not more fair
Than those whose beauty was not less,
Because they saw your loveliness,
And blushed to see a sight so rare.

Forget me not, when others deem
All happiness an idle dream,
Save when they watch the sunbeams play
In golden tents of silken hair,
As though they loved to linger there,
Who perish with the dying day.

Forget me not, when other eyes
Are careless if the sun arise—
So only they may rest on you;
When others hold the songs of birds
Less sweet than those soft-whispered words
That I so loved to listen to.

And oh, if sorrow yours should be—
For even our dearest are not free
From pain we'd gladly bear instead—
If you should find a friend untrue,
One heart will still be true to you,
Till all its lovelorn days are sped.

C. R. CRANE.

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JUAN FERNANDEZ.

JUAN FERNANDEZ, of *Robinson Crusoe* celebrity, is a small island in the South Pacific, some four or five hundred miles west of Valparaiso. Besides the name by which it is more usually known, it is also called Mas-à-Tierra (nearer-the-mainland), to distinguish it from another island nearly a hundred miles farther west, and hence bearing the name of Mas-à-Fuera (farther-off-shore). It has one anchorage, Cumberland Bay, and there, facing the sea, is the settlement, consisting of a few huts and a ruined fort. The island appears to be of volcanic origin; and the huge masses of rock piled one upon the other, rising to a height of nearly three thousand feet, present a very picturesque appearance from the sea. Gentler attractions are, however, not wanting; there are at least two valleys rich in vegetation, and smiling with the luxuriance of an almost tropical fertility.

One of these valleys is thus described by an American traveller—Mr J. R. Browne (*Crusoe's Island*): 'Nothing was here of that stern and inhospitable character that marked the rockbound shores of the island. A soft haze hung over the valley; a happy quiet reigned in the perfumed air; the breath of heaven touched gently the flowers that bloomed upon the sod; all was fresh and fair and full of romantic beauty. Yet there was life in the repose; abundance within the maze of heights that encircled the dreamy solitudes. Fields of wild oats waved with changing colours on the hillsides, green meadows swept around the bases of the mountains; rich and fragrant shrubs bloomed wherever we looked; fair flowers and running vines hung over the brows of the rocks, crowning them as with a garland; and springs burst out from the cool earth, and fell in white mist down into the groves of myrtle below, and were lost in the shade. Nowhere was there a trace of man's intrusion. Wild horses snuffing the breezes, dashed out into the valley in all the joyousness of their freedom, flinging back their manes and tossing their heads proudly;

and when they beheld us, they started suddenly and fled up the mountains beyond. Herds of goats ran along the rugged declivities below us, looking scarcely bigger than rabbits; and birds of bright and beautiful plumage flew close around our heads and lit upon the trees. It was a fair scene, untouched by profaning hands; fair and solitary, and lovely in its solitude as the Happy Valley of Rasselas.'

The chief interest of Juan Fernandez lies, however, not in its external features, but in its eventful history, and in the legends which have gathered round its name. That name is derived from a hardy Spanish sailor who discovered it about the year 1563, and promptly obtained a grant of his 'find' from the Spanish government. Here, like his more famous successor Selkirk, he lived for a time 'monarch of all he surveyed;' but soon growing weary of the lonely eminence, he abandoned his kingdom, leaving behind him as a gift to posterity a herd of goats and pigs.

When next the curtain lifts, the island appears as the shelter of the bold buccaneers. It lay conveniently near to the Spanish settlements, for on Spain the buccaneers made war with savage ferocity. Those were the heroic days of filibustering—the days of Lolonnois the cruel, Montbars the exterminator, Sir Henry Morgan—pirate and knight—Sharpe, and Dampier. It was after an unsuccessful attempt to surprise La Serena that Sharpe and his men anchored off Juan Fernandez. The shore was so thickly covered with seals that they were obliged to shoot some before they could land. The goats, too, had evidently multiplied, for the sailors signalised Christmas day by shooting sixty. As for the pigs, besides those slaughtered for present needs, a hundred were salted down. The waters were alive with fish, so that a sailor fishing with a bare hook caught in an hour or two enough for all the crew. There was an abundant supply of timber, palms, sandalwood, and wild quince, the greater part of which has long since disappeared.

In October 1704 the *Cinque Ports* galley, one

of Dampier's squadron, called at Juan Fernandez. There was a quarrel between Captain Straddling and his sailing-master, Alexander Selcraig or Selkirk, a native of the little fishing town of Largo, in Fifeshire, who refused to serve longer with his captain, and asked to be put on shore. When, however, his wish had been complied with, and he was left alone on the beach with some scanty stores, his heart misgave him, and he sought earnestly permission to return once more on board. But the brutal commander only made this change of resolution a subject of mockery, and left him to the charms of solitude. These, Selkirk 'enjoyed' for nearly four years and a half, till he was taken off (February 1709) by Captain Wood Rogers of the *Duke* privateer. Selkirk was appointed mate of the *Duke*; and died (1723) lieutenant of the royal ship *Weymouth*. A monument was erected to his memory in his native place in 1885. Two circumstances have conspired to confer on this young Scotchman a kind of immortality: Cowper made him the mouthpiece for a charming poem; and a plausible popular error identified him with the hero of Defoe's immortal tale.

There must have been something peculiarly seductive in the attractions of Juan Fernandez, for the next visitor, Captain Clipperton of the *Success*, lost four of his men, who deserted, though two were captured before the vessel left; while Captain Shelvocke, who lost his vessel, the *Speedwell*, and had to build another out of the wreckage, suffered a more serious loss, eleven sailors and thirteen Indians and blacks refusing to leave the island. 'They were not yet prepared for the other world,' was their excuse. Two years afterwards, no traces could be found of the rebellious twenty-four.

Here, in 1741, came the shattered remnants of Anson's expedition. With half his crew gone, and the survivors in such evil case that out of the two hundred there were hardly enough available for active work to sail the ship, the anchorage of Cumberland Bay was a welcome sight. The memory of the hardships they had undergone may to some extent account for the glowing language in which the historian of the expedition speaks of Juan Fernandez. 'Those only,' he says, 'who have endured a long series of thirst, and who can readily recall the desire and agitation which the ideas alone of springs and brooks have at that time raised in them, can judge of the emotion with which we eyed a large cascade of the most transparent water, which poured itself from a rock, near one hundred feet high, into the sea at a small distance from the ship. Even those amongst the diseased who were not in the very last stages of the distemper, though they had been long confined to their hammocks, exerted the small remains of their strength that was left them, and crawled up to the deck to feast themselves with this reviving prospect.'

The wind blew off the shore and made it difficult to effect a landing; but the scurvy-stricken were dying apace, and the few healthy men could not be spared to attend to the sick. At length, however, after three days' hard work, the invalids, numbering one hundred and eighty, were got safely to land, except some twelve who died in the boats on being exposed to the fresh air. Tents were soon erected and something like an

hospital extemporised. But so malignant was the disease and such a hold had it got on the men, that for the first ten or twelve days the average mortality amounted to five or six. Vegetables were fortunately abundant, and the radishes, celery, and watercresses were the best of medicine for the scurvy-stricken sailors. Anson gave as well as took, for he planted many garden-seeds and sowed the stones of fruit-trees, some of which have thriven well.

The next visitor was the Spaniard Ulloa, who came to the island in 1743. He was particularly struck by the number of dogs he saw, especially of the greyhound breed. These dogs had been sent by the Chilian and Peruvian governments in the hope of exterminating the goats, and thus depriving hostile warships and pirates of a possible means of re-provisioning. The plan, however, proved a failure, the goats being too agile in scaling the rocks to give their more swift-footed foes a chance. Ulloa urged the Spanish government to fortify the island and convert it into a penal settlement; but it is doubtful whether his advice would have been acted on, had not motives of jealousy powerfully seconded it. Information was received that, in consequence of Anson's report, England was thinking of establishing a settlement on Juan Fernandez. Their hand thus forced, the Spanish authorities occupied the island (1750) with a strong military force and built a fort commanding the harbour. This, however, was destroyed in the following year by an earthquake, and was rebuilt further inland. The post of governor seems to have been looked upon as one of the plums of the Spanish service. Vast sums were charged against the home government in respect of wholly unnecessary military works commenced but never completed, and the truth of a Spanish proverb was abundantly illustrated:

'Twixt pick and hoe,
The moneys go.

Ulloa's advice was also followed by utilising the settlement as a penal colony. When the South American revolution broke out, many of the Chilian and Peruvian patriots were condemned to exile here. At the end of the revolutionary wars the Chilians took over the settlement, and in 1819 established another penal colony. In the following year, there are said to have been three hundred convicts guarded by a hundred soldiers. In 1821, however, an insurrection broke out, and the settlement was for a time given up, the garrison being removed and the fort dismantled. At the same time the Chilian government, resolved that if they could not use the place no one else should, issued a manifesto forbidding any persons to settle there or kill the cattle or take the wood. Again, in 1828 and 1833 convict settlements were formed; but the cruelties practised on the prisoners led to outbreaks, successful in two instances. At length in 1835 the great earthquake destroyed the fortifications, and the convict establishment was finally abandoned.

But the traveller who climbs the brow of a hill fronting the harbour—barely half a mile from the landing-place—will still find the melancholy traces of these habitations of cruelty. The face of the cliff is excavated to a distance of several hundred feet, and long winding passages lead to

the dark and dripping cells where the convicts were immured. Beneath these, connected by rude earthen steps, are other cells darker and more chill, if that were possible, certainly smaller, for they are not more than five feet in length by six in height. These were reserved for offenders of the deepest dye. Here, in a very blackness of darkness, in a silence unbroken save by the curse of the jailer or the shock of the earthquake, the wretched victims of ignorance and cruelty passed through a life of torture to the oblivion of madness or to the rest of the grave.

The highest point on the island is a rugged rocky peak called *el Yunque* (the Anvil), or *Yonka*, which to all appearance is perfectly inaccessible. Even where the rock is covered with vegetation, the soil is so thin and friable that any attempt on the part of the climber to raise himself by clinging to shrubs, or even trees, would involve almost certain disaster. Thus, Walter, the chaplain to Anson's expedition, tells of a sailor who, being on the hills goat-hunting, caught hold of a tree upon a declivity to assist him in his ascent. This giving way, he immediately rolled down the hill; and though in his fall he fastened on another tree of considerable bulk, yet that too gave way, and he fell among the rocks and was dashed to pieces.

Since 1835, the Chilian government has leased the island to private speculators; and in 1868 it was purchased by Robert Wehrdan, a German engineer, who has established a small but thriving colony. In addition to tillage and stock-raising, hunting and fur-sealing, some trade is carried on with passing ships, especially whalers, which often put in for water. In the same year Her Majesty's ship *Topaze* visited Juan Fernandez, and erected a tablet to the memory of Alexander Selkirk at a spot known as 'Selkirk's Lookout.'

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAP. XL.—AT REST AT LAST.

WINIFRED fell back on the pillows wearily. 'I love him,' she whispered once more. 'He hates me, Elsie; but in spite of all, I love him, I love him.'

For years she had locked up that secret in her own soul. She had told it to no one, least of all to her husband. But, confined to the narrow space of her poor small heart, and battling there with her contempt and scorn, it had slowly eaten her very life out.

Her face was growing very pale now. After all this excitement, she needed rest. The inevitable reaction was beginning to set in. She fumbled with her fingers on the bedclothes nervously; her face twitched with a painful twitching. The symptoms alarmed and frightened Elsie; she opened the door of the little *salon* and signalled to the English doctor to return to the bedroom. He came in, and cast a keen glance at the bed. Elsie looked up at him with inquiring eyes. The doctor nodded gravely and drew his long beard through his closed hand. 'A mere question of hours,' he whispered in her ear. 'It may be delayed; it may come at any time. She's over-taxed her strength. Hysteria, followed by proportionate prostration. Her heart may fail from moment to moment.'

'Where's her husband?' Elsie cried in a fever of dismay.

'I've sent him off about his business for an hour's stroll,' the doctor answered with professional calmness. 'She's evidently in a highly hysterical condition, and the sight of him only increases her excitement. It's a sad case, but a painfully common one. A husband's presence is often the very worst thing on earth for a patient so affected. I thought it would do her far more good to have you alone with her—you're always so gentle and so soothing, Miss Challoner.'

Elsie glanced back at him with swimming eyes. 'But suppose she were to die while he's gone,' she murmured low with profound emotion.

The doctor pursed up his lips philosophically. 'It can't be helped,' he answered with a faint shrug. 'That's just what'll happen, I'm very much afraid. We can only do the best we can. This crisis has evidently been too severe for her.'

As he spoke, Winifred turned up from the bed an appealing face, and beckoned Elsie to bend down closer to her. 'Elsie,' she whispered, in a low hoarse voice, 'send out for Hugh. I want him now.—I should like to kiss him before I die. I think I'm going. I won't last much longer.'

Elsie hurried out to Warren in the anteroom. 'Go,' she cried eagerly, through her blinding tears.—'go and find Hugh. Winifred wants him; she wants to kiss him before she dies. Look for him through all the streets till you find him, and send him home. She wants to forgive him.'

Warren answered her never a single word, but, nodding acquiescence, rushed down by himself to the esplanade and the shore in search of his enemy. Poor baffled enemy, how his heart ached for him! At such a moment, who could help pitying him?

'Is he coming?' Winifred asked from the bed feebly.

'Not yet, darling,' Elsie answered in a hushed voice; 'but Warren's gone out to try and find him. He'll be here soon. Lie still and wait for him.'

Winifred lay quite still for some minutes more, breathing hard and loud on the bed where they had laid her. The moments appeared to spread themselves over hours. But no Hugh came. At last she beckoned Elsie nearer again, with a frail hand that seemed almost to have lost all power of motion. Elsie leant over her with her ear laid close to Winifred's lips. The poor girl's voice sounded very weak and all but inaudible now. 'I can't last till he comes, Elsie,' she murmured low. 'But tell him I forgave him. Tell him I asked him to forgive me in turn. Tell him I wanted to kiss him good-bye. But even that last wish was denied me. And Elsie'—her fingers clutched her friend's convulsively—'tell him all along I've always loved him. I loved him from the very depths of my soul. I never loved any one as I loved that man. When I hated him most, I loved him dearly. It was my very love that made me so hate him. He starved my heart; and now it's broken.'

Elsie stooped down and kissed her forehead. A smile played lambent over Winifred's face at the gentle kiss. The doctor lifted his open hand in warning. Elsie bent over her with gathered brows and strained her eyes for a sign of breath

for a moment. 'Gone?' she asked at last with mute lips of the doctor.

'Gone,' the calmer observer answered with a grave inclination of his head toward Elsie. 'Rapid collapse. A singular case. She suffered no pain at the last, poor lady.'

Elsie flung herself wildly into an easy-chair and burst into tears more burning than ever.

A touch on her shoulder. She looked up with a start. Could this be Hugh? Thank heaven, no! It was Warren who touched her shoulder lightly. Half an hour had passed, and he had now come back again. But, alas, too late. 'No need to stop here any longer,' he said reverently. 'Hugh's down-stairs, and they're breaking the news to him. He doesn't know yet you're here at all. I didn't speak to him. I thought some other person would move him more. I saw him on the quay, and I sent an Italian I met on the beach to tell him he was wanted, and his wife was dying.—Come up to my room on the floor above. Hugh needn't know even now, perhaps, that you're here at San Remo.'

Too full to speak, Elsie followed him blindly from the chamber of death, and stumbled somehow up the broad flight of stairs to Warren's apartments on the next story. As she reached the top of the open flight, she heard a voice—a familiar voice, that would once have thrilled her to the very heart—on the landing below, by Winifred's bedroom. Shame and fascination drew her different ways. Fascination won. She couldn't resist the dangerous temptation to look over the edge of the banisters for a second. Hugh had just mounted the stairs from the big entrance hall, and was talking by the door in measured tones with the English doctor.

'Very well,' he said in his cold stern voice, the voice he had always used to Winifred—a little lowered by conventional respect, indeed, but scarcely so subdued as the doctor's own. 'I'm prepared for the worst. If she's dead, say so. You needn't be afraid of shocking my feelings; I expected it shortly.'

She could see his face distinctly from the spot where she stood, and she shrank back aghast at once from the sight with surprise and horror. It was Hugh to be sure, but oh, what a Hugh! How changed and altered from that light and bright young dilettante poet she had loved and worshipped in the old days at Whitestrand! His very form and features, and limbs and figure, were no longer the same; all were unlike, and the difference was all to their disadvantage. The man had not only grown sterner and harder; he was coarser and commoner and less striking than formerly. His very style had suffered visible degeneration. No more of the jaunty old poetical air; turnips and foot-and-mouth disease, the arrears of rent and the struggle against reduction, the shifting sands and the weight of the riparian proprietors' question, had all left their mark stamped deep in ugly lines upon his face and figure. He was handsome still, but in a less refined and delicate type of manly beauty. The long smouldering war between himself and Winifred had changed his expression to a dogged ill-humour. His eyes had grown dull and sordid and selfish, his lips had assumed a sullen set, and a ragged beard with unkempt ends had disfigured

that clear-cut and dainty chin that was once so eloquent of poetry and culture. Altogether, it was but a pale and flabby version of the old, old Hugh—a replica from whose head the halo had faded. Elsie looked down on him from her height of vantage with a thrill of utter and hopeless disillusionment. Then she turned with a pang of remorse to Warren. Was it really possible? Was there once a time when she thought in her heart that self-centred, hard-hearted, cold-featured creature more than a match for such a man as Warren?

'She is dead,' the doctor answered with professional respect. 'She died half an hour ago, quite happy. Her one regret seemed to be for your absence. She was anxiously expecting you to come back and see her.'

Hugh only answered: 'I thought so. Poor child.' But the very way he said it—the half-unconcerned tone, the lack of any real depth of emotion, nay, even of the decent pretence of tears, shocked and appalled Elsie beyond measure. She rushed away into Warren's room, and gave vent once more to her torrent of emotion. The painter laid his hand gently on her beautiful hair. 'O Warren,' she cried, looking up at him half doubtful, 'it makes me ashamed'—And she checked herself suddenly.

'Ashamed of what?' Warren asked her low.

In the fever of her overwrought feelings, she flung herself passionately into his circling arms. 'Ashamed to think,' she answered with a sob of distress, 'that I once loved him!'

CHAPTER XLI.—REDIVIVA!

Hugh sat that evening, that crowded evening, alone in his dingy, stingy rooms with his dead Winifred. Alone with his weary, dreary thoughts—his thoughts, and a corpse, and a ghostly presence! Two women had loved him dearly in their time, and he had killed them both—Elsie and Winifred. It was a hateful night—hateful and ghastly; for in the bedroom at the side, the attendants of death, despatched by the doctor, were already busy at their gruesome work, performing the last duties for poor martyred Winifred.

He had offered her up on the altar of his selfish remorse and regret for poor martyred Elsie. The last victim had fallen on the grave of the first. She, too, was dead. And now his house was indeed left unto him desolate.

Somehow, as he sat there, with whirling brain and heated brow, on fire in soul, he thought of Elsie far more than of Winifred. The new bereavement, such as it was, seemed to quicken and accentuate the sense of the old one. Was it that Winifred's wild belief in her recognition of Elsie that day in the street had roused once more the picture of his lost love's face and form so vividly in his mind? Or was it that the girl whom Winifred had pointed out to him did really to some slight extent resemble Elsie? and so recall her more definitely before him? He hardly knew; but of one thing he was certain—Elsie that night monopolised his consciousness. His three-year-old grief was still fresh and green. He thought much of Elsie, and little of Winifred.

Late at night, the well-favoured landlady came

up, courteous and Italian, all respectful sympathy, in a black gown and a mourning head-dress, hastily donned, as becomes those who pay visits of condolence in whatever capacity to the recently bereaved. As for Hugh himself, he wore still his rough travelling suit of gray homespun, and the dust of his journey lay thick upon him. But he roused himself listlessly at the landlady's approach. She was bland, but sympathetic. Where would Monsieur sleep? the amiable proprietress inquired in lisping French. Hugh started at the inquiry. He had never thought at all of that. Anywhere, he answered, in a careless voice: it was all the same to him: *sous les toits*, if necessary.

The landlady bowed a respectful deprecation. She could offer him a small room, a most diminutive room, unfit for Monsieur, in his present condition, but still a *chambre de maître*, just above Madame. She regretted she was unable to afford a better; but the house was full, or, in a word, crowded. The world, you see, was beginning to arrive at San Remo for the season. Proprietors in a health-resort naturally resent a death on the premises, especially at the very outset of the winter: they regard it as a slight on the sanitary reputation of the place, and incline to be rude to the deceased and his family. Yet nothing could be more charming than the landlady's manner; she swallowed her natural internal chagrin at so untoward an event in her own house and at such an untimely crisis, with commendable politeness. One would have said that a death rather advertised the condition of the house than otherwise. Hugh nodded his head in blind acquiescence. 'Où vous voulez, Madame,' he answered wearily. 'Up-stairs, if you wish. I'll go now.—I'm sorry to have caused you so much inconvenience; but we never know when these unfortunate affairs are likely to happen.'

The landlady considered in her own mind that the gentleman's tone was of the most distinguished. Such sweet manners! So thoughtful—so considerate—so kindly respectful for the house's injured feelings! She was conscious that his courtesy called for some slight return. 'You have eaten nothing, Monsieur,' she went on, compassionately. 'In effect, our sorrow makes us forget these details of every-day life. You do not derange us at all; but you must let me send you up some little refreshment.'

Hugh nodded again.

She sent him up some cake and red wine of the country by the Swiss waiter, and Hugh ate it mechanically, for he was not hungry. Excitement and fatigue had worn him out. His game was played. He followed the waiter up to the floor above, and was shown—into the next room to Warren's.

He undressed in a stupid, half dead-alive way, and lay down on the bed with his candle still burning. But he didn't sleep. Weariness and remorse kept him wide awake, worn out as he was, tossing and turning through the long slow hours in silent agony.

Strange to say, the sense of freedom was the strongest of all the feelings that crowded in upon him. Now that Winifred was dead, he could do as he chose with his own. He was no longer tied to her will and her criticisms. When he

got back to England—as he would get back, of course, the moment he had decently buried Winifred—he meant to put up a fitting grave-stone at Orfordness, if he sold the wretched remainder of Whitestrand to do it. A granite cross should mark that sacred spot. Dead Elsie's grave should no longer be nameless. So much, at least, his remorse could effect for him.

For Winifred was dead, and Whitestrand was his own. At the price of that miserable manor of blown sand he had sold his own soul and Elsie's life; and now he would gladly get rid of it all, if only he could raise out of its shrunken relics a monument at Orfordness to Elsie. For three long years, that untended grave had silently accused the remnants of his conscience: he determined it should accuse his soul no longer.

The big clock on the landing ticked monotonously. Each swing of the pendulum tortured him afresh; for it called aloud to his heart in measured tones. It cried as plain as words could say: 'Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie!'

Ah, yes! He was young enough to begin life afresh, if that were all. To begin all over again is less than nothing to a brave man. But for whom or for what? Selfish as he was, Hugh Massinger couldn't stand up and face the horrid idea of beginning afresh for himself alone. He must have some one to love, or go under for ever.

And still the clock ticked and ticked on; and still it cried in the silence of the night: 'Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie!'

At last day dawned, and the morning broke. Pale sunlight streamed in at the one south window. The room was bare—a mere servant's attic. Hugh lay still and looked at the gaping cracks that diversified the gaudily painted Italian ceiling. All night through, he had fervently longed for the morning, and thought when it came he would seize the first chance to rise and dress himself. Now it had really come, he lay there unmoved, too tired and too feeble to think of stirring.

Five—six—half-past six—seven. He almost dozed out of pure weariness.

Suddenly, he woke with a quick start. A knock at the door!—a timid knock. Somebody come with a message, apparently. Hugh rose in haste and held the door just a little ajar to ask in his bad Italian, 'What is it?'

A boy's hand thrust a letter sideways through the narrow opening. 'Is it for you, signor?' he asked, peering with black eyes through the chink at the Englishman.

Hugh glanced at the letter in profound astonishment. O heavens, what was this? How incredible—how mysterious! For a moment the room swam wildly around him; he hardly knew how to believe his eyes. Was it part of the general bewilderment of things that seemed to conspire by constant shocks against his perfect sanity? Was he going mad, or was some enemy trying to confuse and confound him? Had some wretch been dabbling in hideous forgeries? For the envelope was addressed—O horror of horrors!—in dead Elsie's hand; and it bore in those well-known angular characters the simple inscription, 'WARREN RELF, Esq., Villa della Fontana (Piano 3°), Avenue Vittorio-Emmanuele, San Remo.'

He recognised this voice from the grave at once. Dead Elsie! To Warren Relf! His fingers clutched it with a fierce mad grip. He could never give it up. To Warren Relf! And from dead Elsie!

'Is it for you, signor?' the boy asked once more, as he let it go with reluctance from his olive-brown fingers.

'For me?—Yes,' Hugh answered still clutching it eagerly. 'For me!—Who sends it?'

'The signorina at the Villa Rossa—Signorina Chalonier,' the boy replied, getting as near as his Italian lips could manage to the sound of Chalonier. 'She told me most stringently to deliver it up to yourself, signor, into your proper fingers, and on no account to let it fall into the hands of the English gentleman on the second story.'

'Good,' Hugh answered, closing the door softly. 'That's quite right. Tell her you gave it me.' Then he added in English with a cry of triumph: 'Good-morning, jackanapes!' After which he flung himself down on the bed once more in a perfect frenzy of indecision and astonishment.

For two minutes he couldn't make up his mind to break open that mysterious missive from the world of the dead, so strangely delivered by an unknown hand at his own door on the very morrow of Winifred's sudden death, and addressed in buried Elsie's hand, as clear as of old, to his dearest enemy. What a horrible concatenation of significant circumstances. He turned it over and over again, unopened, in his awe; and all the time that morose clock outside still ticked in his ear, less loudly than before: 'Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie!'

At last, making up his mind with a start, he opened it, half overcome with a pervading sense of mystery. And this was what he read in it, beyond shadow of doubt, in dead Elsie's very own handwriting:

VILLA ROSSA, Thursday, 7.30, morning.

DEAREST WARREN—I will be ready, as you suggest, by the 9.40. But you mustn't go with me farther than Paris. That will allow you to get back to Edie and the Motherkin by the 6.39 on Saturday evening.—I wish I could have waited here in San Remo till after dear Winifred's funeral was over; but I quite see with you how dangerous such a course might prove. Every moment I stop exposes me to the chance of an unexpected meeting. You must call on Hugh when you get back from Paris, and give him poor Winifred's last forgiving message. Some day—you know when, dearest—I may face seeing him myself, perhaps; and then I can fulfil my promise to her in person. But not till then. And that may be never. I hardly know what I'm writing, I feel so dazed; but I'll meet you at the station at the hour you mention.—No time for more. In great haste—my hand shakes with the shock still.—Yours ever lovingly and devotedly, ELSIE.

The revulsion was awful. For a minute or two, Hugh failed to take it all in. You cannot unthink past years at a jump. The belief that Elsie was dead and buried at Orfordness had grown so ingrained in the fabric of his brain that at first he suspected deliberate treachery. Such things have been. He had forged himself: might not Warren Relf, that incarnate fiend, be turning his own weapon—meanly—against him?

But as he gazed and gazed at dead Elsie's hand—dead Elsie's own hand—unmistakably hers—no forger on earth (not even himself) was ever half so clever—the truth grew gradually clearer and clearer. Dead Elsie was Elsie dead no longer; she had escaped on that awful evening at Whitestrand. It wasn't Elsie at all that was buried in the nameless grave at Orfordness. The past was a lie. The present alone—the present was true. Elsie was here, to-day, at San Remo!

He buried his face in his hands and wept—wept as he never had wept for Winifred—wept as he never had wept in his life before—wept with frantic gladness for Elsie recovered.

Slowly his conceptions framed themselves anew. His mind could only take it all in piecemeal. Bit by bit he set himself to the task—no less a task than to reconstruct the universe.—Winifred must have known Elsie was here. It was Elsie herself that Winifred and he had seen yesterday.

Fresh thoughts poured in upon him in a bewildering flood. He was dazzled, dazed, dumfounded with their number. Elsie was alive, and he had something left, therefore, to live for. Yesterday morning that knowledge would have been less than nothing worth to him while Winifred lived. To-day, thank heaven—for Winifred was dead—it meant more to him than all the wealth of Croesus.

How opportunely Winifred had disappeared from the scene! In the nick of time—on the very stroke and crisis of his fate! At the turn of the tide that leads on to fortune! *Felix opportunitate mortis*, indeed! He had no regret, no remorse now, for poor betrayed and martyred Winifred.

Winifred! What was Winifred to him, or he to Winifred, in a world that still held his own beloved Elsie?

All's well that ends well. The Winifred episode had come and gone. But Elsie remained as permanent background.

And how strangely Winifred herself, in her mad desire, had contributed to this very *dénouement* of his troubles. 'I shall go to San Remo, if I go at all, and to nowhere else on the whole Riviera. I prefer to face the worst, thank you!' The words flashed back with fresh meaning on his soul. If she hadn't so set her whole heart on San Remo, he himself would never have thought of going there. And then, he would never have known about Elsie. For that at least, he had to thank Winifred.

'When I'm dead and gone, you can marry Elsie!'

But what was this discordant note in the letter—Elsie's letter—to Warren Relf—Warren Relf, his dearest enemy? Was Warren Relf at the *pension*, then? Had Warren Relf been conspiring against him? In another flash, it all came back to him—the two scenes at the Cheyne Row Club—Warren's conversation with his friend Potts—the mistakes and errors of his hasty preconceptions. How one fundamental primordial blunder had coloured and distorted all his views of the case! He felt sure now, morally sure, that Warren Relf had rescued Elsie—the sneak, the eavesdropper, in his miserable mud-boat! And yet—if Warren Relf hadn't done so, there would be no Elsie at all for him now to live for. He recognised the

fact; and he hated him for it. That he should owe his Elsie to that cur, that serpent!

Discordant note! Why, yes—see this: ‘Some day—you know when, dearest—I may face seeing him myself, perhaps. But not till then. And that may be never.’

That may be never! O precious words! She was leaving the door half open, then, for her poet.

Poet! His heart leaped up at the thought. New vistas—old vistas long since closed—opened out afresh in long perspective before him. Ay, with such a fount of inspiration as that, to what heights of poetry might he not yet attain! What peaks of Parnassus might he not yet scale! On what pinnacles of glory might he not yet poise himself! Elsie, Elsie, Elsie! That was a talisman to crush all opposition, an ‘Open Sesame’ to prise all doors. With Elsie’s love, what would be impossible to him?

Life floated in new colours before his eager eyes. He dreamed dreams and saw visions, as he lay on his bed in those golden moments. Earth was dearer, fairer, than he ever deemed it. The fever of love and ambition and hate was upon him now in full force. He reeled and revelled in the plenitude of his own wild and hectic imagination. He could do anything, everything, anything. He could move mountains in his fervent access of faith; he could win worlds in his mad delight; he could fight wild beasts in his sudden glory of heroic temper.

And all the while, poor dead Winifred lay cold and white in the bedroom below. And Elsie was off—off to England—with Warren Relf—that wretch! that serpent!—by the 9.40.

THE ALPHABET.

It is by no means improbable that some of our readers on glancing at the above title may be tempted to exclaim, ‘The Alphabet! What can there possibly be to say about that?’ At first sight, we grant, the subject does not promise to be an interesting one, nor to offer a very wide field for profitable consideration. And yet nothing can be farther from the truth. The letters of the alphabet are an instance of the greatest effect produced by the smallest means. If we except Chinese symbols, it may perhaps be said that all correspondence between man and man, all that connects one age with another on the page of history, depends upon these characters, which are so familiar to us from our earliest years that there is nothing, as some might think, to say about them that is either interesting or instructive.

The reverse is the fact. For when we look a little deeper into the matter, and inquire in what manner the letters of the alphabet have come to assume their present shapes, who their ancestors were, where they arose, by what processes they have been evolved, and how long a period elapsed before they finally assumed their present forms, a most interesting field of inquiry at once opens out before us, and one with which very few people, save specialists, have more than a limited acquaintance.

We used just now the word ‘ancestors:’ this reminds us that we sometimes hear people boast of the antiquity of their families, and relate with pardonable pride how an ‘ancestor’ of theirs was a contemporary of some celebrated personage who figured in the page of history so many hundred years ago; or that they are descended from a family whose achievements in arms, or art, or literature won for them, in ages long since gone, fame and wealth. But all such boasting, natural as it may be, pales and fades into insignificance before the claims to family antiquity which the letters of the alphabet are able to prefer. For if they could speak—as, according to Jewish tradition, the Hebrew letter *yod* once did to the Almighty—if they could narrate their experience, they might boast of a history extending not merely over a few centuries, but reaching back into a past so remote that contemplation begets bewilderment. The ‘ancestors’ of those very letters which meet the eyes of the readers of this page are no other than the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, which we find on monuments actually older than the Pyramids. It may be a new idea to many, but it is now almost universally admitted that the letters of our alphabet may be traced through successive phases to the ancient pictorial characters of Egypt. Who would have thought it? Incredible as it may seem, the letters with which this page is printed are the lineal descendants of the characters which were in full use when the early Pharaohs sat on the Egyptian throne, and which any of the curious may see for themselves by visiting the Egyptian Court in the British Museum, or the obelisk which now adorns the Thames Embankment.

But before attaining their present form, these letters have undergone many a change and experienced many a vicissitude.

To begin at the beginning, with the Egyptian hieroglyphics. It must be remembered that these quaint symbols were not an alphabet in our sense of the word. All of them originally were meant to represent not sounds, but things or ideas. The picture of a sail meant air, breath, the winds. The figure of a sharp-pointed knife stood, in the proper connections, for to cut, to prick, to kill, to whet. But by degrees some of the hieroglyphs came to stand simply for sounds; they became what are called *phonograms*. There seem to have been as many as four hundred phonograms, some of which stood for the sounds of entire words, others for the sounds of syllables, while some forty-five of them stood for still simpler sounds, and so had nearly an alphabetic value. But with such a multiplicity of signs, and of different values for the signs, reading and writing must for ancient Egyptians have always proved a pretty laborious business.

At a very early period, the Phœnicians, a great trading people, came from Tyre and Sidon, and had settlements in Egypt. Keenly alive to the value of written records, they managed to secure the advantages of the Egyptian writing

	EGYPTIAN	PHŒNICIAN	GREEK				LATIN				HEBREW
1		𐤀	Α	Α	λ	α	Α	Α	α	α	א
2		𐤁	Β	Β	Β	β	Β	Β	β	ב	ב
3		𐤂	Γ	Γ	Γ	γ	Κ	С	ϸ	ϸ	ג
4		𐤃	Δ	Δ	Δ	δ	Δ	Δ	δ	ד	ד
5		𐤄	Ε	Ε	Ε	ε	Ε	Ε	ε	ה	ה
6		𐤅	Υ	Υ	Υ	υ	Ϝ	Ϝ	ϝ	ו	ו
7		𐤆	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	ζ	Ζ	Ζ	ז	ז	ז
8		𐤇	Η	Η	Η	η	Η	Η	ה	ח	ח
9		𐤈	Θ	Θ	Θ	θ	Θ				ט
10		𐤉	Ι	Ι	Ι	ι	Ι	Ι	י	י	י
11		𐤊	Κ	Κ	Κ	κ	Κ	Κ	כ	כ	כ
12		𐤋	Λ	Λ	Λ	λ	Λ	Λ	ל	ל	ל
13		𐤌	Μ	Μ	Μ	μ	Μ	Μ	מ	מ	מ
14		𐤍	Ν	Ν	Ν	ν	Ν	Ν	נ	נ	נ
15		𐤎	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	ξ	Ξ	+	×	×	ד
16		𐤏	Ο	Ο	Ο	ο	Ο				ע
17		𐤐	Π	Π	Π	π	Ρ	Ρ	ρ		פ
18		𐤑	Μ			Ϟ	Ρ				צ
19		𐤒	Φ	Φ	Φ		Q	Q	q	q	ק
20		𐤓	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	ρ	Ρ	Ρ	ר	ר	ר
21		𐤔	Σ	Σ	Σ	σ	Σ	Σ	ś	ś	ש
22		𐤕	Τ	Τ	Τ	τ	Τ	Τ	τ	τ	ת
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI

without its tediousness and cumbrousness; and of the enormous number of Egyptian signs they employed only as many as they found necessary to express the sounds of their own language, which was much the same as that of the Jews. They left the hieroglyphs for ideas and those for words and for syllables alone; and out of the forty-five alphabetic symbols selected twenty-one of the most suitable. To these twenty-one they probably added another of their own invention; and had now, for the first time in the history of the world, a single simple alphabet. From this alphabet are derived not merely that which we use, but all the alphabets of the world, directly or indirectly, including the Arabic, the various Indian alphabets, and even the Malay.

The Phœnicians did not copy the hieroglyphic form of the twenty-one hieroglyphs they selected. They found ready to their hand a more convenient form of them. For the Egyptian priests, writing on papyrus, had already come to use simplified forms of the hieroglyphs. Instead of the complete figure of an eagle, for example, the priests made a single twisted curved stroke something like a 2. It was this, the priestly or hieratic form, that the Phœnicians took over; but they did not exactly copy the hieratic characters. The Phœnician letters as known to us were not written on a smooth substance like papyrus, but scratched or carved on hard surfaces; and so they came to differ considerably from their models, being more angular and stiffer than the flowing curves suited for papyrus writing.

The Greeks believed that they learnt their letters from a Phœnician called Cadmus. That they got them from the Phœnicians with whom they traded, is certain, for the forms of the oldest Greek letters are nearly identical with those of Phœnician inscriptions yet extant. 'Cadmus' is probably simply the Phœnician *Kadmon*, 'Man of the East.' The Greek colonists who settled in Italy took a form of their alphabet with them, and this the Romans borrowed. And from the Romans the nations of the greater part of modern Europe and America have obtained the alphabet now used by them.

The table on the opposite page has been prepared to show the principal changes which the hieroglyphs underwent in passing from the Egyptians to the Phœnicians, and from them to the Greeks and Romans. It is taken from the article on the 'Alphabet' in the new edition of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* (vol. i. 1888); which article is by Canon Isaac Taylor, author of the most important recent work on the subject—*The Alphabet* (2 vols. 1883).

The column on the left (column I.) shows the Egyptian hieroglyphs; col. II. the hieratic form of them; col. III. the Phœnician letters; cols. IV. to VII. the chief Greek forms of the same alphabetic signs; cols. VIII. to X. the Roman or Latin forms; while col. XI. is the square or later Hebrew—the oldest Hebrew having been nearly identical with the Phœnician.

It will be observed that col. VII., the Greek minuscules, or small letters, and col. X., the Latin minuscules, resemble the small letters of our own alphabet; while cols. IV. V. VI. VIII. and IX., the majuscules, look like capitals. It is the fact that our small letters are derived from the Latin minuscules, which were derived from the majus-

cules. But it should be noted that whereas Greeks and Romans wrote entire books in majuscule or capital letters only, we have found reason for printing the bulk of our literary matter in minuscules, while we intersperse capitals or majuscules here and there, at the beginning of sentences, in proper names, and the like.

We have not yet explained the word *alphabet*. In the first column of the table we see that the Egyptian hieroglyph which, when taken with alphabetic value, corresponded to A, was a picture of an eagle with beak and claws complete, and was called *Ahom*, the Egyptian word for eagle. That corresponding to our B was the picture of a crane, very graphically drawn. The Phœnicians got their A, however, not from the drawing of the eagle, but from the double curve of the hieratic writing; and making a kind of triangle with points projecting, called it *Aleph*, the Phœnician word for ox. Perhaps they saw in the symbol as they made it a resemblance to the head and horns of an ox; perhaps they just took the first convenient word in their own tongue that commenced with the sound of A. Just as we say to children, 'A was an archer who shot at a frog, B was a butcher who had a great dog,' not because A is *like* an archer or B like a butcher, but because 'archer' begins with A, and 'butcher' with B. So that, whether the character of *Aleph* is like an ox, or that of *Beth* like a house or tent, or that of *Gimel* like the head and neck of a camel, certain it is that *Aleph* begins with A, *Beth* with B and *Gimel* with G. The word *Aleph* in Greek became *Alpha* (a word that has no meaning in Greek), and *Beth* was made *Beta*, also quite unmeaning to Greek ears; and so the noble name of *alphabet* is a contracted form of *Alpha-beta*, Greek corruptions of *Aleph-beth*, Phœnician and Hebrew words for 'ox' and 'house.' However this may be, we yet owe a heavier debt of gratitude than we can easily realise to the Romans, who passed on the obligation from Greek colonists, they from Phœnician trading sailors, and they from Egyptian priests of a time long prior to the Hebrew exodus; while the Egyptian priests were the descendants and debtors of many generations of the ingenious, laborious, mysterious people who built pyramids, sculptured vast temples, painted rock tombs, adorned coffins, and embalmed their nearest and dearest to be exhibited as Egyptian mummies in every great European museum.

And if the letters have seen various forms, it is no less true that the mode of writing has varied considerably. At one time the scribe wrote in vertical columns, from the top of the page to the bottom, as is the custom in China and Japan to-day: at other times he wrote from right to left, a method adopted in the very early Greek inscriptions: at other times, again, in the style technically known as *boustrophædon*, that is, in the manner of an ox ploughing furrows in a field, beginning a fresh line on the same side on which the last left off: and finally, sometimes he wrote from left to right, as we do now, each line commencing immediately beneath its predecessor.

It is a far cry from the sands of Gizeh to London; but if King Cheops, who built the Great Pyramid, were now to be shown a page of the *Times*, he would actually see, though he

would probably fail to recognise in the letters before him, the descendants of those pictorial hieroglyphs that were in common use in his day.

MRS FARQUHARSON'S NIECE.

CHAP. III.—AN UNSEEN LISTENER.

As already mentioned, I purposed going to Shuttleton that afternoon. My business was to buy some wool for a sofa-blanket which I intended knitting as a present to the curate's wife, whom I occasionally visited. On leaving the wool-shop, a heavy shower of rain came on, and I hurried along for shelter to the inn, to Mrs Jenkyns. I found that lady in the midst of a hubbub caused by the arrival of a picnic party, who were occupying her large back room and all demanding to be served immediately.

'Oh, it is you, miss.—Just go up-stairs to my room till the rain is over. I am so busy, I don't know which way to turn.'

I went up-stairs as directed. The inn was an old-fashioned square sort of building, three stories in height. Mrs Jenkyns' room was on the first floor. On the flat above, the rooms were seldom used, except when the inn was full, which was not often. I had heard Mrs Glass speak of the view of the Manor grounds to be obtained from the upper windows; and as Mrs Jenkyns would not object to my taking the liberty, I left my parcel and umbrella in her room and proceeded to the upper story. There were three rooms looking to the back. Formerly, there had been but two; a wooden partition had, however, been erected, dividing the larger room, and leaving a small bedroom facing the stair. It was this room into which I entered. I glanced from the window: the rain was still pouring steadily. In the distance I saw nearly the entire grounds of the Manor. The trees of the avenue hid the house itself; but the river winding round behind it and the little island not far from the house were visible. A person with a small telescope or opera glass could easily have distinguished people walking in the grounds. I thought the view would be even better from the window of the room to the right, and I was about to go into it, when I heard heavy footsteps below on the first stair. I did not think of the persons ascending to the upper story, yet I paused to listen. I could hear the voices of two men as they ascended. They did not stop at the first landing, but were evidently coming higher. I did not wish to be disturbed, and hastily turned back into the room and slipped the bolt softly into the socket, afraid lest they might be the worse of liquor. Their heavy footsteps drowned the noise I made. At the second landing the men turned into the room to the right. The partition between being of wood, I could distinctly hear every word of their conversation.

'You are sure we cannot be overheard here, Jacobs?' said one of them in a voice the smooth tones of which I did not like.

'Perfectly certain. I am the only one on this flat, and they are all engaged down-stairs; but I will look and see, in case. I selected this room because of the view. Look! You can see nearly the entire Manor grounds, with the exception of

the little bit near the river on to the turn, and the garden at the back of the house, which are hidden by the big close hedge dividing them from Farmer Shiell's ground.—I will be back in a minute.'

I heard him leave the room, walk along the landing to the room on the left, and next try the door of the room where I was. There were two rooms to the front, which he also examined.

'There is no one here but ourselves,' he said to his companion. 'The room next to us is locked, and there is no one in the others.'

'Well,' said the other man, 'you can tell me now how matters stand. You say you sent on word to headquarters this morning. I left shortly after mid-day, before your letter arrived. I was fortunate in meeting you so near your inn; I was afraid you might be away somewhere.'

'I would have been, but for this confounded rain, which drove me home.—The game is nearly played out, Jack. Our bird is caged to a certainty.'

'No!' cried Jack in a tone of surprise.—'Then he is here, after all.—Have you seen him?'

'Not near enough till yesterday to be able to swear positively to him. But I am now certain it is he, and no one else. He never comes outside the grounds, and there is no hiding-place near enough the house to allow one to get a close view. There is some shrubbery near to the gate where one can hide; from that place of concealment I have seen him frequently at a distance strolling about the grounds in company with his old fossil of an uncle, or with that little governess or companion, or whatever she is. How I have laughed to myself when I saw them going about, to think how, if my suspicions were correct, the little companion would stare when once she found it all out. Yesterday, he came very near the shrubbery in his walk, and I got a proper look at him. It is he beyond a doubt; and a very good-looking girl he makes.'

I sat as if turned into stone. Until this last sentence, was uttered, the idea that their conversation in any way affected myself had not dawned upon me. Now, a dreadful suspicion that I was only too closely connected with it almost overwhelmed me. Eagerly I strained every nerve to catch their next words.

'How did you manage it? I mean, how did you get on the scent at first?'

'Easy enough. You know I had often seen him along with old Balscombe's nephew, and knew that they were both given to gambling and betting, the difference being that this youngster had very little money, while young Balscombe had plenty. After the forgery was discovered, the young gentleman was accused of it, and of course denied it, though it was as clear as noon-day against him. If he had admitted it, old Balscombe, I believe, would have forgiven him; for he had a great liking for the lad, and intended leaving his business to his nephew and him, ere long. But he was enraged at the young man's hardihood and brazen-facedness, and was determined to punish him. He is a very stern old boy. He gave instructions to have him apprehended; but the youngster contrived to get word of it and give us the slip. I believe old Bates the cashier gave him the wink; and I suspect he is keeping him posted up as to how matters stand, though of course he does not know I am here,

and cannot inform him.—Well, after I had exhausted every source of inquiry, and made pretty sure that my bird was not in hiding in town, I began to make inquiry as to any relatives or friends he might possess. I found out from young Balscombe that he had no other relatives save a couple of aunts, both by his mother's side—one in this place, and another down in Hampshire; and an old uncle who wasn't of much account. This being nearest, I came here first. I then discovered that his aunt, Mrs Farquharson, lived here very retired with her brother—the old uncle whom I mentioned—her servants, and a young girl as companion; but that she had at present a niece staying with her, whom nobody could tell me much about. I succeeded in ascertaining, however, that her name was Selwyn, that she had but recently come here, and that her mother was a sister of Mrs Farquharson's. As you know, I suspected this niece might be my young gentleman in disguise, for I had heard of the same trick before. I therefore determined not to leave the place until I saw her, which I did while she was walking about the Manor grounds, as I have already told you; but though I was almost certain it was the gentleman I wanted, he was well disguised, and I could not get a near view till yesterday afternoon. Two days ago, I waylaid one of the servants, and, by adroit questioning, found out, amongst other things, that the supposed niece had arrived here rather unexpectedly, and with scarcely any luggage, on the afternoon of the day on which young Vanburgh left his lodgings; and that she was a very peculiar young lady in her ways. This confirmed my suspicions. Still, the young lady might turn out to be a bonâ-fide Miss Selwyn after all. Meantime, Bob was making inquiry down in Hampshire regarding the other aunt.

'But,' interrupted Jack, 'if you were so certain yesterday afternoon, why did you not telegraph at once to headquarters?'

'Because I waited till I had Bob's report, which I expected last night by the eight o'clock post; and I would not have got the warrant till this afternoon at anyrate, probably; so little time has been lost. I *did* get his report. He says that there is a Mrs Selwyn residing in Brackley in that county, an aunt of young Vanburgh's, who has indeed a daughter; but the poor girl is silly, and is never seen outside the house. Her mother never leaves her. She is an only child. Therefore, the Miss Selwyn who is here must be an impostor.—A clever young dog, is he not, but not clever enough for me.—Eh, Jack?'

'What do you intend doing now? Have him apprehended, I suppose?'

'Yes; but not until to-morrow morning. Bob will arrive to-night with the warrant, for we must have everything perfectly formal, in case they should show fight. We could apprehend him to-night; but there is really no hurry, as I am certain they suspect nothing. Besides, I am dead-tired. I have been haunting that blessed shrubbery till I am as stiff as a post. I was up there this forenoon.—Have a look through this opera-glass.—There! You can see most that passes in the Manor grounds; it brings them quite close. I told you I selected this room because of the view. Thank goodness, the game is about over now.—Let us go down-stairs and have a drink,

and then we will have a stroll round. The rain has gone off now. You will, of course, wait here to-night and see the fun to-morrow morning. You can have the room next mine.'

I would have given anything to be safe home at the Manor. My limbs trembled so that I could hardly stand. Everything was now clear to me. Miss Selwyn was Mrs Farquharson's nephew, Jack Vanburgh, in disguise! I had often heard of him, though I had never seen him; but I knew his aunt saw him sometimes when she went to London, and that she had sent home money from India for his education, he having been left an orphan early. Till lately, he had lived with an uncle, a bachelor brother of his father's, who had died some four months ago. Since that time he had been in lodgings.

Trembling like a criminal going to execution, I stole down-stairs after the men left their room. What if they should observe me and suspect? They were still about the premises. Mrs Jenkyns, too, might say something which would reach their ears. I determined to effect my exit by the back way, and out at the garden gate into the little lane beyond. In this I was successful. I got out of the inn unobserved. The rain had ceased; but I was in no mood to care although it had been pouring. My thoughts were concentrated on reaching home without delay. Something must be done to save Miss Selwyn—or rather Mr Vanburgh. I felt my face redden as I thought how frequently I had allowed the pseudo Miss Selwyn to kiss me; and I could now understand the half-frightened looks of Mrs Farquharson at these times. The use of the razor and the smoking of the cigars were now no longer to be wondered at.

I reached the Manor in a whirl of excitement. The hall door was open, and I made my entrance unobserved. I was afraid my looks might have excited comment. Even amidst my agitation, I had hurriedly thought over a plan by which the detective might be foiled, if only it could be managed. We had yet a little time to spare.

'My dear girl, what is the matter?' Mrs Farquharson cried as I bounced unceremoniously into her sitting-room. 'You look as if some one was after you.'

'Where is Miss Selwyn?—Mr Vanburgh, I mean?'—I cried breathlessly. 'O Mrs Farquharson, we must save him. They have found out he is here, and are going to apprehend him and take him to prison.'

I thought she would have fainted, she turned so white; but she commanded herself with a violent effort. 'Calm yourself, and tell me all, Naomi,' she said soothingly, taking in the situation at once. 'Miss Selwyn—that is, Jack—is up-stairs.'

Hurriedly I related all that had occurred, to which she listened with strained attention. 'You are a good brave girl, Naomi!' she said when I had finished. 'Let us go and tell Jack. Between us, we will surely manage to save him. I thank Heaven, child, that you happened to go to the village this afternoon.'

We found Mr Vanburgh up-stairs, seated before the fire in his room, his heels on a level with his head, engaged in the unladylike occupation of smoking a cigar. 'Hillo! I thought the door was bolted,' he said, starting to his feet as we came sweeping in.—'Why, what the deuce!'—he

exclaimed, catching sight of me, and confusedly glancing from me to the cigar in his hand.

'Naomi knows everything,' said Mrs Farquharson. 'O Jack, you are in great danger;' and she hastily repeated the substance of what I have related.

'By Jove! you are a plucky little girl!' said he, after he had heard all. 'I must get out of here to-night somehow; but where I am to go beats me. I would have gone out of the country at first; but I had neither time nor money; besides, I might have been seized before I could have taken my passage out, and without luggage it would have looked suspicious.'

'If you are willing to go abroad, I can put you on a plan,' I said. 'I thought of it on the way here. Money is not even necessary for your passage until it can be remitted you, if you have sufficient for your wants otherwise.'

'That can be managed, for I have two hundred pounds lying here in cash,' interrupted Mrs Farquharson. 'I sent to my bankers for it only this week, in case of an emergency of this kind.—But for your plan, Naomi?'

'It is this,' said I: 'A friend of my father's, Captain Gray, a Scotchman, like papa, and an old schoolmate of his, sails for Australia by the ship *Dido*, leaving London to-morrow morning early, as my mother's letter mentioned yesterday. He will do anything for papa, or for me either, for I am named after his wife, who is dead. My plan is, that Mr Vanburgh leaves here at once, carrying with him a letter from me to papa, and catches the twenty-five minutes to eight train at Harley Junction, which you know is but four miles from here. It is now half-past five, and he has ample time to walk the distance. That train does not stop at Shuttleton, and even although it did, he dare not risk going there. He will reach London before ten o'clock, and can at once take a cab to papa's, who is sure to be at home at that hour. My letter will state that Miss Selwyn is a friend of mine who has been imperatively summoned to Australia—say to Sydney, at once, and ask papa to secure a passage for her immediately with Captain Gray. The suddenness of the call will excuse the want of luggage. Papa will ask no questions. If Mr Vanburgh thinks it expedient, he can confide in Captain Gray, who is to be trusted, during the passage; or if not, can resume his own dress after landing.'

'Your plan is admirable, child,' said Mrs Farquharson, kissing me fervently.—'Jack, she has thought of everything.'

'I will go and write at once, then,' I said, 'if you will order tea without delay.'

SOME MONSTER NUGGETS.

THERE was recently on exhibition in the city of London the largest 'nugget,' or, to use a phrase that will perhaps be more readily understood by the majority of non-colonial readers, lump of gold that has been found of recent years in the Australian colonies. Its weight was 617 ounces, and its value in current coin £2400. But, though this 'Lady Loch' nugget (for so it was named, after the wife of Sir Henry Brougham Loch, the present Viceroy of the colony of Victoria, in which it was found) attracted a large amount of attention at the antipodes, and was also an object

of considerable curiosity in London, it would have been thought little of some twenty or thirty years ago, when monster nuggets were no novelties on the colonial goldfields. But these large masses of gold were mostly found on or near the surface, and ever since the era of deep-sinking commenced, they have been but rarely met with. As most people are aware, gold-mining in Australia is now chiefly carried on by the systematic crushing of the auriferous quartz, which is brought to the surface from depths exceeding two thousand feet in some instances. In the early digging days the workings were almost entirely of a superficial character, and it was in the alluvial soil thus opened up that most of the monster nuggets were discovered from time to time. A lengthy official list of these interesting lumps of gold is given in the chapter commencing at page 355 of Mr Brough Smyth's *Goldfields and Mineral Districts of Victoria* (Trübner, London, 1869); and further information on the subject will be found in Mr George Sutherland's interesting *Tales of the Goldfields* (George Robertson, Melbourne, 1880), and in a scientific treatise entitled *Notes on the Physical Geography, Geology, and Mineralogy of Victoria* (George Robertson, Melbourne, 1866), by Alfred R. C. Selwyn and George Ulrich.

It is a noteworthy fact that one colony, Victoria, has not only produced the largest nugget the world has ever seen, but has outdistanced all competitors in the quantity and variety of its lesser golden glories. The famous nugget answering to the above description is known in history as the 'Welcome Stranger.' It was discovered under singular circumstances in the Dunolly district of Victoria, which is one hundred and ten miles north-west of the capital, Melbourne, by two Cornish miners named Deeson and Oates. Their career is remarkable, as showing how fortune, after frowning for years, will suddenly smile on the objects of her apparent aversion. These two Cornishmen emigrated from England to Australia by the same vessel in 1854. They betook themselves to the far-famed Sandhurst Goldfield in Victoria; they worked together industriously for years, and yet only contrived to make a bare livelihood by their exertions. Thinking that change of place might possibly mean change of luck, they moved to the Dunolly Goldfield, and their spirits were considerably raised by the discovery of some small nuggets. But this was only a momentary gleam of sunshine, for their former ill-luck pursued them again, and pursued them even more relentlessly than before.

The time at last came, on the morning of Friday, February 5, 1869, when the storekeeper with whom they were accustomed to deal refused to supply them any longer with the necessaries of life until they liquidated the debt they had already incurred. For the first time in their lives they went hungry to work, and the spectacle of these two brave fellows fighting on an empty stomach against continued ill-luck must have moved the fickle goddess to pity and repentance. Gloomy and depressed as they naturally were, they plied their picks with indomitable perseverance, and while Deeson was breaking up the earth around the roots of a tree, his pick suddenly and sharply rebounded by reason of its having struck some very hard substance. 'Come and see what this is,' he called out to his mate. To their

astonishment, 'this' turned out to be the 'Welcome Stranger' nugget; and thus two poverty-stricken Cornish miners became in a moment the possessors of the largest mass of gold that mortal eyes ever saw, or are likely to see again. Such a revolution of fortune is probably unique in the annals of the human race. Almost bewildered by the unexpected treasure they had found at their feet, Deeson and Oates removed the superincumbent clay, and there revealed to their wondering eyes was a lump of gold, a foot long and a foot broad, and so heavy that their joint strength could scarcely move it. A dray having been procured, the monster nugget was escorted by an admiring procession into the town of Dunolly, and carried into the local branch of the London Chartered Bank, where it was weighed, and found to contain 2268½ ounces of gold. The Bank purchased the nugget for £9534, which the erstwhile so unlucky, but now so fortunate, pair of Cornish miners divided equally between them. Whether the storekeeper who refused them the materials for a breakfast that morning apologised for his harsh behaviour, history relates not, but the probability is that he was paid the precise amount of his debt and no more; whereas, had he acted in a more generous spirit towards two brothers in distress, he might have come in for a handsome present out of the proceeds of the 'Welcome Stranger.'

The 'Welcome' nugget, found at Bakery Hill, Ballarat, in Victoria, on June 15, 1858, was nearly as large as the one just described, its weight being 2217 ounces 16 dwts. It was found at a depth of one hundred and eighty feet in a claim belonging to a party of twenty-four men, who disposed of it for £10,500. A smaller nugget, weighing 571 ounces, was found in close proximity to it. After being exhibited in Melbourne, the 'Welcome' nugget was brought to London and smelted in November 1859. The assay showed that it contained 99·20 per cent. of gold.

Another valuable nugget, which was brought to London and exhibited at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, was the 'Blanche Barkly,' found by a party of four diggers on August 27, 1857, at Kingower, Victoria, just thirteen feet beneath the surface. It was twenty-eight inches long, ten inches broad in its widest part, and weighed 1743 ounces 13 dwts. It realised £6905, 12s. 6d. A peculiarity about this nugget was the manner in which it had eluded the efforts of previous parties to capture it. Three years before its discovery, a number of miners, judging the place to be a 'likely' locality, had sunk holes within a few feet of the spot where this golden mass was reposing, and yet they were not lucky enough to strike it. What a tantalising thought it must have been in after-years, when they reflected on the fact that they were once within an arm's length of £7000 without being fortunate enough to grasp the golden treasure! Kingower, like Dunolly, from which it is only a few miles distant, is a locality famous for its nuggets. One weighing 230 ounces was actually found on the surface covered with green moss; and pieces of gold have frequently been picked up there after heavy rains, the water washing away the thin coating of earth that had previously concealed them. Two men working in the Kingower district in 1860 found a very fine nugget, weigh-

ing 805 ounces, within a foot of the surface; and one of 715 ounces was unearthed at Daisy Hill at a depth of only three and a half feet.

A notable instance of rapid fortune was that of a party of four, who, having been but a few months in the colony of Victoria, were lucky enough to alight on a nugget weighing 1615 ounces. They immediately returned to England with their prize, and sold it for £5532, 7s. 4d. The place where they thus quickly made their 'pile,' to use an expressive colonialism, was Canadian Gully, at Ballarat, a very prolific nugget-ground. There was also found the 'Lady Hotham' nugget, called after the wife of Sir Charles Hotham, one of the early governors of Victoria. It was discovered on September 8, 1854, at a depth of 135 feet. Its weight was 1177 ounces; and near it were found a number of smaller nuggets of the aggregate weight of 2600 ounces, so that the total value of the gold extracted from this one claim was no less than £13,000. As showing the phenomenal richness of this locality, it may be added that on January 20, 1853, a party of three brought to the surface a solid mass of gold weighing 1117 ounces; and two days afterwards, in the same tunnel, a splendid pyramidal-shaped nugget weighing 1011 ounces was discovered; the conjoint value of the two being £7500.

A case somewhat similar to one already described was that of the 'Heron' nugget, a solid mass of gold to the amount of 1008 ounces, which was found at Fryer's Creek, Victoria, by two young men who had been only three months in the colony. They were offered £4000 for it in Victoria; but they preferred to bring it to England as a trophy, and there they sold it for £4080.

The 'Victoria' nugget, as its name suggests, was purchased by the Victorian government for presentation to Her Majesty. It was a very pretty specimen of 340 ounces, worth £1650, and was discovered at White Horse Gully, Sandhurst. Quite close to it, and within a foot of the surface, was found the 'Dascombe' nugget, weighing 330 ounces, which was also brought to London, and sold for £1500.

Just as a book should never be judged by its cover, so mineral substances should not be estimated by superficial indications. A neglect of this salutary precept was once very nearly resulting in the loss of a valuable Victorian nugget. A big lump of quartz was brought to the surface, and, as its exterior aspect presented only slight indications of the existence of gold, it was at first believed to be valueless; but as soon as the mass was broken up, there, embedded in the quartz, was a beautiful nugget of an oval shape.

New South Wales, the parent colony of the Australian group, has produced a considerable quantity of gold, but not many notable nuggets. Its most famous nugget was discovered by a native boy in June 1851 at Meroo Creek, near the present town of Bathurst. This black boy was in the employ of Dr Kerr as a shepherd, and one day, whilst minding his sheep, he casually came across three detached pieces of quartz. He tried to turn over the largest of the pieces with his stick; but he was astonished to find that the lump was much heavier than the ordinary quartz

with which he was familiar. Bending down and looking closer, he saw a shining yellow mass lying near; and when he at last succeeded in lifting up the piece of quartz, his eyes expanded on observing that the whole of its under surface was of the same shining complexion. He probably did not realise the full value of his discovery; but he had sufficient sense to break off a few specimens and hasten to show them to his master. Dr Kerr set off at once to verify the discovery; and when he arrived at the spot, his most sanguine anticipations were fulfilled by the event. He found himself the possessor of 1272 ounces of gold; and he rewarded the author of his wealth, the little black boy, with a flock of sheep and as much land as was needed for their pasture.

It has been the fashion of late years to speak of the days of big nuggets as having gone for ever; but the recent finding of two such brilliant specimens as the 'Lady Brassey' and the 'Lady Loch' is a sufficient negative to such a gratuitous hypothesis. Irrespective of the old and long-established goldfields, there are still not a few undeveloped auriferous areas in various parts of Victoria, notably in the extensive Gippsland district; and in these latter it is not only possible, but, judging from analogy, highly probable that there are big nuggets lying not many feet from the surface awaiting the advent of the adventurous and lucky digger.

CAUGHT NAPPING.

IN a populous city in the west of England lately lived a Jew named Solomon Isaac. That he 'lent at usance' would seem to go without saying. He had, in fact, for many years carried on the combined business of a pawnbroker and jeweller. At the time of which we write he was in decidedly easy circumstances, and having entered upon the declining years of life, he had transferred to his son the active management of his business, and had resolved to take things comfortably. In appearance, Solomon bore but little resemblance to the conventional Hebrew money-lender. His features, as a whole, clearly denoted his extraction; but his nose lacked the significant hook, and his form was portly; while his habitual cheerfulness evinced that he was neither remarkably avaricious nor malevolent.

In the afternoon of a summer day, not many years since, Solomon was seated at his desk in that part of his establishment which was known as 'the office.' His son was away for the day. The heat was oppressive, and to an attentive observer, it must have appeared that Solomon—like Homer—occasionally nodded. Solomon was disturbed in his nap by the entrance of a stranger. He was a tall, middle-aged man, showily dressed and self-possessed. After explaining that unexpected calls had been made upon his purse, he begged that Solomon would accommodate him until the morning with a loan of ten pounds, and he proffered as security a valuable-looking diamond ring. Solomon tested the gold and scrutinised the stones, and, feeling satisfied of the sufficient value of the ring, conceded the

desired advance; whereupon, with a profusion of thanks, the stranger—who had given the name of Wilkins—took his departure.

In the morning, the son resumed his duties in the business. He also tested the ring, and, to the amazement of his father, pronounced the stones to be paste, and the value of the ring to be a fifth of the sum for which it had been pledged. Solomon again examined the stones, and was obliged to concur in his son's opinion. He was extremely mortified at having proved such an easy dupe; and felt highly indignant that an attempt should have been made to swindle him, who had grown old in the trade, and whose acuteness in business was matter of common notoriety.

It was not very long, however, before Solomon regained his usual composure of mind, and when, a little later in the day, a second stranger entered the shop, Solomon stepped forward with alacrity to serve him. The new arrival may be appropriately described as an 'elderly gentleman of respectable appearance,' and he made known to Solomon his desire to purchase 'a trifle for a present.' As he had previously inspected, from the outside, the contents of the shop window, Solomon at once placed before him for selection a considerable quantity of other jewelry. The fancy of the gentleman, oddly enough, was at last taken by some rather valuable rings. A nice ring, he thought, would answer his purpose admirably; but he was remarkably fastidious. None of the rings which he looked at would exactly suit, and it seemed to be impossible to please him, when the son fetched from the office and deposited in his father's hands the ring pledged by Mr Wilkins on the previous day. It was strange that it had not occurred to Solomon to offer this ring. Both he and his son, by an easy process of reasoning, had arrived at the conclusion that Mr Wilkins would be unlikely to relieve them of it, and they had therefore determined to sell it. On beholding this ring, the eyes of the gentleman sparkled. He fitted it on his finger, extolled its beauty, and gazed on it approvingly; yet he seemed unable to come to a decision. With the ring in his hand, he entered, apparently, into an abstruse mental calculation, and finally gave back the ring with a show of great reluctance, and an expression of regret that unless his judgment deceived him, the price must be more than he could afford. Solomon generously inquired what he would give for it, and the gentleman, after some further hesitation, diffidently suggested five pounds. With this offer Solomon promptly closed; and the gentleman left, apparently quite satisfied with his purchase.

As soon as he was fairly out of hearing, Solomon and his son exulted over their good fortune. The son, in a bantering tone, took the credit to himself for having introduced the ring; but Solomon, while appreciating his son's astuteness, was not to be deprived of the credit of having, as he said, made the best of a bad bargain.

The day, however, had yet another surprise in store. The innocent rillery in which Solomon

and his son had indulged had hardly subsided when Mr Wilkins again appeared upon the scene. With a smile of recognition, he advanced towards Solomon, and informing him that, according to promise, he had come to return the loan with which he had been favoured on the previous day, deposited the amount with his ticket on the counter, and politely asked for his ring. Solomon and his son were stupefied, and for some seconds gazed in confusion at each other. The silence was eventually broken by Solomon, who, addressing Mr Wilkins, explained that having detected that the stones were spurious, they had assumed—and too hastily, as it now appeared—that he would not return to redeem the ring, and it had therefore been sold. At this intelligence, the rage of Mr Wilkins was intense. It was evident, he said, that they were incompetent to judge of the value of the ring, which was, at least, three times as great as the paltry sum which they had lent him. For what had they sold it? Five pounds? Ridiculous! They knew that they had no right to sell property received in pledge except at the time and in the manner authorised by law; and had they possessed the right to sell his ring, how could they justify their accepting even five pounds for it, seeing that they did not believe the diamonds to be genuine? In answer to these pertinent inquiries, Solomon could only tender a humble apology for his mistake. But this, as was to be expected, was hardly sufficient; and threatening to consult his legal adviser, Mr Wilkins strode towards the door.

Solomon could not disguise from himself that it would be extremely awkward to have his character for fair dealing successfully impeached in a court of justice. He had also, as he knew, directly violated the law in two respects—first, in selling within the year allowed for redemption; and secondly, in selling privately instead of by public auction. As he reflected upon his position, his mind filled with alarm, a fact which Mr Wilkins did not fail to perceive. Solomon therefore besought him not to create unpleasantness, and expressed his readiness to make every atonement for the consequences of his error. This conciliatory attitude on the part of Solomon seemed to soften the resentment of Mr Wilkins. The ring, he said, was a souvenir, and he prized it highly on that account. But he had no desire to take undue advantage of Solomon's mistake, and would be satisfied with the money value of the ring, which, at the lowest estimate, he put at thirty pounds. It was painful to Solomon to accede to these terms, but it was clear to him that he had no alternative. He was also wise enough to perceive that, while some part of his conduct would receive the censure of many, the other part would provoke the laughter of all. He therefore doled out the thirty pounds, which Mr Wilkins leisurely gathered up, and, bidding both Solomon and his son a friendly adieu, left the shop with the air of one who felt that he was a benefactor to his race.

On the following day, Solomon chanced to be at the local railway station; and had there lingered in his mind the slightest doubt that he had been cruelly victimised, it would have been rudely dispelled when, at one of the windows of a train slowly steaming away, he descried the jubilant faces of both Mr Wilkins and the

elderly gentleman, the purchaser of the ring. Solomon's emotion at the sight, and his sense of utter helplessness, must be left to the imagination of the reader.

FINE ART IN RAILWAY CARRIAGES.

HAVING had the recent experience of travelling nearly five hundred miles on three of the principal railway lines, it becomes an easy task, if it were necessary, to compare the travelling comforts of the three systems. Two of them happen to be rivals over a part of their district, and there is not much variety to choose from in the dirty cushions of the third-class carriages. On the score of official courtesy and punctuality there is nothing wanting in any of the three lines; but I was agreeably surprised, as I selected a compartment in a waiting train at the Liverpool Street Station of the Great Eastern Railway, to find that I was surrounded by some charming works of art; and being ultra-curious, I went the whole length of the long train, and found that nearly every carriage had been decorated in the same artistic manner.

Instead of those dreary advertisements connected with ironmongery, insurance, babies' food, and a host of other things which the travelling public are forced to look at, or shut their eyes to escape the painful obtrusions, in the train in question both sides of each compartment were elegantly fitted up, just under the parcel rack, with a mahogany case, in fact a specially constructed picture-frame, containing a photographic series of buildings, mediæval and modern; of scenery, artificial and natural; of life, in the pretty seclusions of the country, and of the more extended seaside. Though I was travelling at the rate of one penny per mile, yet I was seated in a well-appointed carriage with cushioned comforts equal to any ordinary chair, having no trouble about the small parcels, and enjoying the proffered beauties all around the carriage sides. Less than twenty years ago and over the same rails, just before the banishment of those remarkable and perfectly open passenger carriages like the modern bullock-wagons, I undertook one short ride on a frosty morning so as to thoroughly recognise and realise whatever advantages that method of open-air travelling possessed. Things have improved since then even to the value of railway stock, which to-day stands at sixty-six instead of forty something. *Punch* suggested and cartooned the binding of a director (Prometheus-like) to the boiler of every engine, as a probable antidote to the regularity of accidents. The prevalent policy now universally entertained by directors is the old one of prevention being better than cure, especially when one material part of the cure signifies heavy damages.

Being the sole occupant of a compartment during a continuous run of seventy miles, I had sufficient opportunity for examining every picture, and formed a favourable opinion of this new departure in railway art. The presence of such beautiful pictures will be certain to have a refining effect on the different classes of travellers, for who would ever think of destroying or injuring so much beauty? On one of the other main lines I had just travelled by, the only literature in one carriage was the brief announcement

'5 seats,' which had been still further abbreviated by some wandering iconoclast into '5 seats.' But it will be a surprising thing if any but a Bedlamite can injure the travelling things of beauty, although the sight costs nothing. The photographs are designedly of a character to illustrate the several and varied features of the district served by the Great Eastern Railway, which includes several cathedrals, abbeys, and other ecclesiastical edifices, many ancient and modern buildings, and certainly some delightful examples of still-life amongst the Norfolk broads and river system. The pictures will initiate many a conversation, and ought to provoke closer observation of the works of nature and art with which East Anglia abounds. The project thus commenced is one deserving of imitation and general adoption. It is a very simple arrangement. A piece of polished mahogany is divided into three principal parts, the openings for the pictures being sufficiently large to hold two photos, these of course being protected by glass. On one side of the compartment there were the following four large pictures, eleven inches by seven: Yarmouth Beach, evidently an instantaneous photo of a very busy scene; Lincoln Cathedral; Ely Cathedral and Palace, a winter scene; and Ditton Church with the River Cam. Two round pictures, six inches across, are Ely Cathedral from the river, and Thorpe Reach near Norwich, with a wherry in full sail. Two other excellent views of Ely Cathedral and the east end of Lincoln Cathedral complete this series.

Opposite to me are Geldeston Lock and the River Waveney, in Norfolk—an exquisite rural scene, showing two wooden bridges, well known to the pedestrian amongst the Waveney marshes; the west front of Lincoln Cathedral; and another of the Palace ruins at Lincoln. Two round ones represent Rockland Broad with its gigantic reeds and rushes, a special example of still-life; and another of the Park at Yarmouth with two inevitables, probably girls this time, much interested in being taken in the very middle of a gravel path; and lastly, Lowestoft Beach. Each picture has its designation neatly printed beneath, and nothing is needed but an appreciative public, who with this new order of art, enterprise will not only travel, but change carriages oftener than usual, in order to have the full benefit of change of compartments, and therefore of change of scenery, for no two carriages are decorated alike. The irksomeness of being pent up hour after hour at once becomes one degree less; and as there are some individuals who can even see some charms in a railroad, the enlightened and spirited policy of the Great Eastern Railway will enhance the pleasures of a railway journey very greatly in their estimation.

THE DOTY LIGHT.

The rapid development of the oil industry has been closely followed by numerous inventions aiming at improvements in its adaptation for purposes of illumination. One of the latest of these, known as the Doty Light, from the name of its inventor, Captain Doty, has already given results promising well for the future. The design and construction of the new light will be readily understood: it consists essentially of a galvanised

iron cylinder some two feet high, more or less, according to the required capacity, by eighteen inches in diameter, which forms the reservoir for the oil. On the top of this cylinder is placed the burner. Compressed air, up to a pressure of from ten to fifteen pounds per square inch, is forced into the reservoir by means of a hand-pump attached to it, a gauge being provided to register the pressure. A tube, starting from near the bottom of the cylinder, is formed into a spiral above it, and then again doubling downwards, winds as a second spiral inside the first coil, and terminates at the bottom of the double coil, where its orifice constitutes the burner.

The coil having been heated for five minutes by burning a little oil placed in asbestos in a saucer beneath, oil from the cistern is admitted. Driven by the force of the compressed air in the reservoir, it passes through the heated coil, becomes at once vaporised, and igniting at the burner, issues in a brilliant flame some three feet in height. Once started, the Doty Light will burn for some thirteen hours, till, in fact, the oil in the reservoir has become exhausted, nothing more being required than a few strokes of the air-pump every two or three hours, to maintain the pressure necessary to force the oil through the coil. The consumption of oil is estimated to average three-quarters of a gallon per hour.

Three sizes of the Doty Light are being placed on the market—three hundred, five hundred, and one thousand candle-power; whilst its inventor claims for it the numerous advantages accruing from its being self-contained, self-generating, and portable.

From trials recently carried out, the new light has shown itself to be well suited for the illumination of girder-yards, bridge-building and engineering shops, docks, harbours, goods-yards, coaling stations, tunnel-works, pitheads, quarries, mines, and generally all places where brilliant illumination, without dark shadows, is required at moderate cost and without elaborate preparation.

TO THE SINGER.

SISTER, the soul that wakes in thee
Hath in it something of the spring,
What time the sunny breezes swing
The daffodil beneath the tree;
I seem to sit beside the sea,
And hear a spirit in thee sing.

Thy voice makes many a pleasant place
To rest in, many a fragrant spot;
Blue eyes of the forget-me-not,
The charm of wistful maiden ways,
Bring back a hundred yesterdays
Of song, that may not be forgot.

If at an hour when storm-winds sway
The clouds through heaven from pole to pole,
The passion in thee seems to roll
In music to the Far-away,
Listen within thyself, and say:
'It is the soul, it is the soul.'

WILLIAM RENTON.

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INUNDATIONS ON THE PLANET MARS.

Most people are more or less interested in the affairs of their neighbours. With some, this interest is confined to their street. With others, the chief gossip does not travel beyond the small circle of the country town or parish. The number of people, however, labouring under these limitations of time and place is not so great as it has been; and with improved means of communication, other nations have become our neighbours, and the affairs of the globe our subject for small-talk. But even this is not enough. We must set our fancies to work on other worlds, revealed in vague yet attractive detail to the larger eye of our telescopes; and the caterer for the public ear must now mingle tales of the doings of 'lunatics'—a suggestive title for the explorers of the moon now famous in fiction—with the latest scandal of the 'court' and the alley. So has the world grown, and our horizon of curiosity extended.

But, in sober earnest, we may well take interest in a neighbouring planet. The crowning evidence of the truth of the modern astronomy, in so far as it views our earth and her sister planets as the ever-circling attendants of the sun, came when Galileo caught his first glimpse of the miniature system formed by Jupiter and his four satellites. How great a step was then taken, and what new conceptions of our history and destiny made possible, we are only beginning to see. In the moon we not only see a changing luminary, but a 'face which is a book wherein a man may read strange matters.' The study reveals much to enlighten us as to the past and future of our own small world; while each planet, at least of those nearer to us, has its quota of information to give. Among these, perhaps the most popularly and humanly interesting is the planet Mars, regarding which we propose to give our readers some information which may be of general interest. This little world, about half the size of our own, and at present concealed almost entirely in the long summer evening light, is better known and understood by astronomers than any other, and,

by a strange coincidence, presents features in some points so like those which our earth would exhibit if similarly viewed, that it is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that it is habitable, if not inhabited, by beings somewhat like ourselves. It was, then, with more than mere scientific interest that the astronomical world received the startling report, recently sent out on high authority, that a considerable part of the planet's surface had been engulfed in its waters. Our readers will probably be interested to know on what general, as well as special, evidence this report is founded, and what amount of weight is to be attached to it. How do we know there are oceans in Mars to engulf, and continents to be engulfed by them? And what in this case has led to the belief in some such catastrophe?

Small as the planet's disc appears to our vision, it can be mapped in many details with perfect accuracy, though, perhaps, if our readers were favoured with a glimpse of its disc through a powerful telescope, they would not feel inclined to grant this. Probably, their first feeling would be either that the telescope was bad, or the artists and engravers of the planet sad deceivers. Indeed, most of the published representations of this planet are miserable failures. Yet the delineator is not altogether to blame for this. The markings of the planet are in most cases so delicate that long practice is necessary to trace them, and it is impossible to represent them so as to be visible at all in an engraving without considerably adding to their distinctness.

But as the observer's eye grew accustomed to the peculiar conditions of telescopic vision, he would gradually perceive that the planet's disc was marked with faint blue and white on a ruddy ground. Probably this is about all he would see without much practice. To the astronomer, however, these blue and white markings present distinct outlines and easily recognisable shapes. He is quite familiar with them, for they do not change their form or position. The alterations in successive drawings of the planet have not been due to change in these markings, but to

additional details revealing themselves to more powerful telescopes and more patient scrutiny. The chief of them are all named and charted on the same principles as the continents and oceans of the earth.

Are they, then, seas and inlets, bays and gulfs, polar ice-caps and glaciated islands? The cautious astronomer will only answer, 'Most probably.' Let us see what can be said in support of this answer.

The planet has an atmosphere, by early observers supposed to be very extensive, but now known to be much more tenuous than our own. As a consequence of this tenuity or thinness, atmospheric pressure there would be between one-seventh and one-eighth of ours, and the Martian air would be less compressed about the surface of the planet, as its smaller mass and diameter would alter most materially the action of gravity upon it. Calculation in this is confirmed by observation, for we see the features of the planet far more distinctly than we would see the oceans of earth through an air laden with dust and vapour such as that of our world. Moreover, in the Martian air there is water-vapour, which must evidently arise from some watery expanse on the surface; and so, very naturally, astronomers regard the blue markings as oceans, and the brilliant white spots as ice or snow. Two of the most distinct coincide with the north and south poles, and can therefore scarcely be regarded otherwise than as polar accumulations of these chilly materials. There is a general consensus of opinion among observers that this is the case. Oceans and continents imply rivers and lakes; snow implies rain and dew. So that, on the surface of Mars we would be at home, so far as these surroundings of our life are concerned. We should, however, if Scotch, lack the clouds to which we are so accustomed, for the Martian air is singularly clear, and apparently calm also.

The Martian day is almost the same in length as our own; and it may provoke perhaps some incredulity when we state that its length is known to within *one-fiftieth of a second*, such accuracy have astronomers' time-measures attained. It is given by the latest authority as 24 hours 37 minutes 22·735 seconds. The Martians must, then, dine and sleep pretty much as we do. But their sowing and reaping will be very different. Mars has an orbit much larger than ours to traverse in completing its year, and goes only at the moderate mean speed of 53,000 miles per hour, as against the Earth's 65,000. The year there will therefore be nearly twice as long as ours. This our readers may note as one very great difference. For the laws of vegetable, and probably of animal, life must be strikingly different in the ruddy planet from those ruling on earth. Vegetable growth is probably much slower, and changes dependent on the seasons all less violent than with us. In fact, as we consider the matter more minutely, we see that, while there is what may be styled an *elementary* resemblance between Mars and the Earth, life on the one will differ greatly from life on the other. The long year, with its slow changes of temperature, will moderate the causes of aerial disturbance, and these causes will operate in an atmosphere very much less dense. The storms and breezes

will thus be literally much *lighter* than with us. Yet so far this will be balanced by the generally frailer structure of plants and animals. Our trees are strong because they have to sustain the weight of their umbrageous heads, as well as resist the impact of our denser air as it sweeps over them in the storms of winter. With a weight of material only one-seventh, the Martian trees and plants are probably less firm in structure, and so are proportioned in strength to the feebler Martian winds.

It may also be thought that the Martian sailors, if there be such, will have less speedy voyages than ours. The resistance to a vessel's motion depends of course on the density and structure of water, which do not depend on gravity. So that with a lighter wind to fill his sails, the Martian will have as dense a fluid beneath his vessel. But here the same kind of compensation comes in. His ship will only weigh one-half as much as one of ours, even if made of the same material. But for his purposes far less strength will suffice, and, as we have seen, if he builds of wood, he will get light material to his hand. His vessel will literally 'skim the seas,' and will find ample power in the feeble breeze. The tenuity of the Martian air will also trouble housewives. Their pots, if not closed steam-tight, will boil when the water is almost lukewarm!—certainly at a temperature far below what we find necessary for cooking purposes.

We have already remarked on the long Martian seasons. Owing to the fact that the planet's path takes it much nearer the sun in one part than in another, these seasons are curiously unequal. This inequality conspicuously favours the northern hemisphere. In fact, the summer half of the year there is three hundred and seventy-two days in length, while to the winter half is only given two hundred and ninety-six. Exactly the reverse is the case in the southern hemisphere, the winter there being long and the summer short. Yet on such a small globe it will be easy for the inhabitants to change their hemisphere according to taste, and by travelling, to enjoy any of the seasons they like in continual freshness. The distribution of land and sea will also favour this. The Martian seas are really mere lakes, channels, and inlets. Their arrangement is peculiar and interesting. A broad belt of continents girdles the equatorial region of the planet. These continents are bordered towards the poles by narrow strips of sea, which are unfrozen, and apparently continuous round the whole of the globe. One or two large masses of water break up the continental belt, and these are united to one another by a perfect maze of narrow channels, turning and twisting in all directions, and opening into numerous inlets. These inlets are sometimes very long. The one called Bessel Inlet extends over nearly ninety degrees of Martian latitude—that is, about a quarter of the way round the globe of the planet. The bottle shape of these long gulfs is a very curious feature. Most of them enter by a very narrow neck, and then expand suddenly or gradually into a large oval bay. If the border of these consists of cliffs and mountains, the Martians will be highly favoured in the matter of scenery. To pass through a narrow cliff-bound channel into the expanse of one of these vast bays, if

surrounded by wooded hills, would be a beautiful voyage indeed.

This *bottle* shape extends even to the oceans, in which there is not in any case a great expanse of surface. Dawes Ocean largely consists of two great bag-shaped bays, and De la Rue Ocean is the same in structure. These of course are named after eminent astronomers, as are almost all the chief features of the planet. By these arrangements, our readers will see that the facilities on Mars for water-carriage are very great; while, of course, railway carriage and construction must be, if attempted, proportionately difficult. The Martian voyagers will have no long weary days on the expanse of ocean; on the contrary, varied and beautiful minglings of land and sea will continually refresh their vision. A recent discovery has apparently somewhat extended this grand network of waterways. In 1877 the planet was in a peculiarly favourable position for observation, and a perfect reticulation of faint markings was seen by Schiaperelli, of Milan Observatory. These covered the larger continents, and were by him named 'canals,' though to be visible at this distance they must be enormous in size. Their reality has since been doubted, but may be regarded as now confirmed. Moreover, they are sometimes doubled, a twin canal appearing parallel to the first at a distance of several hundred miles. This doubling is considered by Schiaperelli to depend in some way on the change of the Martian seasons. Though still called canals, they are hardly now regarded as such; indeed they form one of the most curious and inexplicable features of the planet. Perhaps all its features may be regarded as difficult of explanation. We have given our readers only what is the most probable view of the case. Certainty cannot yet be said to be attained on any points, except the tenuity and clearness of the Martian air, and the presence in it of water-vapour. Still no very strained inference is involved in the rest.

But there is one fundamental fact about Mars which thoroughly baffles explanation. The planet is forty-eight million miles farther from the sun than the Earth. It will receive less than half the light and heat that we do. Its tenuous air will not retain the solar heat as our denser atmosphere does. The condition of the general surface will be more like that of some lofty mountain top near our arctic circle, than that of our fertile plains in the temperate zone. It should be clothed with almost constant ice and snow. Yet the north and south polar ice-caps on Mars are very small—far smaller in proportion than those of the Earth. What strange cause maintains the warmth of his surface? This is one of the problems awaiting solution by the astronomy of the future. When solved, it will throw light on many other perplexing cosmical questions.

Our readers will now be in a better position to understand the evidence offered in proof of the vast inundation to which we have referred. Mars has been lately favourably situated for observation, being near the Earth, and though his position low down in the sky prevents full advantage being taken of his proximity, yet in May and June he was an object of special regard. A portion of the land-surface of the planet—named 'Libya' in the principal charts—

has appeared darker than usual, so much so, to some observers, as to seem blended with the neighbouring waters. The 'Tyrrhenian Sea' has also seemed paler in tint, as if reduced greatly in depth. From what we have said of the feeble gravity on the planet, it is evident that the structure of the rocks and soil, as well as that of the trees and plants, must be greatly less massive than with us; indeed, a certain *porosity* of surface structure would seem probable, and this, taken with the fact that, as a whole, Mars is only about half as dense as our earth, would render such an event as the subsidence of a continent not so very improbable. But our readers must remember that such a structure infers feebler forces to disintegrate and destroy. On such a globe, the 'war of elements' could not rage very fiercely at any time. It is indeed not likely that on any inhabited globe the conditions of life are really so precarious as we might imagine. Dr Terby, of Louvain, a very skilful observer, is not inclined to favour the inundation theory, attributing the slight changes which have been confirmed rather to the very oblique view of the regions involved at present offered to astronomers by the position of the Martian globe. Further accounts from such skilful observers are needed before the matter can be seriously considered.

If undistracted by devouring waters, the Martians will be able to enjoy a continued celestial spectacle of a very curious kind. They are, as our readers must be aware, furnished with two small moons, one of which completes its orbital course in about seven hours and a half. It will rise or set three or even four times in a single day, and for the Martian seamen will do the part of a chronometer. Indeed, clocks will be at a discount there, for with little cloudy weather, and a celestial body crossing the heavens in seven or eight hours, it will always be possible to tell the time with considerable exactitude.

Thus we have considered our next neighbour among the planets, the likeness of which to the Earth is obvious, but its differences from it being still more prominent.

THIS MORTAL COIL

CHAPTER XLII.—FACE TO FACE.

THAT hint sobered him. He roused himself to actual action at last. It was now eight, and Elsie was off by the 9.40! Too many thoughts had crowded him too fast. That single hour enclosed for Hugh Massinger a whole eternity.

He rose and dressed himself with all expedition, remembering—though by an afterthought—for decency's sake to put on his black cutaway coat and his darkest trousers—he had with him none black save those of his evening suit—and to approach as near to a mourning tie as the narrow resources of his wardrobe permitted. But it was all a hollow, hollow mockery, a transparent farce, a mere outer semblance: his coat might be black, but his heart was blithe as a lark's on a bright May morning. He drew up the blind: the sun was flooding the bay and the hillsides with Italian lavishment. Flowers were gay on the parterres of the public garden. Who could pretend to be sad at soul on a day like this, worthy of whitest

chalk, when the sun shone and flowers bloomed and Elsie was alive again? Let the dead bury their dead. For him, Elsie! for Elsie was alive again. He lived once more a fresh life. What need to play the hypocrite, here, alone, in his own hired house, in the privacy of his lonely widowed bedchamber? He smiled to himself in the narrow looking-glass fastened against the wall! He laughed hilariously. He showed his even white teeth in his joy: they shone like pearl. He trimmed his beard with unwonted care; for now he must make himself worthy of Elsie. 'If I be dear to some one else,' he murmured, with the lover in *Maud*, 'then I should be to myself more dear.' And that he was dear to Elsie, he was quite certain. Her love had suffered eclipse, no doubt: Warren Relf, like a shadow, had flitted for a moment in between them; but when once he, Hugh, burst forth like the sun upon her eyes once more, Warren Relf, pale and ineffectual, would hide his diminished head and vanish into vacancy.

'Warren Relf! That reptile—that vermin! Ha, ha! I have you now at my feet—my heel on your neck, you sneaking traitor. Hiding my Elsie so long from my sight! But I nick you now, on the eve of your victory. You think you have her safe in the hollow of your hand. You'll carry her off away from me to England! Fool! Idiot! Imbecile! Fatuous! You reckon this time without your hostess. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. I'll dash away this cup, my fine fellow, from yours. Your lip shall never touch my Elsie's. Nectar is for gods, and not for mudlarks. I'll bring you down on your marrow-bones before me. You tried to outwit me. Two can play at that game, my friend.'—He seized the bolster from the bed, and flinging it with a dash on the carpetless floor, trampled it in an access of frenzy under foot, for Warren in effigy. The relief from his strain had come too quick. He was beside himself now with love and rage, mad with excitement, drunk with hatred and joy and jealousy. That creature marry his Elsie, forsooth! He danced in a fever of prospective triumph over the prostrate body of his fallen enemy.

Warren Relf, meanwhile, by himself next door, was saying to himself, as he dressed and packed, in sober sincerity: 'Poor Massinger! What a terrible time he must be having, down there alone with his dead wife and his accusing conscience! Ought I to go down and lighten his burden for him, I wonder? Such remorse as his must be too heavy to bear. Ought I to tell him that Elsie's alive?—that that death at least doesn't lie at his door?—that he has only to answer for poor Mrs. Massinger?—No. It would be useless for me to tell him. He hates me too much. He wouldn't listen to me. Elsie shall break it to him in her own good time. But my heart aches for him, for all that, in spite of his cruelty. His worst enemy could wish him no harm now. He must be suffering agonies of regret and repentance. Perhaps at such a moment he might accept consolation even from me. But probably not. I wish I could do anything to lessen this misery for him.'

Why did no answer come from Elsie? That puzzled and surprised Warren not a little. He had begged her to let him know first thing in the morning whether she could get away by the 9.40.

He wondered Elsie could be so neglectful—she, who was generally so thoughtful and so trustworthy. Moment after moment, he watched and waited: a letter must surely come from Elsie.

After a while, Hugh's access of mania—for it was little less—cooled down somewhat. He began to face the position like a man. He must be calm; he must be sane; he must deliberate sensibly.

Elsie was going by the 9.40; and Warren Relf would be there to join her. 'I'll meet you at the station at the hour you mention.' But not unless Relf received that letter. Should he ever receive it? That was the question.

He glanced once more at the envelope—torn hastily open: 'WARREN RELF, Esq., Villa della Fontana (Piano 3'). Then Warren Relf was here, in this self-same house—on this very floor—next door, possibly! He would like to go in and wring the creature's neck for him!—But that would be rash, unadvisable—premature, at any rate. The wise man dissembles his hate—for a while—till occasion offers. Some other time. With better means and more premeditation.

If he wrung the creature's neck now, a foolish prejudice would hang him for it, under all the forms and pretences of law. And that would be inconvenient—for then he could never marry Elsie!

How inconsistent! that one should be permitted to crush under foot a lizard or an adder, but be hanged, by a wretched travesty of justice, for wringing the neck of that noxious vermin! He stamped with all his might upon the bolster (*vice* Warren Relf, not then producible) and gnashed his teeth in the fury of his hatred. 'Some day, my fine fellow, it'll be your own turn,' he muttered to himself, 'to get really danced upon.'

Happy thought! If he let things take their own course, Relf would probably never go down to the station at all, waiting like a fool to hear from Elsie; and then—why, then, he might go himself and—well—why not?—run away with her himself offhand to England!

There, now, would be a dramatic triumph indeed for you! At the very moment when the reptile was waiting in his lair for the heroine, to snatch her by one bold stroke from his slimy grasp, and leave him, disconsolate, to seek her in vain in an empty waiting-room! It was splendid!—it was magnificent! The humour of it made his mouth water.

But no! The scandal—the gossip—the indecency! With Winifred dead in the room below! He must shield Elsie from so grave an imputation. He must bide his time. He must simulate grief. He must let a proper conventional interval elapse. Elsie was his, and he must guard her from evil tongues and eyes. He must do nothing to compromise Elsie.

Still, he might just go to the station to meet her. To satisfy his eyes. No harm in that. Why give the note at all to the reptile?

But looking at it impartially, the straight road is always the safest. The proverb is right. Honesty appears to be on the whole the best policy. He had tried the crooked path already, and found it wanting. Lying too often incurs failure. Henceforth, he would be—reasonably and moderately—honest.

Excess is bad in any direction. The wise man will therefore avoid excess, be it either on the side of vice or of virtue. A middle course of external decorum will be found by average minds the most prudent. On this, O British ratepayer, address yourself!

Hugh took from his portmanteau an envelope and his writing-case. With Elsie's torn envelope laid before him for a model, he exercised yet once more his accustomed skill in imitating to the letter—to the very stroke, even—the turns and twists of that sacred handwriting. But oh, with what different feelings now! No longer dead Elsie's, but his living love's. She wrote it herself, that very morning. Addressed as it was to Warren Relf, he pressed it to his lips in a fervour of delight and kissed it tenderly—for was it not Elsie's?

His beautiful, pure, noble-hearted Elsie! To write to that reptile! And 'Dearest Warren,' too! What madness! What desecration! Pah! It sickened him.

But it was not for long. The sun had risen. Before its rays the lesser Lucifers would soon efface themselves.

He rang the bell, and after the usual aristocratic Italian interval, a servant presented himself. Your Italian never shows a vulgar haste in answering bells. Hugh handed him the letter, readdressed to Warren in a forged imitation of Elsie's handwriting, and asked simply: 'This gentleman is in the *pension*, is he?'

Luigi bowed and smiled profusely. 'On the same floor; next door, signor,' he answered, indicating the room with a jerk of his elbow. The Italian waiter lacks polish. Hugh noted the gesture with British disapproval. His tastes were fine; he disliked familiarity.

On the same floor—as yet unchoked! And he couldn't get at him. Horrible! horrible!

For Elsie's sake he must assume some regret for dead Winifred.

So he told the landlady with a sigh of sensibility he had no heart that morning to taste his breakfast. He would go and stroll by the seashore alone. Everything had been arranged about the poor signora. 'What grief!' said the landlady. 'Look you, Luigi, he can eat nothing.'

At a shabby *trattoria* in the main street, he took his breakfast—a sloppy breakfast; but the coffee was good, with the exquisite aroma of the newly roasted berry, and the fresh fruit was really delicious. On the Mediterranean slope, coffee and fresh fruit cover a multitude of sins. What could you have nicer, now, than these green figs, so daintily purpled on the sunny side, and these small white grapes from the local vineyards with their faint undertone of musky flavour? The olives, too, smack of the basking soil; 'the luscious glebe of vine-clad lands,' he had called it himself in that pretty song in *A Life's Philosophy*.—He repeated the lines for his own pleasure, rolling them on his palate with vast satisfaction, as a connoisseur rolls good old Madeira:

My thirsty bosom pants for sunlit waters,
And luscious glebe of vine-clad lands,
And chanted psalms of freedom's bronze-cheeked
daughters,
And sacred grasp of brotherly hands.

That was written before he knew Winifred! His spirits were high. He enjoyed his breakfast. A quarter to nine by the big church clock; and Elsie goes at 9.40.

He strolled down at his leisure to the station with his hands in his pockets. Fresh air and sunshine smiled at his humour. He would have liked to hide himself somewhere, and 'see unseen,' like Paris with the goddesses in the dells of Ida; but stern fact intervened, in the shape of that rigid continental red-tape railway system which admits nobody to the waiting-rooms without the passport of a ticket. He must buy a ticket for form's sake, then, and go a little way on the same line with them; just for a station or two—say to Monte Carlo.—He presented himself at the wicket accordingly, and took a first single as far as the Casino.

In the waiting-room he lurked in a dark corner, behind the bookstall with the paper-covered novels. Elsie and Relf would have plenty to do, he shrewdly suspected, in looking after their own luggage without troubling their heads about casual strangers. So he lurked and waited. The situation was a strange one. Would Elsie turn up? His heart stood still. After so many years, after so much misery, to think he was waiting again for Elsie!

As each new-comer entered the waiting-room, his pulse leaped again with a burst of expectation. The time went slowly: 9.30, 9.35, 9.36, 9.37—would Elsie come in time for the 9.40?

A throb! a jump!—alive! alive! It was Elsie, Elsie, Elsie!

She never turned; she never saw. She walked on hastily, side by side with Warren, the serpent, the reptile. Hugh let her pass out on to the platform and choose her carriage. His flood of emotion fairly overpowered him. Then he sneaked out with a hand-dog air, and selected another compartment for himself, a long way behind Elsie's. But when once he was seated in his place, at his ease, he let his pent-up feelings have free play. He sat in his corner, and cried for joy. The tears followed one another unchecked down his cheeks. Elsie was alive! He had seen Elsie!

The train rattled on upon its way to the frontier. Bordighera, Ventimiglia, the Roya, the Nervia, were soon passed. They entered France at the Pont St-Louis.

Elsie was crying in her carriage too—crying for poor tortured, heart-broken Winifred. And not without certain pangs of regret for Hugh as well. She had loved him once, and he was her own cousin.

And all the time, Hugh Massinger, in his own carriage, was thinking—not of poor dead Winifred; not of remorse, or regret, or penitence; not of his sin and the mischief it had wrought—but of Elsie. The bay of Mentone smiled lovely to his eyes. The crags of the steep seaward scarp on the Cap Martin side glistened and shone in the morning sunlight. The rock of Monaco rose sheer like a painter's dream from the sea in front of him. And as he stepped from the carriage at Monte Carlo station, with the mountains above and the gardens below, flooded by the rich Mediterranean sunlight, he looked about him at the scene in pure æsthetic delight, saying to himself in his

throbbing heart that the world after all was very beautiful, and that he might still be happy at last with Elsie.

(To be continued.)

SCOTSMEN AND THE RIVER PLATE.

THE design of this paper is partly to illustrate the industry and perseverance of Scotsmen, and partly to describe scenes on the South American coasts, or in the *estancias* (farmhouses), in which business is carried on very thrivingly. In truth, one might linger at Rio de Janeiro and Monte Video and pick up something in the way of information, which, if retailed in a popular sense, would be very interesting from the point of view of suggestive pabulum. The harbour of Rio, for example, would make an artist rampant with enthusiasm, seeing that it is surrounded by innumerable palm-clad islands, while lofty mountains are reflected in the land-locked and glassy waters. Natural surroundings apart, another inducement for a brief stay here would be the pleasure of having a chat with the Emperor, who is always to be met in early morn taking his constitutional, just as an old and hearty farmer might do, towards some one or other of the suburbs bordering his capital. He is always glad to have a chat with any European who has a respectable card in his pocket, or who can refer to some one or other of the merchants at Rio as having a knowledge of his *locus standi*. On these occasions the Emperor is unattended, save by a valet, who is dressed in a green coat, —the national colour—accompanied by a faithful collie dog, now a little grizzled, which he took home with him on his last visit to Europe. He will chat freely of the resources of his country, and point out how the surplus labour of Great Britain might be benefited by taking up the untilled lands in his empire, which are only awaiting labour to make them reproductive.

Then, if the visitor should be inclined to take another stroll, he might explore the mysteries of the Corcovada. This is a small steep mountain, from which, when surmounted, a view of the harbour and neighbouring country can be obtained. The approaches are of a zigzag kind; and the rays of the sun are mitigated by trees whose branches, covered with creepers, orchids, and vegetable parasites of all descriptions, constitute a natural network which it is pleasing to contemplate. Here, animated nature is in great activity; and the hearer is never likely to forget the curious hum and clatter that come upon the breeze from myriads of beetles, bullfrogs, and flying insects.

Should one elect to pursue the journey by way of Monte Video—which, in these days of good maps and extended information, it is almost needless to say is the capital of Uruguay, though the writer has met with many instances in which 'globetrotters' have mixed up the affairs of this republic with those of the Argentine confederacy, and that especially in connection with the exportation of wool and frozen meat to European markets—the experiences which will be encountered will not be regretted. The coast lies low in one unbroken plain, with here and there ranges of hills in the far-off distance; while the land is thickly interspersed with cattle and horses, with

hardly a tree to shelter them from the rays of what is very much like a tropical sun. What we at home should call farmhouses are built bungalow-fashion, and from a distance look as though they had been stuccoed with bleached oyster-shells. Indeed, here, as everywhere else in tropical climates, the dwellings of the people present a whitewashed appearance, and this probably for the reason that that colour is a non-conductor of heat; but whether the proverbial black of the old country is equally effective in keeping out the cold is a question which may be left for experts to determine. This province is as much favoured by the waters of the River Plate as is that of the Argentine Republic. Monte Video—so called from an insignificant and solitary hill which overlooks the city—may be said to be, as South American cities go, and having regard to the fact that its drainage is imperfect, a clean, well-built town, with a few attractive buildings laid out on the American plan; while business men can hie them hither or thither at moderate fares, in tram-cars, which are drawn by four horses. There are a few Scottish merchants there who are always ready to give a welcome to any traveller from the old country, and to give him the 'run' during his stay of a comfortable clubhouse, provided with papers, periodicals, billiard-tables, and a bar where some very good examples of the 'barley bree' can be obtained.

Monte Video has a handsome square with a fountain fringed by trees, and no end of representatives of the floricultural kingdom. A military band plays here from eight to ten every night. To say sooth, however, its music is not of the character a European is accustomed to, for the dominating noise emanates from a pair of cymbals and a big drum, the monotony of the latter being as repulsive as the tom-toms of the Dark Continent. But discords notwithstanding, there are damsels there with dark piercing eyes and sunburnt visages, dressed in their best attire, and love has its conquests in South America as much as in Europe. If for no other experiences than those recounted, Monte Video would be worth a visit by any traveller whose destination was the Argentine Republic. If he had time at his disposal, he might run out of town and get some experience of the hospitality extended at the *Hotel del Prado*, which may be described as a miniature *Star and Garter*; or train could be taken to Santa Lucia, which is noted for its picturesque surroundings, and its flat-roofed villas, gaily decorated with the brightest colours; while the gardens are rich in statues and variegated glass at every coign of vantage. The hedges, where they exist, are formed either of aloe (or rather agave) or cactus; and the soil is both deep and rich, and being level, all kinds of agricultural machines can be employed upon it. If there are any Scottish farmers disposed to try their fortunes in this part of the world, they might do so to advantage, since land is cheap and rent moderate. As for the land, it is so productive that superphosphates, guano, or any kind of manures are not needed to produce rich harvests.

The Argentine Republic adjoins that of Uruguay, as will be gathered from the before-mentioned proximity of the River Plate to both. Owing to the facility which the water-way affords,

something considerable in the way of trade is done between the two republics. Of the two, however, the Argentine Republic is certainly the most progressive, a fact which is due perhaps as much to the wisdom of its presidents as to the pluck and enterprise of those Europeans—among whom the Scottish element is prominent—who have done so much to extend its industries. Now and again, sad tales have been heard upon the Stock Exchange of the decadence of this country in respect to its public debt; but whenever the hard dollar has been wanted to liquidate the interest thereon, the evil reports of 'bulls' and 'bears' notwithstanding, it has always been forthcoming. It will be a big country by-and-by. Even now, it runs Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa hard in the markets on this side of the equator in respect of wool, hides, horns, and skins. Numerically, it dominates every sheep-producing country in the world save the United States, since, while the flocks of Australia are reckoned at about eighty millions, of New Zealand at forty millions, South Africa from sixty-five to seventy millions, those of the Argentine Republic reach a hundred millions. As to stock, the recent bounty will doubtless give an impetus to the exportation of beef and frozen mutton. Though ten years ago the wool-trade of that country was not so profitable as that of the colonies above mentioned, yet the Scottish element has improved upon the past by the introduction of fresh blood. As time goes on and facilities of transport are afforded—by reason of the closer proximity of that country to the markets of Europe than South Africa or the colonies at the antipodes—there can be no doubt that the producers of this part of the world will make headway, as respects the export of wool, hides, and horns, as well as cereals, the growth of which is rapidly extending throughout the province. It is true that at present Buenos Ayres is inaccessible within ten miles to any ocean-going steamer, and that the lighterage to-day is equal to one-half of the freight to Europe; but this is a difficulty which a progressive government cannot afford to ignore, and which is sure to be overcome. With respect to wool, the Scottish farmers on the Plate are very anxious to improve its quality, so that it may hold its own with the best samples from Australia, and take a leading place among the choicest brands that are now in demand on the wool exchange in Coleman Street. With this object, the best possible strains have been imported by them from America and Europe.

At this point it may be mentioned that on many of the *estancias* owned by Scotsmen may be seen the national collie, who towers grandly over the Spanish lurcher, and does not appear to have deteriorated much by change of climate.

With regard to the frozen-meat industry, this would go well if only the steamship Companies trading to South America would fit up vessels with the necessary freezing machinery. Scotsmen there are very emphatic on this point; and if the existing Companies who trade there do not meet their conveniences, they are rich enough to offer bonuses to Companies who will. Given proper appliances, five million sheep and lambs could be annually exported to Great Britain without making any appreciable difference in the stock. The reader will easily realise what this means from the point

of view of our food-supply and the realisation of dividends on capital. Already the imports of frozen meat from this republic top those of any of our colonies, and, as has been said, it only requires further carrying facilities to be extended indefinitely. In 1887 the import of meat from that country into London and Liverpool amounted to 641,266 carcasses—London absorbing 242,903, and Liverpool 398,363. Looking, however, to the fact that meat to any extent can be conveyed from that country to the British markets in twenty days, it is but reasonable to assume that science and capital will discover means by which that trade will be largely extended.

With respect to the wool-trade of the Argentine Republic, the writer is acquainted with a Scotsman who nursed this Hercules in its cradle, and he says there is a feeling among the growers there so to improve the staple that it shall hold its own with the best known brands of any wool-producing country in the world. Hitherto, the imports of River Plate wool into London have been but meagre in respect to bales, the chief markets for that commodity being Liverpool and Antwerp, where, indeed, most of the hides, skins, and horns are sold. A slight trade is done with America, since America does a trade with the Argentine Republic in agricultural machinery. From the point of view of endurance, however, American machinery is not so much appreciated as that imported from Scotland. Among the hides mostly sought after by tanners are the Saladero ox, the Matadero, the Grande Saladero, and the Salted Cow, since they can be converted into leather which is much approved of among those who follow industries into which the article leather enters. In respect to boots and shoes, perhaps there are thousands of people walking about London and Edinburgh who little think that their feet are encompassed with leather tanned from the hides of animals that roamed the Pampas. As showing the trade carried on between Great Britain and South America, it may be mentioned that a hundred and twenty vessels sailed to that continent in January last from ports in Great Britain, Havre, and Antwerp, freighted with manufactures of different kinds.

MRS FARQUHARSON'S NIECE.

CHAP. IV.—CHECKMATED.

I SCARCELY recognised myself in the resolute energetic girl I had become. The other two seemed to depend on me for everything, and I had roused myself to the occasion. I wrote a hurried note, and descended, bearing it in my hand unsealed. I handed it to Mr Vanburgh, whom I found dressed. A long dark cloak of Mrs Farquharson's almost entirely covered his gray dress. He wore my hat, which I had left in his room, and a dark veil. His bag stood on a chair. He would not wait for tea, he said. He asked my pardon for taking my hat.

'Oh, what does it matter, so that you escape!' I cried. 'I will accompany you to Harley, for I know that neither Mrs Farquharson nor I could rest unless we knew you had got safely away.—Do not raise any objection; I can walk back perfectly well alone.'

'You are a true friend in need, Miss Stuart,' said he with emotion. 'What we should have done without you at this time, Heaven knows, for I am quite unnerved. I am sorry uncle is not here; I should have liked to have said good-bye to him.'

We left the house, Mr Vanburgh carrying the bag concealed under the long cloak. None of the servants by good luck were about. Mrs Farquharson did not come to the door; she wished it to appear as though we had gone merely for a stroll. On my return, she would tell Mrs Glass the housekeeper that Miss Selwyn had gone.

We took down the garden path and along near to the river-side until we reached the bend of the river, which brought us outside the Manor grounds into Squire Bolden's, between which and Mrs Farquharson's there was a high hedge, the counterpart of that which bounded the Manor lands on Farmer Shiel's side. By taking this road we kept completely out of the detective's view, should he be on the outlook with his glass. A small footpath led us out on to the main road leading to Harley.

Our walk was a very silent one, for we scarce exchanged half-a-dozen words. When we reached the station, we had not long to wait. I secured Mr Vanburgh's ticket for him.

'I cannot thank you,' he said, much agitated, as he was about to step into the train: 'I will try and drop a line. Perhaps we shall yet see each other again. My aunt will tell you the whole story. Believe me, Miss Stuart, I am innocent of this charge.'

'I never doubted it. We shall long to hear from you how you get on.—Might I ask you a favour, Mr Vanburgh? It is, that you promise me to give up gambling and betting from this time.'

He suddenly stooped and imprinted a kiss on my forehead. 'Forgive me. I do promise. For your sake, I would promise anything.'

Next minute, I was standing alone with crimson cheeks waving my handkerchief as the train glided off. My thoughts were full of that kiss all the way back.

Mrs Glass coming into the room on my return, was then told of Miss Selwyn's departure. She seemed much surprised, but made no remark. That young lady's erratic movements were evidently too much for her. She was simply told Miss Selwyn had received word which necessitated her leaving at once.

It was not without some trepidation that I descended next morning to the breakfast-room. Mrs Farquharson was already seated there, calm and composed as usual. I could not help admiring her fortitude. In the midst of the meal came a ring at the door bell. Mrs Glass, being at that moment in the act of crossing the hall, herself opened the door.

'We wish to see Miss Selwyn,' said a voice, which I recognised as that of the man Jacobs.

'Miss Selwyn is not here,' replied Mrs Glass. 'She left last night before seven o'clock. She was telegraphed for to go home.' This statement she made entirely on her own authority, as nothing whatever had been said to her either regarding the mode in which Miss Selwyn had been summoned away or her destination. She had

apparently arrived at this conclusion of her own accord.

'Stuff and gammon!' cried the man coarsely. 'Where could she go? You don't catch a weasel asleep. Try that on with some other, my good woman. More likely she saw us from the window, and is in hiding.—Tell your mistress we wish to see her at once.'

Without waiting to be invited, they followed Mrs Glass into the breakfast-room. There were three of them; the third, I presume, being the man whom Jacobs had called Bob. The foremost, Jacobs, held what I supposed was the warrant in his hand.

Mrs Farquharson's presence of mind was admirable. 'May I ask the meaning of this intrusion, gentlemen?' she asked calmly. 'Mrs Glass, show these gentlemen into the front drawing-room for a few minutes. Miss Stuart and I are engaged at breakfast just now.'

They were manifestly taken aback at her coolness. 'I beg your pardon, madam; and yours too, miss,' said Jacobs; 'but our business will not wait. I have here a warrant for the apprehension of Mr Jack Vanburgh on a charge of forgery, who has been staying here these last three weeks under the name of Miss Doris Selwyn.'

Mrs Glass gave a scream, and seemed about to drop. Mrs Farquharson still preserved an unruffled front.

'Mrs Glass has already told you that Miss Selwyn is not here. I have nothing more to add, gentlemen. If you wish, you can search the house and grounds. Perhaps you will kindly relieve us of your presence, and allow Miss Stuart and me to finish breakfast.'

I never saw such an expression of baffled rage on the face of any human being as that which overspread the countenance of Jacobs. Perhaps the knowledge of his own dilatoriness made him feel worse. 'It is false!' he shouted. 'He is here! I'll bet my life.—Maybe you are not aware, madam, that in concealing this young man from punishment, you run a risk yourself,' he added ferociously.

'I am concealing no young man,' she said; 'and if I were, am not one to be intimidated by threats.—Excuse me, gentlemen, but if you do not retire, Miss Stuart and I must.'

Thereupon they went out, but not before casting suspicious glances round the room. They searched the house from top to bottom—of course with no result; and all day two of them hovered about the house and grounds, the third probably making inquiries elsewhere. I do not think they suspected me in the matter.

In the course of the day I received a letter, which was, I understood, directed to me to avoid suspicion. It contained simply these words: 'Everything arranged. To-morrow six A.M.' No signature was attached, and it bore the London postmark. This was sufficient, however, to satisfy us that all was right, and that Mr Vanburgh would by this time have sailed and the note been written by him the night before. Later on, I would get full details from my father.

Meantime, I had heard the particulars of the alleged forgery from Mrs Farquharson. 'One night about a month ago,' she said, 'old Mr Balcombe and Jack were detained in the office on business later than usual, the others having left

before them. After Mr Balscombe left, Jack noticed his cheque-book lying among some papers on his desk. He was usually very careful to keep it under lock and key. Jack picked it up and put it in the inside pocket of his coat, intending to lock it up in the safe in the other room; but having some other things to do first, finally forgot all about it. During that evening he and Mr Balscombe's nephew were out playing at billiards together, and Jack got himself rather the worse of liquor. Young Balscombe had to take him home and see him to bed. In the morning, Jack suddenly remembered the cheque-book, and on examining his pocket, found it all right where he had placed it the night before. When he got to the office, he handed it to Mr Balscombe, explaining how it came to be in his possession. Some days afterwards, Mr Balscombe discovered, on looking over his bank-book, that a sum of fifty pounds, for which he did not remember writing a cheque, had been withdrawn from his account. He called at once at the bank, and was shown a cheque for that amount purporting to be signed by himself, but which he at once detected to be a forgery. On examining his cheque-book, one cheque was found to have been torn away, counterfoil and all. He then remembered the occasion on which Jack had charge of the cheque-book as being the only time it was out of his possession. The cheque had been filled up in a strange name, but had been endorsed all right, and the money paid—so far as the teller of the bank could recollect—to a young lad of about eighteen or so, the morning Jack returned the book to Mr Balscombe. Jack was then questioned on the subject, but indignantly repudiated all knowledge of the forgery or of the cheque. He had forgotten all about the book, he said, till next morning, and consequently no one knew from him of his having it in his possession. He had not stolen it himself, and therefore the cheque must have been abstracted earlier. Mr Balscombe was furious. Although the amount was trifling, the crime was none the less.—You know the rest, Naomi. If the cheque was really taken out of the book that evening, it must have been done unknown to him, for Jack swears he is innocent, and I can believe him.

'And I also,' I said. 'But who could have done it?'

'I cannot tell,' said Mrs Farquharson sadly. 'Mr Balscombe is positive the cheque was not taken away before that day, and the very next morning it was cashed.—When Jack came here that afternoon,' she continued, 'I did not know him at first in his disguise. He told me then that Mr Bates the cashier had warned him to flee at once, for Mr Balscombe had ordered his arrest. The disguise he wore he had lately used in some private theatricals, and adopted it for safety. He was anxious to get out of the country, and until he could do so, we agreed that he should pass himself off as my niece, Doris Selwyn, for I had no acquaintances with whom I was on sufficiently intimate terms to have their daughters visiting me, as I mix so little in society.—You have never heard me mention Doris, Naomi; the subject is too painful. Three years ago she was to have been married; and on the very morning of the marriage day, her lover was killed in one of those dreadful railway acci-

dents. The shock turned her brain and nearly killed her, and she has been out of her mind ever since. The doctors, however, still hold out hope of her ultimate recovery.'

'Poor girl! Her lot has been a very sad one,' I said. 'I pity her from my heart.'

'Jack has no hope of proving his innocence,' added Mrs Farquharson after a few minutes. 'Mr Bates has been writing to him since he came here as to how matters stood, and he says his master is as wild at Jack as ever. It is curious, too, and he such a favourite with him till recently.'

I then related the incidents of the razor and the cigar-smoking which I had noticed. Mrs Farquharson could not help smiling, especially at the mention of the razor.

'I remember seeing the door ajar that morning,' she said, 'for I heard you come in, and was just ready to leave my room at the time. The Professor, who of course was in the secret, had been in Jack's room hunting for one of his books, which Jack had mislaid, and neglected to close the door after him. The draught from his own door when he closed it must have blown Jack's door further open. Jack is so careless, he had not observed it.'

More than a year slipped past. I was still with Mrs Farquharson. Mr Vanburgh, we had long ago heard, had landed at Sydney all right; and on the recommendation of Captain Gray, to whom he had confided the position in which he was placed, succeeded in obtaining a situation in a large mercantile firm, where he was doing well. He wrote home regularly to his uncle and aunt. I also had recently received a letter from him, the contents of which I need not divulge; suffice it to say that I wrote back in answer to his request, promising to go out to Sydney to him as soon as he could make a home for me; but this promise I was never called upon to fulfil, for shortly thereafter Jack himself was urgently sent for to come home by Mr Balscombe, with an offer of partnership. The mystery of the forged cheque had at last been cleared up. As the reader may have guessed, the culprit was no other than Henry Balscombe, Mr Balscombe's nephew. On his recovery from a violent attack of fever, with which he was seized about a year and a half after Jack's hurried departure, and during which attack his life was despaired of, he confessed all. He had been jealous of Jack's favouritism with his uncle. That night he took him home, in helping him off with his coat the cheque-book had fallen from his pocket to the floor. Henry Balscombe picked it up, recognised it as his uncle's, and a demon must have prompted him. He tore out one of the cheques and put back the book, filled the cheque up next morning, imitating his uncle's handwriting admirably, and finally sent his landlady's young son to the bank for the money, bidding him say, if any questions were asked, that he came from Mr Taylor, the name in which the cheque had been filled up. His plot was only too successful. He saw his rival dethroned; but he himself was far from happy, and over and over again had been on the point of confessing everything. Suspicion had never in the slightest degree attached to him, although it

was known he had been with Jack that night. It was supposed he could have had no object in purloining the cheque, even though he had known the cheque-book to have been in Jack's possession, as he had plenty of money of his own, while Jack was well known to be rather hard up.

At first, on hearing his confession, his uncle refused to have anything further to do with him. However, when Jack came home, which he did almost immediately, Mr Balscombe, on his urgent entreaty, agreed to overlook his nephew's misdeemeanour, and became reconciled to him. Henry Balscombe was very sincerely penitent; and Jack and he are now partners in business and the closest of friends. As for myself, I agree with Jack in thinking that after all there was a silver lining to the cloud, since but for that unfounded accusation, he would not have been forced to take refuge at the Manor, and I might never have been, as I am now, the happy wife of him whom first I knew as Mrs Farquharson's niece.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

REFERRING to the extraordinary amount of rain which fell over a large part of the country in June and July last, and which in many places left the hay rotting in the fields for want of sunshine, Lord Powerscourt made, in a letter to the *Times*, a most valuable suggestion. He reminded farmers that it is quite possible to preserve this wet hay, and to turn it into winter-food for cattle by making it into stacks of ensilage, without the necessity of building silos. The plan has been tried for some years in County Kildare with great success. The sodden hay is first of all piled into stacks and well trodden down by labourers, the addition of a layer of brewers' grains, if they can be had, half-way up or near the top of the stack, being very beneficial. The stacks are then covered with a roofing of rough weeds or fern, over which wires are laid with hanging weights on either side of the stack, to retain the necessary pressure, neglect of which precaution might lead to spontaneous combustion. The wet mass will of course heat to some extent, but it will not fire if well pressed. This valuable hint should be remembered by farmers, in case of the recurrence of such a wet season as we have lately experienced.

The Report of Mr Alan Cole on the state of the Honiton lace industry has recently been published as a parliamentary paper. Mr Cole, as Commissioner from the South Kensington Museum, has been visiting Honiton and other towns and villages in Devonshire where this industry has for many years been carried on. He found it in a declining state, the demand having considerably fallen off, which some of the workers attribute partly to unfair pressure exercised by foreign duties on English lace. He found, too, that the children, who used to learn the art as soon as they learned to read, were now no longer taught lace-making. He suggests that the industry is capable of very high development, and advises the delivery of lectures upon the subject, and the offering of various prizes, so as to stimulate the production of first-class designs.

On the coast of Devonshire, not far from Exeter, there is a village called Beer. At this place a tradition has long existed that one of the vessels belonging to the ill-fated Spanish Armada was wrecked in its bay, and that the Spaniards who were fortunate enough to escape from a watery grave settled and throve in the place. This is borne out by the circumstance that the physical characteristics of some of the good people of Beer differ widely from those of their neighbours, for they are swarthy, with black curly hair. There are also in the parish registers of Branscombe hard by—which records go back to the earlier part of the sixteenth century—names of distinctly Spanish origin. In further corroboration of the old tradition, two fishermen at Beer pulled up, entangled in their nets, a very old anchor, fashioned in an antique manner, and quite different from the anchors in use at the present time. These interesting particulars are contributed by the Rev. H. G. Tomkins, lately vicar of Branscombe, to the *Western Antiquary*.

There has lately been exhibited in London a new form of apparatus which has been designed to enable a man to breathe without difficulty in a smoke-laden or poisonous atmosphere. The contrivance consists of a respirator with a series of small filters attached, which contain respectively wet sponge, cotton-wool moistened with glycerine, and animal charcoal. This is fastened to the mouth; while the nose is protected by a clip to prevent inhalation by that organ, and the eyes by an ingeniously formed pair of vapour-proof spectacles. The arrangement enables a man to breathe in dense smoke without inconvenience. But in the case of an actually noxious atmosphere, such as the choke-damp of mines, an additional aid is necessary. This takes the form of a long india-rubber tube, which the explorer drags after him, the end of which remains in a purer atmosphere. It is obvious that such a tube would limit a man's movements considerably, while its accidental rupture would lead to a fatal result. It is probable, therefore, that the apparatus will be far more useful as a protection against smoke, and as such should form a valuable adjunct to the equipment of our fire brigades.

It has more than once been stated as the opinion of authorities upon the subject that the victims of cancer are rarely found among vegetarians, and that the disease is largely due to the carnivorous habits now in vogue. Surgeon-Major Hendley of Jeypore writes to the *British Medical Journal* to give a direct contradiction to this belief, at any rate so far as India is concerned. He states that at the Mayo Hospital in Jeypore during the last eight years there have been performed one hundred and two major operations in cases of cancer at that establishment, which is under his charge. Of these, forty-one were on the persons of meat-eaters, and sixty-one on strict vegetarians, whose religious scruples had forbidden them to touch flesh during the whole course of their lives. Some of the persons so treated belonged to a class so strict that they even eschewed the use of certain vegetables. The maximum age of the sufferers was seventy years, and the minimum eighteen years, the average age being forty-three.

For some occult reason, the domestic cat is extremely fond of the odour of valerian, and if

any person should be so insane as to wish to increase the visits of these nocturnal rambles to his garden, he need only scatter a few drops of the tincture of that root about the place to secure that end. An American journal describes how this fondness of cats for valerian has been put to profitable account. It was found desirable to determine the exact position of some leaks in a house-drain through which sewer gas escaped. An infusion of valerian was poured into the drain, and the cat was set to work. She speedily discovered three places which emitted the attractive odour, and the faults were remedied. A more usual plan, we may remark, is to use essence of peppermint, which can be readily detected without the aid of a cat.

The works of the Manchester Ship Canal continue to go on apace, and parliament is being asked to authorise certain alterations in the original plans which will both increase the efficiency of the water-way and reduce its cost. At a late meeting of the shareholders, the contractor stated that the forty-eight million cubic yards of excavation which had to be executed were being carried out at the rate of a million yards per month, and that he hoped before the end of the summer to double that amount per month.

We recently referred to the successful removal of a large hotel in America by haulage along an improvised railway track, and suggested that the experiment gave fresh interest to Captain Ead's scheme for constructing a Ship Railway across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico, and thus connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by the Gulf of Mexico. We now learn that the contract has been given for the construction of this curious international highway, and that the road is to be completed in five years. Vessels will be lifted and lowered at either end of the track in cradles moved by hydraulic power, and the haulage along the line will be carried out by locomotive steam-engines. Taking into account the financial difficulties connected with the Panama Canal enterprise, it is quite possible that Captain Ead's railway will be ready before the first ship makes its passage through M. de Lesseps' water-way.

Those of our readers who happen to be amateur photographers may be willing to help the Council of the Royal Meteorological Society in their appeal for photographs of lightning-flashes. The same request was made last year; and the pictures collected, while disclosing certain facts about lightning which before were quite unsuspected, do not justify the Committee formed for their consideration in making any generalisations. They require more photographs before this can be done. They point out that such pictures are very easily obtained. The work can only be done at night, and of course during a thunder-storm. The camera, after having been focused for a distant object, is left with lens uncovered and sensitive plate in position at a window, or in any other convenient situation, pointing towards the portion of the sky where lightning is occurring. The flash then registers itself on the plate without any further help from the operator. The sole drawback is that he must be prepared to sacrifice several plates before a serviceable result is obtained.

The suggestion that executions of criminals should be carried out by a more scientific and humane method than that now in vogue has been

before the public for many years; but the subject, important as it is, has not—possibly because of its repulsiveness—received that attention on the part of our legislators which it deserves. The State of New York has taken the lead in actually passing a Bill authorising the execution of criminals by means of the electric current, and this will come into effect on the first day of next year. A Commission was some time ago appointed by the New York legislature to investigate and report upon the subject; and many experiments have been made on the lower animals to test the most humane method by which the dread sentence of the law can be carried out. It now remains to be seen whether the impressive effect of death of such awful suddenness will serve to diminish capital offences, for this, after all, should be the main result to be looked for. The criminal will be seated in a chair, and the mere touch of a button will turn him into a corpse.

For many years the Committee of the Royal National Lifeboat Association have been desirous of discovering some effective means of propulsion for lifeboats, and they have at various times offered prizes for a design which should meet with their approval. Hitherto, these efforts have been without success, for although plans have been submitted to them by many competitors both English and foreign, none of these has been considered to fulfil the conditions required. The Committee have at last accepted the plan of a boat which has been designed by Messrs R. & H. Green of Blackwall, and with some modifications, a vessel constructed on that plan is to be built by the firm in question. It will have a length of fifty feet with a twelve-feet beam, and will be driven by a turbine wheel worked by a powerful engine. It is obvious that such a vessel is not intended to supersede entirely the lifeboats now in use; but for certain ports with harbour accommodation it will be invaluable.

It is now four years since a movement was begun for the establishment at Plymouth of a Marine Biological Laboratory on the pattern of those which are already at work at Naples and at other European stations. The building which was the result of this movement has now been formally opened, with a secured annual income of nine hundred pounds. This building will when complete give accommodation to twenty-four working naturalists, a library for whom is in course of formation. If our country seems somewhat behindhand in making this provision for biological research, the delay has at least been beneficial in enabling its promoters to profit by works of a similar nature which have been established both in Europe and America. The work of the Plymouth Institution will be to investigate the organisation, habits, and surroundings of the multitudes of living creatures which people the British seas; while their structure will be studied with the greatest care in physiological and chemical laboratories, which form part of the scheme. The results will, it is hoped, have most important bearings on the fishing industry, upon which many thousands of pounds have been from time to time expended by successive governments with but barren results. It is through the medium of an establishment such as that just opened at Plymouth that the subject can be attacked *de novo* and from a new standpoint. It will serve to give

that technical education to students from which, in all departments of knowledge, so much good arises. Although the City Companies, with that of the Fishmongers at their head, have contributed munificently to the foundation of this truly national scheme, money is still wanted for its completion and endowment. We cannot suggest to the wealthy any more worthy object for help; while those unable to give more substantial assistance would do well to aid the library with any duplicate copies of standard biological works which they may possess.

An ingenious adaptation of the rocket to life-saving purposes forms the subject of a German patent. The rocket has attached to it a cylinder full of oil, together with an explosive charge, which scatters the liquid over a wide area when the projectile reaches the end of its journey. From several experiments which have been conducted at sea with this new appliance, it is found that the rocket will travel nine hundred feet in the teeth of a gale. By firing several rockets in different directions from a storm-tossed ship, a large area of smooth water is secured to her. The use of oil at sea will certainly be rendered more efficient by the employment of such a means of throwing the liquid in the exact direction required.

Admiral Sir W. H. Grubbe has been conducting some experiments at the Cape of Good Hope on a new mode of signalling by means of the electric arc lamp, which is now carried by so many ships. The ray from such a lamp is cast upon the clouds, and is interrupted so as to form long or short flashes for the requirements of the Morse alphabet. Such signals can be seen and deciphered at a distance of fifty miles or more. The plan would seem to be especially useful at sea, and also on flat coasts, where the convexity of the earth would prevent the direct light of the lamp being observed. But it is not clear that it would be available except when clouds are present in the sky.

Mr Edison's Phonograph, at the time of its introduction a few years back, led to wonderful anticipations as to what it could bring about. We were then told that the voices of our public singers and orators could be reproduced by it at the will of the operator, and that the dying testator need no longer leave a document subject to dispute, for the phonograph would register his wishes in actual speech, which could be reheard, if necessary, years after he had turned into dust. These sanguine hopes were destined to disappointment. The instrument, marvellous as it was as a triumph of acoustical science, and valuable as it proved to be in demonstrating certain laws, was, beyond these uses, a mere curious toy. But its diligent inventor did not mean that it should ever remain so. Although his attention has been occupied of late years in other directions, and notably in perfecting various aids to electric lighting, he has not forgotten the phonograph. He has now produced it in a much improved form, and there is every reason to suppose that the instrument will be serviceable in many ways. Among its possible uses it will serve as a model to orators, for it will repeat exactly, and as often as required, the speech conveyed to it by an accomplished speaker. It is evident, too, that it would in like manner be wonderfully useful in instructing a student of lan-

guages in the art of correct pronunciation. When we add that this preserved speech can be sent through the ordinary post, it will be evident that the phonograph has before it a wide field of usefulness.

It seems to be determined that America is to take the lead in astronomy, so far as the construction of enormous telescopes is concerned. The vast instrument at the Lick Observatory, which has but recently been made over to the University of California, has already a rival in the shape of a telescope of twenty-inch aperture, which is to be constructed at Denver, by the munificence of Mr H. B. Chamberlain of that city. Although this telescope is not so large as the one at Mount Hamilton, already alluded to, it will have the advantage of standing on a site five thousand feet above the sea-level, or eight hundred feet higher than the Lick telescope. It remains to be seen whether these vast instruments will do as much as their sanguine projectors anticipate. The greatest astronomical discoveries were made with apparatus so faulty in construction that it would in these days have no intrinsic value whatever. With such an instrument, Galileo saw that Venus had phases like the moon, and so corroborated the truth of the Copernican theory of the universe.

An ingenious form of meter was brought before a recent meeting of the Gas Institute by its inventor, Mr Brownhill. It is known as the 'Pre-payment Gas-meter,' for it works on the principle of the automatic drop-coin machines which are now so common. A penny dropped into it, and a pennyworth of gas will be given out. The contrivance really consists of a box attachment which can be adjusted to any form of meter new or old. It is calculated that it will prove of great service in small households, where quarterly payments represent financial difficulties of no mean kind, and where the possibility of purchasing small quantities of petroleum tempts families to adopt a far more dangerous form of illumination. For sub-tenancies in large premises the plan will prove very useful, as it will also in the case of buildings which are let by the evening for entertainments. On the other hand, the householder will have to guard his gas-meter as jealously as he does his spoons. He will no longer be able to relegate it to a corner in his kitchen or scullery, but must place it in a more protected situation under his own control.

MY INHERITANCE.

'If Mr Frank Heathcote will call on Messrs Pounce, Parchment, & Co., Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, he will hear of something to his advantage.' This brief note in a legal hand astonished me, the above-named Frank Heathcote, one morning on sitting down to a modest breakfast. To hear of *anything* to my advantage was surprising and delightful, as I was unfortunately one of the unemployed, with little expectation of something turning up.

An hour or two later saw me searching in Lincoln's Inn for the offices of Pounce & Co. On finding the house, I duly presented myself. Mr Pounce had not arrived; but would I step in and see Mr Parchment? The lawyer did not belie his name, for I have seldom seen so

dry and yellow looking a man. On presenting my note, Mr Parchment surveyed me in silence for a few minutes.

'So you are the nephew of the late Mr Horace Oldcastle, young gentleman, I presume?'

I replied I had that honour.

'Allow me to congratulate you on your good fortune,' said the lawyer with a lurking smile.

Opening a desk, he produced the copy of a will, by which my lamented uncle left me Hernmere Place, an old Hall in Sussex, on condition that I should occupy it.

'Pray, sir,' said I, 'can you give me any information respecting this property?' for, truth to tell, my uncle had never invited me to see him, and I had only an indistinct recollection of the old gentleman.

'The Hall,' replied the lawyer, 'is an interesting place from an artist's point of view; but the situation is just a trifle secluded; and the building is, I am afraid, a little out of repair; but a small outlay would render it habitable, and doubtless you will soon get over the loneliness.'

Being furnished with the necessary credentials, and agreeable to the terms of the will, I set out for Sussex. Upon inquiry, I found that Hernmere Place was some five or six miles from the nearest railway station; so, having my effects packed in a knapsack, I thought I might as well walk that distance. The way lay along a beautiful bend of the South Downs. The season was spring, and the cool breeze that came sweeping over the hills was most exhilarating and laden with perfume. After climbing a long gradual ascent that wound round a spur of the Downs, I reached the summit. The view that opened out was wild and splendid. Long slopes of flower-spangled turf alternated with dense patches of furze; while on every side the ground rose and fell in wave-like swells. Near at hand, a shepherd was watching a large flock of sheep, the tinkling of whose bells sounded quite musical. In the far distance the sea sparkled under the keen bright sky. Overhead, light fleecy clouds floated peacefully, while two larks made melody.

On asking the shepherd the way to Hernmere Place, he directed me in the quaint dialect of the district. Keeping his directions in view, I soon came to the rusty gates of Hernmere Place. The house was of brick, in the Tudor style, and, from the signs of decay, evidently of great age. A moss-covered buttressed wall extended on both sides of the gate and shut in the front of the house completely.

Entering, I came to what had once been the lawn, but was now a wilderness of weeds. The path leading to the Hall door was damp and grass-grown; and the aspect of the whole place was picturesque, but melancholy. There was no sign of life or welcome in the old house, many of the window shutters being closed. The walls were blotched and lichen-covered, and in some places long straggling branches of ivy hung in neglected festoons. Going round the house, I came to a tangled and overgrown garden, at the farther side of which, through an open wicket, I could make out an old man busy with a small patch of vegetables. On presenting myself to this venerable person, who was the custodian, Griggs by name, I was welcomed in a somewhat peculiar manner. My new acquaintance first rummaged in the pocket

of his coat, which lay on a wheelbarrow, and produced an antique pair of spectacles, which he presently adjusted. Looking me very attentively in the face for some time, he at length said: 'You be main loike old Muster Oldcastle. I moind him well when he was as young as you.—But walk in, sir, and my missus will get you a bit of summat to eat.' Putting on his coat, the old fellow hobbled up the steps leading to the garden-door of the house.

Inside, the signs of age were if anything more apparent. The old wainscoted passage was hung with cobwebs, and our footsteps echoed loudly along the stone floor. Passing up a twisted staircase, we entered a small room on the first floor.

'This was the room in which your uncle spent most of his time, and it was here he died,' said Griggs.

I gazed around, and felt a sense of dread creep over me. The walls were panelled with dark oak; along one side was an old cabinet, black with age, and on a shelf above it was arranged a small collection of ancient-looking books. Close to the window was a writing-table, on which stood an old desk. A few high-backed chairs were placed by the walls, and some ancestral portraits looked down with eyes that seemed to follow my every movement. By the fireplace stood a capacious armchair, shut in with an old screen covered with stamped leather.

The view from the window was very striking. Beyond the garden lay a large pool of water, surrounded by drooping trees and bushes, and fringed with a tangled growth of rank weeds. The afternoon had become suddenly overcast, and dense masses of cloud were rolling up; while a cold wind ruffled the surface of the water and tossed about the trees growing around. Beyond the pool was a flat marshy valley, on the opposite side of which a range of hills shut in the view.

Meanwhile Mrs Griggs, an ancient dame of gnarled and knotted aspect, was endeavouring to make a fire blaze in the rusty grate. Accomplishing this, in course of time a plain meal was set before me, and I was left in peace to discuss it. The walk having given me a fine appetite, I fell to, nothing loth. When I had finished, I made a closer inspection of the contents of the room. A cupboard in the wall was filled with old lumber of various descriptions. Opening the cabinet with one of the keys given to me by the lawyer, I found drawers filled with old accounts done up in a methodical manner, a pair of silver-mounted pistols of a bygone date, some odds and ends of curiosities, but nothing of any special interest or value. At length I opened a small drawer with the smallest key of the bunch, and took out a sealed packet, which was addressed to me. Unfastening it eagerly, I found it to contain a miniature of a lady and child, and also a short letter, which ran as follows:

NEPHEW FRANK—I leave you the old house, which has been in our family since it was built. Though it is desolate enough now, it once echoed the voices of those very dear to me. See that you do not suffer anything to be destroyed. I parted in anger with your mother, my only sister; but now would prove if you, the only remaining

descendant of the old house, are worthy to bring back its former state. Patience and perseverance are necessary; but if you strive, you will in the end be rewarded. My blessing rest on you, if you obey.

HORACE OLDCASTLE.

After reading the letter several times, I rang for old Griggs, to try to get some information about my uncle.

'He were a close man, were Muster Oldcastle,' said he, 'living here by himself since his wife and child died years ago. He left the old place exactly as it was when they were alive, and could not bear to see strangers. My idea is that the trouble made him a bit queer. He caused the west wing to be shut up; and they do say as some of the old Oldcastles walks there. I never see any of 'em; but there's strange noises o' noights.'

I made an inspection of the house, and pitched upon a bedroom next to my uncle's study as being most convenient. Mrs Griggs lit a fire there, and bringing in some bedclothes, made the room in a little while as comfortable as circumstances would permit. The wind had now increased to a gale, and heavy drops of rain dashed against the window. Returning to my uncle's study, I settled myself before the fire to enjoy a snug evening before turning in for the night. The old couple, who occupied some rooms in a distant part of the house, having retired, I felt myself cut off from the world. A pair of candles flickered on the table, and the changeful light of the fire lit up and threw into gloom the dark walls and furniture. Taking a book, I was soon deep in its pages. It was an old collection of legends and romances of Spain. One tale took my fancy. It related how a certain Don Alfonso made a search in the Alhambra in Granada, and how, after many strange adventures, at length was successful in breaking the charm that held a great treasure guarded by enchanted Moors, and became possessed of the whole. I became deeply interested in the old-world legends. After a while I closed the book, and leaning back in my chair, fell into a brown-study. Suddenly I became aware of a strange thing. An old man, whom I knew to be my uncle, though I had only seen him once, years ago, was standing by the cabinet, looking intently at the books on the shelf. I stared at him with all my eyes, and yet, though full of amazement, I felt no fear. After a short time he took down a book, opened it, and seemed to make a mark inside. He then replaced it, and took down the next, and, by slow degrees, went through most of the library. Suddenly, I heard a loud knock at the door, and breaking the spell that held me, I started up and confronted Mrs Griggs. Turning to the cabinet, I saw no one there; the books were on the shelf, and I noticed the empty space from which I had taken the Spanish legends. For a time I could do nothing but stare at Mrs Griggs, who kept courtesying and asking me if I would take any supper. Asking her if any one was in the house except her husband, she said no, and that the door had been locked for more than an hour.

Dismissing the old woman with a good-night, I seated myself by the fire, and on thinking quietly over the strange event, came to the conclusion that I must have fallen asleep and dreamt it.

A sudden thought struck me that perhaps I might find something in the books about which my uncle had seemed so busy. Looking at the backs, I saw that each book was marked with a letter stamped in gold under the title. Beginning at the left-hand volume, which was marked A, each was marked in alphabetical order, ending with the last volume Z. Looking over the pages of the first volume, I could find nothing written in it, the only mark being a red cross on one of the leaves. Reading this particular part threw no light on the mystery, as the text related to legal matters about the possession of land. Having no more relish for reading that night, I retired to my bed in the next room, and soon forgot my uncle in a sound sleep.

In the morning I rose early, greatly refreshed, and strolled out to view my domain. The sun shone brightly, and it was impossible to feel gloomy under the clear fresh sky, with the sweet breeze playing over the peaceful hills. Returning, after a short walk, to breakfast, I then set myself to consider my position and arrange matters as to my new mode of life. I had been left, some few years back, with an allowance which barely sufficed to keep me, but had unfortunately been put to no profession. The outlook was not promising, and I did not feel very hopeful regarding my future. To try and cheer myself up, I made a tour over the old house. The rooms were mostly in a state of decay; but the furniture and decorations, in spite of the ravages of time, were handsome, and showed that my ancestors kept great state at one time. My uncle was reputed to have been very rich, but what he did with his money was a mystery, for he had only left some paltry legacies. The west wing of the house had been shut up for years, in consequence of some dreadful occurrence which had happened there. I did not care to investigate the gloomy chambers.

As time went on, I became more resigned to my new home, but still found it very dull; and my occupations being so limited, the days dragged slowly by. I made a few acquaintances, but found no congenial companion to fill up my empty hours. Spring blossomed into summer, and summer, with all its beauty, mellowed into autumn, when an event occurred which turned the current of my life.

One morning in September I received a letter from Tom Saxon, an old chum and schoolfellow, saying he would like to spend a few weeks with me in Sussex, if agreeable. I was delighted for two reasons: because Tom was a good fellow; and because Tom's pretty sister Clara and I were waiting till my prospects would entitle me to hope for a favourable reception at the hands of Mr Saxon senior. I was in a fever of impatience to meet Tom. I went to the station long before the train was due, and when it did come in, I could have rushed into his arms. After dinner our time was taken up with questions and answers on both sides.

'By-the-bye, Frank,' said Tom suddenly, 'you mentioned something strange about your first night here—connected with your uncle. Tell me all about it.'

He listened attentively whilst I related my dream. When I had finished, he rose, and going to the cabinet, took one of the books from the

shelf. He looked over it carefully, and then inspected more of the volumes. When he had spent some time in this way, he came back to the fire with a disappointed look.

'Can't make anything out of the books,' said he, standing with his back to the blaze and with his hands thrust deep in his pockets, 'except that the old boy had a peculiar fancy to letter the backs of the volumes with the alphabet instead of numbering them. Some of the pages are marked with a red cross, but the matters on them don't appear to throw any light on the subject.'

After giving vent to his feelings in several vigorous pulls at his pipe, Tom fixed his eyes thoughtfully on the old desk on the table. 'This seems a curious desk. Perhaps you may have overlooked some clue to the mystery contained in it. Would you mind me looking into it?'

I opened the desk, but we could find nothing of consequence in it.

'You haven't looked in the secret drawer,' said Tom. 'All desks have one. Let me try my hand.' Suiting the action to the word, he gave the bottom of the desk such a blow that a small compartment which had escaped my notice flew open, and something fell with a ringing sound on the floor. Tom uttered a satisfied sound, and picked up a key of curious and antique workmanship. 'This will most likely unlock the mystery, since your uncle seems to have put it away so carefully.'

We started on a voyage of discovery over the old house. Many of the cupboards and boxes were unlocked; and those which were fastened could be opened by some of the keys with which the lawyer had furnished me. After a long hunt, we gave the thing up as a bad job. Tired out, we retired to rest, and forgot our disappointment in sleep.

Next morning, after breakfast, Tom commenced a sketch of the front of the mansion, at which he worked hard till dinner-time. In the afternoon we went for a walk. Thus a week went by, varied only by a little fishing in the pool. The picture was finished, and another begun. One afternoon, Tom said he should like to have another shy at the mysterious library. 'I have been thinking it over all the week, and I fancy I have made a discovery. You will notice, on looking through the books carefully, only one page in each is marked, and that all the marks occur in the first score or so of leaves in each volume. Now, what set me thinking was the whim of your uncle having the alphabet marked on the backs of the books. This one marked A is crossed under the number of page 19; the next book, B, under number 5; C, under number 1; D, under number 18; E, under number 3; and F under number 8. Now, taking the numbers of the pages to represent corresponding letters of the alphabet, we get the word SEARCH. I haven't got any further yet, but we must work it out together.'

I jumped up and seized Tom's hand. 'You have hit it now for certain, my dear fellow.'

'Don't be premature. It may only turn out a mare's-nest after all. However, here goes to get at the root of the matter.'

Working eagerly yet carefully through all the volumes, we got the following results. Numbers

of pages marked with a red cross, and the corresponding letters:

19, 5, 1, 18, 3, 8, 3, 1, 18, 5, 6, 21, 12, 12, 25,
S E A R C H C A R E F U L L Y

20, 8, 5, 7, 15, 12, 4, 18, 15, 15, 13.
T H E G O L D R O O M.

'Well,' said Tom, when we had made out the above, 'this certainly looks like a find. Let us set about examining this same Gold Room at once.'

There was a chamber on the second floor of the house having the walls covered with leather, on which a great number of elaborate designs were stamped in gold; hence its name. We hurried to this room and set to work to try and discover the secret. There was scarcely any furniture; what there was, we carefully examined, but to no purpose.

'Never say die,' said Tom. 'We must now try the walls.' He commenced tapping and feeling in all the odd corners; went into a cupboard, tried the window-seats; and, as a last resource, turned his attention to the chimney-piece, which was very large and highly carved. The mantel was high, and projected a good way over the hearth. The panels on either side were ornamented with grotesque figures cut in bold relief. Tom looked up the chimney, rapped the wood-work, and pried into each little nook. I was similarly engaged, but with no success. An exclamation from Tom caused me to rush to his side, when I saw him pushing at a small grotesque head enclosed in a wreath of leaves and flowers. 'This seems to give a little, Frank,' said he; and exerting his whole strength, the projection sank into the panel, which slid a little to one side and disclosed a dark opening.

'Stop here a moment, Tom,' said I, highly excited, 'while I get a light. We must be on the eve of a great discovery.' Hurrying down-stairs, I got old Griggs to light a lantern; and snatching up a chisel and a hammer, made my way back as fast as I could.

We forced the panel far enough to allow us to enter, and groped our way along a dark, musty-smelling passage, only feebly illuminated by the lantern. Stumbling along in what seemed nearly one direction, we came to a steep flight of stairs, evidently built in the thickness of the wall, and ending in a small door, at which we stopped. Feeling no latch, we gave a simultaneous heave, and bursting the obstacle, fell forward into a room. Recovering ourselves, we searched about on the floor for the lantern, which we discovered in a crushed condition, and the light extinguished.

'Here's a pretty go!' cried Tom. 'It's so dark we can't find anything. One of us had better go back and fetch a light.' I volunteered to stay. Tom felt his way slowly down the stairs, and after what seemed an age, returned with a candle and a box of matches.

'I wouldn't trouble Griggs,' said he. 'I got these from my bedroom, as we had better manage this business quietly by ourselves.'

We gazed about in a bewildered way on the room we had discovered. It seemed to be close under the roof, and, from the direction of the

passage, was evidently in the west wing of the house. The walls and floor were covered with dust; and the little air the place contained came through a small grating over the top of the door. In one corner, fastened to the floor by strong iron clamps, was a ponderous-looking oak chest, girt with bands of iron, studded with nails, and fastened with a curiously ornamented lock.

'I have it!' said Tom. 'That curious key we found in the desk will very likely fit this lock; the ornamentation seems very similar in design.'

In a few minutes I returned with the key, and after a vigorous wrench, managed to unlock the chest. We pushed open the heavy lid; and a perfect mine of wealth was disclosed to us. My uncle must have had an old-fashioned prejudice against banks, for here was evidently the hoarded riches of years, stowed away in a secret chamber, and further protected by being in the part of the house supposed to be haunted. In the chest we also found a letter, addressed to me:

DEAR NEPHEW—If you find this money, as I believe you will, take it as the reward for obeying my wishes. As the Hall has been in our family since its foundation, I solemnly charge you to adopt the name of Oldcastle; and may the old line be revived in you.—Your loving uncle,
HORACE OLDCASTLE.

This letter was dated only a few weeks before my uncle's death; and it seemed strange and sad to be hearing, as it were, the words of a dead man in that dark and ghostly chamber.

With the help of Tom I was soon placed on a friendly footing with his father, and the dreariness of the past was forgotten in the light that beamed from Clara's dear eyes.

We had a regular cleaning and polishing up of Hernmere Place; the west wing was thrown open to the light of day; and a few months after saw Clara enthroned as mistress of the old Hall.

My uncle has never again visited me in my dreams, and this I take to be a proof of his satisfaction with the way in which I have carried out his wishes.

SECURITE.

'Securite' is the name given to an explosive recently discovered by Herr Schoeneweg, an eminent German chemist, which has been more particularly introduced for use in mines liable to firedamp, the speciality of the new product being that no flame is generated when the charge is exploded. In appearance, securite is a granulated powder, possessing a light yellow colour, and has an odour resembling that of bitter almonds. It cannot be ignited by friction, blow, or jar; hence all risk in transport or storage is entirely obviated. Explosion can only be produced by strong caps of one gramme of fulminate of mercury, and then no flame being given off, accidents arising from the presence of firedamp or coal-dust are rendered impossible.

To put this fact beyond question, a series of severe tests has been carried out with securite. It has been fired in specially prepared tubes, and in contact with firedamp and coal-dust, under circumstances which would, in the ordinary course of everyday working, have been in the highest

degree dangerous. In these experiments the compound has acquitted itself to the satisfaction of the experimenters, and in no case has explosion of the firedamp or coal-dust ensued. To carry the test still further, the gallery of a pit was rendered very foul by temporarily stopping the ventilating current; and after the atmosphere had become highly charged with firedamp, several shots of securite were fired: no flame resulted; and consequently, accidents, which must have resulted with any other explosive, were entirely averted. The gases arising from the explosion of securite are small in volume, and harmless to the health of persons inhaling them.

With respect to cost, it is stated that securite can be placed on the market at a cheaper rate than dynamite, whilst in point of strength it is but little inferior to that explosive. Securite is readily manufactured, the process occupying, according to its inventor, but one hour; whilst no deterioration results on storage, a desideratum of by no means minor import. The manufacture is vigorously carried on in Germany, and steps are being taken to establish similar works in this country.

When it is pointed out that the estimated amount of coal raised annually in Great Britain is one hundred and seventy million tons, giving employment to some half-million miners, enough has been said to indicate how vast a field in this branch of our industries alone lies open to the manufacturers of a safe explosive.

IN VAIN.

WE meet, although we know 'tis vain;
Each meeting leaves a burning pain—
But still we pray to meet again,
And vainly long the more.
Yet when it comes, our words are none:
Hearts as on fire, lips turned to stone;
Each meeting leaves us—when alone—
More hopeless than before.

Why do we not for ever part,
Nor let each wretched struggling heart
Though sore with unavailing smart,
Still linger o'er the flame?
Ah me! the love that grows with years,
The love that bears, not hopes, but fears,
The ceaseless fount of bitter tears,
Still lives, till death, the same.

R. G. D.

** TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
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THE FORTH BRIDGE.

BY BENJAMIN BAKER, C.E.

TWENTY-THREE years ago Parliamentary powers were obtained by the North British Railway Company to construct a bridge across the Firth of Tay, and a bridge across the Firth of Forth, for the purpose of 'securing for the North British, Great Northern, North-Eastern, and Midland Railways, a fair share of the through-traffic between England and the north of Scotland, hitherto practically monopolised by the London and North-Western and Caledonian Railways.' As all the world knows, the original Tay Bridge was constructed and opened for traffic in May 1878; blown down with the loss of seventy-five lives in December 1879; re-constructed, and again opened for traffic in June of last year. The Forth Bridge authorised by the twenty-three-year-old Act of Parliament was to have crossed the Forth at a point five miles above Queensferry where the water was shallow; but the mud proving to be of practically unlimited depth, the project was of necessity abandoned, and another point of crossing selected. This was found at Queensferry, where the island of Inchgarvie stands as a stepping-stone in the middle of the channel, leaving, however, a depth of over 200 feet of water on either side—too deep for intermediate piers—and consequently a bridge having two openings of the unprecedented span of 1700 feet became a necessity, and Parliamentary powers were obtained for its construction fifteen years ago.

Owing to the fall of the Tay Bridge, the original design for the Forth Bridge on the suspension principle was abandoned, and the far more rigid cantilever girder design of Messrs Fowler and Baker was substituted. Operations were commenced in the spring of 1883 by the establishment of large bridge-building works at Queensferry, with special appliances and machines of a novel character adapted to the bending, planing, drilling, and riveting of the 50,000 tons of steel plates and bars required for the superstructure of the great

Bridge. The work since then has been continuously pressed on by day and by night, and the termination of the arduous labours of the engineers and contractors is now within measurable distance, for it is anticipated that the autumn of next year will see the completion of the Bridge.

Since the designs of the Forth Bridge were published, many cantilever bridges have been built in America and elsewhere, and the term cantilever has thus become familiar to the public. Such was not the case originally, and one of the first questions asked by visitors to the Forth Bridge was, 'What is a cantilever bridge?' The word 'cantilever' is, as will be shown in Dr Murray's new English Dictionary, several hundred years old. It means simply a bracket or projecting arm; and a cantilever bridge consists of two such brackets, and a central beam connecting the two ends. When lecturing recently at the Royal Institution, I exhibited what might be termed a living model of the Forth Bridge, arranged as follows: Two men sitting on chairs extended their arms and supported the same by grasping sticks butting against the chairs. This represented the two double cantilevers. The central beam was represented by a short stick slung from the near hands of the two men, and the anchorages of the cantilevers by ropes extending from the other hands of the men to a couple of piles of bricks. When stresses were brought to bear on this system by a load on the central beam, the men's arms and the anchorage ropes came into tension, and the sticks and the chair-legs into compression. In the Forth Bridge it is to be imagined that the chairs are placed a third of a mile apart; that the men's heads are 340 feet above the ground; that the pull on each arm is about 4000 tons, the thrust on each stick over 6000 tons, and the weight on the legs of the chair about 25,000 tons.

The advantages of the cantilever system of construction as regards simplicity and rigidity were appreciated by the Chinese hundreds of years ago, and many timber structures on that

principle are still to be found. No important metallic structure of the kind was, however, in existence previous to the publishing of the designs of the Forth Bridge. The advantages of the system under the conditions found at the Queensferry crossing are enormous. Thus, as the superstructure can be erected without scaffolding, it is immaterial whether the water be two feet or two hundred feet deep. Again, as the cantilevers are built by commencing with the work over the piers, and adding successive portions of steel-work on each side until the cantilevers project the required distance, there is perfect solidity at all stages of the erection, and there are none of those periods of risk and anxiety which occur when girders are built on temporary staging, or are floated into position on pontoons, or otherwise erected. All of the anticipated advantages of the system have been fully realised in the case of the Forth Bridge, for at the present moment the cantilevers project about half their full length over the sea; upwards of 28,000 tons of steel-work have been erected, and not a single plate or bar has been lost or injured in any way during the wildest gales.

At no period of the operations has the Forth Bridge presented greater features of novelty and interest to its thousands of visitors than at present; nevertheless, there were times in the past when works now hidden and forgotten called for all the vigilance and skill of the engineers and contractors. Such were the pier-works at Inchgarvie and South Queensferry. Each of these piers consists of four columns of concrete and masonry, about seventy feet in diameter, founded on rock or boulder clay at depths up to ninety feet below high-water. The usual way in this country of building such piers is to enclose the site within cofferdams and pump out the water. In such a stormy estuary as the Forth this could not be done, so the piers were founded on enormous diving-bells, seventy feet in diameter, the masonry being built on the top of the bells, and the men working within the same, excavating the earth and passing it through air-locks into the open air, and so, by a process of undercutting, sinking the pier like a huge pile through the soft soil to a solid substratum. Powerful air-pumps kept the diving-bells charged with compressed air, by which means the water was excluded, and the men worked in a brilliantly lighted chamber seventy feet in diameter, at a depth of ninety feet below sea-level, as readily as on dry land. Of course it is not given to every one to work with comfort in a place where the barometer stands as high as one hundred and twenty inches, which it did in the Inchgarvie diving-bell caissons. One of the first sensations in passing from the ordinary atmospheric pressure into compressed air is a painful pressure on the drums of the ears, which is relieved by swallowing. A long continuance in a high pressure leads to paralysis of the nerves, the workmen walk with difficult step and a slight

stoop, violent cramps and death often supervene. When Glaisher and Coxwell made their high balloon ascent in 1862, the barometer fell to seven and a half inches, and temporary paralysis of the nerves then occurred; but the matter for surprise is rather that the human organism should sustain at all such wide ranges of atmospheric pressure as from seven and a half inches to one hundred and twenty inches of mercury, than that some amount of personal inconvenience or danger should result from it.

When the masonry piers had been securely founded in the manner described on the rock, or hardly less firm boulder clay forming the bed of the Forth, the erection of the steel superstructure was commenced. Over the piers are lofty steel towers made of four columns 12 feet in diameter and 340 feet high, bound together in all directions to resist wind-storms and the forces resulting from the passage of the heaviest and fastest trains on the East Coast route. An ascent to the top of these towers, at the height of the golden cross on the dome of St Paul's Cathedral, is an event not soon forgotten. Hundreds of visitors, men of science of all nations, turbaned Indian princes, and even venturesome young ladies have done it, and all alike have been impressed by the sublimity of the scene. Standing on the edge of the top platform and glancing down at the workmen hanging in mid-air by fine wire ropes, at the steam-barges manœuvring below laden with portions of the structure, the vessels of all classes at anchor or sailing, and the whole grand panorama of the Firth of Forth, the scene recalls vividly that passage in *King Lear* where Edgar leads Gloucester to the edge of the cliff:

Stand still.—How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air

Show scarce so gross as beetles.

Experience has shown that in a very short time workmen lose all sense of the height at which they are working, and that they can not only glance down, but climb down without any feeling of dizziness.

The steel towers being built, the next step was to commence the erection of the great cantilevers. These each project 680 feet from the towers over the sea, and consist of a curved bottom member, shaped like a fishing-rod, tapering from twelve feet diameter at the butt to five feet diameter at the end, connected by diagonal bracing to an inclined top member of lattice construction. This massive steel-work is erected without scaffolding by powerful steam cranes and winches carried by the Bridge itself.

Everything in connection with the Forth Bridge except the rolling of the steel plates has been done on the spot, and this has necessitated the establishment at the little burgh of Queensferry of one of the largest bridge-building works in the kingdom, capable of turning out 1500 tons of finished girder-work every month. More than half a million sterling has been expended in machinery, buildings, railways, steamboats, and

other plant. The number of men employed on the works has at times been as high as 4300. Much of the work at the Forth Bridge requires men possessed of great coolness, courage, and hardi-ness. Nervousness would simply induce an acci-ent, and consequently when crawling along narrow planks or angle bars with a clear drop of three or four hundred feet below them, the men have to dismiss from their minds all ideas of what students of dynamics call the motion of a falling body under the unbalanced action of its own weight. Unfortunately, men have fallen from all heights on to the lower staging, and into the sea; but having reference to the novelty and difficulty of the work, the number of accidents has been singularly small. The works have been carried on under the personal direction of Sir John Fowler, K.C.M.G., and Mr Benjamin Baker, the engineers, and Mr William Arrol, the chief contractor, aided by a large staff of clever and zealous assistants.

It must be admitted on all hands that the great Forth Bridge will be the crowning work of the railway system in this country, and that nothing of the kind of equal importance can reasonably be expected to follow it. It will also be admitted that it would be difficult to exaggerate the benefits which railways have conferred upon this country. At the beginning of the century, when Mr Pitt wanted a few millions, the terms he offered were one hundred and fifty-seven pounds of three per cents. for one hundred sovereigns. We have lately seen Mr Goschen's successful conversion of the National Debt into a two and three-quarter per cent. stock, and there is little doubt that the altered conditions are largely due to the changes wrought by the development of the railway system. When, therefore, it is asked whether the end will justify the means, and whether the saving in time and distance will pay for the heavy expenditure on the Forth Bridge, the obvious answer is that time is becoming more and more a priceless commodity, and that the quickest route, irrespective of almost all other considerations, will carry the traffic and earn the money. The opening of the Forth Bridge will in all probability lead to a noteworthy acceleration of the already fast running of the northern expresses. That such is practicable is proved by actual experience both in this country and America. A speed of 75 miles is often attained on the Great Northern Railway, and it was also attained two years ago on the New York Central Railway, when an average speed of 65½ miles an hour was maintained for the whole distance of 149 miles between Syracuse and Rochester. Sooner or later, as railway managers have found out to their cost, whatever can be done to improve the train service has to be done, and as the construction of the Forth Bridge has demonstrated the practicability of building railway bridges of great span, New Yorkers have ceased to be content with ferry-boats, and demand the substitution of a bridge across the Hudson. Two such projects are before the public—one a bridge having two spans of 1600 feet each, and another with a single span of 2800 feet. No further evidence is required of the great influence which the Forth Bridge will exercise on the railways of the future; for it is already clearly shown that the Forth Bridge, great work though it be, is but

the pioneer of still greater works in countries whose physical features and commercial require-ments demand the building of railway bridges of great span.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAP. XLIII.—AT MONTE CARLO.

HUGH had not had the carriage entirely to himself all the way; a stranger got in with him at Mentone station. But so absorbed was Hugh in his own thoughts that he hardly noticed the new-comer's presence. Full of Elsie and drunk with joy, he had utterly forgotten the man's very existence more than once. Crying and laughing by turns as he went, he must have impressed the stranger almost like a madman. He had smiled and frowned and chuckled to himself, exactly as if he had been quite alone; and though he saw occasionally, with a careless glee, that the stranger leaned back nervously in his seat and seemed to shrink away from him, as if in bodily fear, he scarcely troubled his head at all about so insignificant and unimportant a person. His soul was all engrossed with Elsie. What was a casual foreigner to him, with Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, recovered?

The Casino gardens were already filled with loungers and children—gamblers' children, in gay Parisian dresses—but the gaming-rooms themselves were not yet open. Hugh, who had come there half by accident, for want of somewhere better to go to, and who meant to return to San Remo by the first train, strolled casually without any thought to a seat on the terrace. Preoccupied as he was, the loveliness of the place nevertheless took him fairly by surprise. His poet's soul lay open to its beauty. He had never visited Monte Carlo before; and even now he had merely mentioned the name at random as the first that occurred to him when he went to take his ticket at the San Remo booking-office. He had stumbled upon it wholly by chance. But he was glad he had come; it was all so lovely. The smiling aspect of the spot took his breath away with wonder. And the peaceful air of all that blue bay soothed somewhat his feverish excitement at the momentous discovery that Elsie, his Elsie, was still living.

He gazed around him with serene delight. This was indeed a day of joyful surprises. The whole place looked more like a scene in fairyland in full pantomime time than like a prosaic bit of this workaday world of ours. Lovely by nature, that exquisite spot—the fairest, perhaps, in all Europe—has been made still lovelier by all the resources of human art. From the water's edge, terraces of luscious tropical vegetation rise one after another in successive steps towards the grand façade of the gleaming Casino, divided from one another by parapets of marble balustrades, and connected together from place to place by broad flights of Florentine staircases. Fantastic clusters of palms and aloes, their base girt round with rare exotic flowers, thrust themselves cunningly into the foreground of every beautiful view, so that the visitor looks out upon the bay and the mountains through artistic vistas deftly arranged in the very spot where a Tuscan

painter's exuberant fancy would have wished to set them for scenic effect. To Warren Relf, to be sure, Monte Carlo seemed always too meretriciously obtrusive to deserve his pencil; but to Hugh Massinger's more gorgeous oriental taste it revealed itself at once in brilliant colours as a dream of beauty and a glimpse of Paradise.

He looked away next to the nearer foreground. The dreamland of Monte Carlo floated in morning lights before his enchanted eyes. The great and splendid turreted Casino, the exquisite green lawns and gardens, the brilliant rows of shops and cafés, the picturesque villas dotted up and down the smooth and English-looking sward, the Italian terraces with their marble steps, the glorious luxuriance of waving palm-trees, massive agaves, thick clustering yucca blossoms, and heavy breadths of tropical foliage—all alike fired and delighted his poetical nature. The bright blue of Mediterranean seas, the dazzling white of Mediterranean sunshine, the brilliant russet of Mediterranean roofs, soothed and charmed his too exalted mood. He needed repose, beauty, and nature. He looked at his watch and consulted the little local time-table he had bought at San Remo.—After all, why return to that lonely *pension* and to dead Winifred so very soon? It was better to be here—here, where all was bright and gay and lively. He might sit in the gardens all day long and return by the last train to-night to Winifred. No need to report himself now any longer. He was free, free: he would stop at Monte Carlo.

Why leave, indeed, that glorious spot, the loveliest and deadliest siren of our civilisation? He felt his spirit easier here, with those great gray crags frowning down upon him from above, and those exquisite bays smiling up at him from below. Nature and art had here combined to woo and charm him. It seemed like a poet's midsummer dream, crystallised into lasting and solid reality by some gracious wave of Titania's wand.

He murmured to himself those lines from the *Daisy*:

Nor knew we well what pleased us most;
Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A mould'ring citadel on the coast:

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine.

Exquisite lines! He looked across to Cap Martin and understood them all. Then his own verses on his first Italian tour came back with a burst of similarity to his memory. In his exultation and unnatural excitement he had the audacity to compare them with Tennyson's own. Why might not he, too, build at last that mansion he had talked about long, long ago, on the summit of Parnassus?

I found it not, where solemn Alps and gray
Draw purple glories from the new-born day;
Nor where huge sombre pines loom overhanging
Niagara's rainbow spray.

Nor in loud psalms whose palpitating strain
Thrills the vast dome of Buonarroti's fane:
On canvas quick with Guido's earnest passion,
Or Titian's statelier vein.

Tennyson indeed! Who prates about Tennyson? Were not his own sonorous round-mouthed verses worth every bit as much as many Tennysons? He repeated them over lovingly to himself. The familiar ring intoxicated his soul. He was a poet too. He would yet make a fortune, for himself and for Elsie!

Echoes, echoes, mere echoes all of them! But to Hugh Massinger, in his parental blindness, quite as good and true as their inspired originals. So the minor poet for ever deceives himself.

Guido, to be sure, he now knew to be feeble. He had outlived Guido, and reached Botticelli. Not that the one preference was any profounder or truer at bottom than the other; but fashion had changed, and he himself had changed with it. He wrote those verses long, long ago. In those days Guido was not yet exploded. He wished he could find now some good disyllabic early Italian name (with the accent on the first) that would suit modern taste and take the place in the verse of that too tell-tale Guido.

For Elsie was alive, and he must be a poet still. He must build up a fortune for himself and for Elsie.

Somebody touched his elbow as he sat there. He looked up, not without some passing tinge of annoyance. What a bore to be discovered! He didn't want to be disturbed or recognised just then—at Monte Carlo—and with Winifred lying dead on her bed at San Remo!

It was a desultory London club acquaintance—a member of the Savage—and with him was the man who had come with Hugh in the train from Mentone.

'Hullo, Massinger,' the desultory Savage observed complacently: 'who'd have ever thought of meeting you here. Down in the South for the winter, or on a visit? Come for pleasure, or is your wife with you? Whitestrand too much for you in a foggy English November, eh?'

Hugh made up his mind at once to his course of action: he would say not a single word about Winifred. 'On a visit,' he answered, with some slight embarrassment. 'I expect to stop only a week or two.' As a matter of fact, it was not his intention to remain very long after Winifred's funeral. He was in haste, as things stood, to return to England—and Elsie.—'I came over with your friend from Mentone this morning. Lock.'

'And he took you for a maniac, my dear boy,' the other answered with a quiet smile. 'I've duly explained to him that you are not mad, most noble Massinger; you're only a poet. The terms, though nearly, are not quite synonymous.' Then he added in French: 'Let me introduce you now to one another. M. le Lieutenant Fédor Raffalevsky, of the Russian navy.'

M. Raffalevsky bowed politely. 'I fear, Monsieur,' he said with a courtly air, 'I caused you some slight surprise and discomfort by my peculiar demeanour in the train this morning.—To tell you the truth, your attitude discomposed me. I was coming to Monte Carlo to join in the play, and I carried no less a sum for the purpose than three hundred thousand francs about my body. Not knowing I had to deal with a person of honour, I felt somewhat nervous, you may readily conceive, as to your muttered remarks

and apparent abstraction. Figure to yourself my situation. So much money makes one naturally fanciful! Monsieur, I trust, will have the goodness to forgive me.'

'To say the truth,' Hugh answered frankly, 'I was so much absorbed in my own thoughts that I scarcely noticed any little hesitation you may have happened to express in your looks and manner. Three hundred thousand francs is no doubt a very large sum. Why, it's twelve thousand pounds sterling—isn't it, Lock?—You mean to try your luck, then, *en gros*, Monsieur?'

The Russian smiled. 'For once,' he answered, nodding his head good-humouredly. 'I have a system, I believe: an infallible system. I'm a mathematician myself by taste and habit. I've invented a plan for tricking fortune—the only safe one ever yet discovered.'

Hugh shook his head almost mechanically. 'All systems alike are equally bad,' he replied in a politely careless tone. Gambler as he had always been by nature, he had too much common-sense to believe in martingales. 'The bank's bound to beat you in the longrun, you know. It has the deepest purse, and must win in the end, if you go on long enough.'

The Russian's face wore a calm expression of superior wisdom. 'I know better,' he answered quietly. 'I have worked for years at the doctrine of chances. I've calculated the odds to ten places of decimals. If I hadn't, do you think I'd risk three hundred thousand francs on the mere turn of a wretched roulette table?'

The doors of the Casino were now open, and players were beginning to crowd the gambling rooms. 'Let's go in and watch him,' Lock suggested in English. 'There can be no particular harm in looking on. I'm not a player myself, like you, Massinger; but I want to see whether this fellow really wins or loses. He believes in his own system most profoundly, I observe. He's a very nice chap, the Paymaster of the Russian Mediterranean squadron. I picked him up at the Cercle Nautique at Nice last week; and he and I have been going everywhere in my yacht ever since together.'

'All right,' Hugh answered, with the horrible new-born careless glee of his recent emancipation. 'I don't mind twopence what I do to-day. *Vogue la galère!* I'm game for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter.' He never suspected himself how true those casual words of the stock slang expressions were soon to become. Pitch-and-toss first, and afterwards manslaughter.

They strolled round together to the front of the Casino, that stately building in the gaudiest Hausmannised Parisian style, planted plump down with grotesque incongruity beneath the lofty crags of the Maritime Alps. The palace of sin faces a large and handsome open square, with greensward and fountains and parterres of flowers; and all around stand coquettish shops, laid temptingly out with bonnets and jewelry and æsthetic products; for people who win largely disburse freely, and many ladies hover about the grounds, with fashionable dresses and shady antecedents, by no means slow to share the good fortune of the lucky and all too generous hero of the day. Hugh mounted the entrance staircase with the rest of the crowd, and pushed through the swinging glass doors of the Casino. Within, they came

upon the large and spacious vestibule, its roof supported by solid marble and porphyry pillars. Presentation of their cards secured them the right of entry to the *salles de jeu*, for everything is free at Monte Carlo—except the tables. You may go in and out of the rooms as you please, and enjoy for nothing—so long as you are not fool enough to play—the use of two hundred European newspapers, and the music of a theatre, where a splendid band discourses hourly to all comers the enlivening strains of Strauss and of Gungl. But all that is the merest prelude. The play itself, which forms the solid core of the entire entertainment, takes place in the gambling saloons on the left of the Casino.

Furnished with their indispensable little ticket of introduction, the three newcomers entered the rooms, and took their place tentatively by one of the tables. The Russian, selecting a seat at once, addressed himself to the task like one well accustomed to systematic gambling. Hugh and his acquaintance Lock stood idly behind, to watch the outcome of his infallible method.

And all the time, alone at San Remo, Winifred's body lay on the solitary bed of death, attended only at long intervals by the waiting-women and landlady of the shabby *pension*.

CHAPTER XLIV.—'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MAKE YOUR GAME!'

Though play had only just begun when Hugh and his companions entered the saloon, the rooms were already pretty well crowded with regular visitors, who came early to secure their accustomed seats, and who leant forward with big rolls of gold piled high in columns on the table before them, marking down with a dot on their tablets the winning numbers, and staking their twenty or thirty napoleons with mechanical calmness on every turn of that fallacious whirlingig. Hugh had often heard or read sensational descriptions of the eagerness depicted upon every face, the anxious gaze, the rapt attention, the obvious fascination of the game for its votaries; but what struck him rather on the first blush of it all was the exact opposite: the stolid indifference with which men and women alike, inured to the varying chances of the board, lost or won a couple of dozen pounds or so on each jump of the pea, as though it were a matter of the supremest unconcern to them in their capacity of gamblers whether they or the bank happened to take up each particular little heap of money. They seemed, indeed, to be mostly rich and *blase* people, suffering from a chronic plethora of the purse, who could afford to throw away their gold like water, and who threw it away carelessly out of pure wantonness, for the sake of the small modicum of passing excitement yielded by the uncertainty to their jaded palates.

Nevertheless, he remarked with surprise from the very first moment that even at that early hour of the morning, when the day's work had hardly yet got well under weigh, the rooms, though large and lofty, were past all belief hot and close, doubtless from the strange number of feverish human hearts and lungs, all throbbing and panting their suppressed excitement, in that single Casino, and warming the air with their internal fires. He raised his eyes and glanced

for a moment around the saloon. It was spacious and handsome, after its own gaudy fashion, richly decorated in the Mauresque style of the Spanish Alhambra, though with far less taste and harmony of colour than in the restorations to which his eye had been long familiarised in London and Sydenham. At Monte Carlo, to say the truth, a certain subdued tinge of vulgar garishness just mars the native purity of the style into perfect accord with the nature and purposes of that temple of Mammon in his vilest avatar.

Hugh, however, for his part had no scruples in the matter of gambling. He gazed up and down at the ten or twelve roulette tables that crowded the *salles de jeu*, with the utmost complacency. He liked play, and it diverted him to watch it, especially when the man he meant to observe was the propounder of a new and infallible system. Infallible systems are always interesting: they collapse with a crash—amusing to everybody except their propounder. He bent his eyes closely upon the hands of the Russian, who had now pulled out his roll of gold and silver, and was eagerly beginning to back his chosen numbers, doubtless with the blind and stupid confidence of the infatuated system-monger.

Raffalevsky, however, played a cautious opening. He started modestly with four five-franc pieces, distributed about on a distinct plan, and each of them staked on a separate number. The five-franc piece, in fact, is the minimum coin permitted to show its face on those aristocratic tables; and six thousand francs is the maximum sum which the bank allows any one player to hazard on a single twist of the roulette: between these extreme limits, all possible systems must needs confine themselves, so that the common martingale of doubling the stakes at each unsuccessful throw becomes here practically impossible. Raffalevsky's play had been carefully calculated. Hugh, who was already well versed in the mysteries of roulette, could see at a glance that the Russian had really a method in his madness. He was working on strict mathematical principles. Sometimes he divided or decreased his stake; sometimes, at a bound, he trebled or quadrupled it. Sometimes he plunged on a single number; sometimes for several turns together he steadily backed either red or black, *pair* or *impair*. But on the whole, by hap or cunning, he really seemed to be winning rapidly. His sustained success made Hugh more anxious than ever to watch his play. It was clear he had invented a genuine system. Might it be after all, as he said, an infallible one?

If only Hugh could find it out! He must, he would marry Elsie. How grand to marry her, a rich man! He would love to lay at Elsie's feet a fortune worthy of his beautiful Elsie.

Things were all changed now. He had something to live, to work, to gamble for! If only he could say to his recovered Elsie: 'Take me, rich, famous, great—take me, and Whitestrland, no longer sand-swept. I lay it all in your lap for your gracious acceptance—these piles of gold—these heaps of coins!' But he had nothing, nothing, save the few napoleons he carried about him. If he had but the Russian's twelve thousand pounds now! he would play and win—win a fortune at a stroke for his darling Elsie.

Fired with the thought, he watched Raffalevsky more closely than ever. In time, he began to perceive by degrees upon what principle the money was so regularly lost and won. It was a good principle, mathematically correct. Hugh worked it out hastily on the back of an envelope. Yes, in one hundred and twenty chances out of one hundred and thirty-seven, a man ought to win ten louis a turn, against seven lost, on an average reckoning. At last, Raffalevsky, after several good hazards, laid down five louis boldly upon 24. Hugh touched his shoulder with a gentle hand. 'Wrong,' he murmured in French. 'You make a mistake there. You abandon your principle. You ought to have backed 27 this time.'

The Russian looked back at him with an angry smile; so slight a scratch at once brought out the Tartar. 'Back it yourself, then, Monsieur,' he said sullenly. 'I make my own game.—Pray, don't interrupt me. If your calculations go so very deep, put your own money down, and try your luck against me. *My* principles, when I first discovered them, were not worked out on the back of an envelope.'

The gibe offended Hugh. In a second he saw that the fellow was wrong: he was misinterpreting the nature of his own discovery. He had neglected one obvious element of the problem. The error was mathematical: Hugh snapped at it mentally with his keen perception—he had taken a first in mathematics at Oxford—and noted at once that if the Russian pursued his present course for many turns together he was certain before long to go under hopelessly. For the space of one deep breath he hesitated and held back. What was the use of gambling with no capital to go upon? Then, more for the sake of proving himself right than of winning money, he dived into his pocket with a sudden resolution, and drawing forth five napoleons from his scanty purse, laid them without a word on 27, and awaited patiently the result of his action.

'The game is made,' the croupier called out as Hugh withdrew his hand. After that warning signal, no stakes can be further received or altered. Whir-r-r went the roulette. The pea span round with whizzing speed. Hugh looked on, all eager, in a fever of suspense. He half regretted he had backed 27. He was sure to lose. The chances, after all, were so enormous against him. Thirty-six to one! If you win, it's a fluke. What a fool he had been to run the risk of making himself look small in this gratuitous way before the cold eyes of that unfeeling Russian.

He knew he was right, of course: 27 was the system. But a sensible system never hangs upon a single throw. It depends upon a long calculation of chances. You must let one risk balance another. Raffalevsky had twelve thousand pounds to fall back upon. If he failed once, to him that didn't matter: he could go on still and recoup himself in the end by means of the system. Only under such circumstances of a full purse can any method of gambling ever by any possibility be worth anything. Broken reeds at the best, even for a Rothschild, they must almost necessarily pierce the hand that leans upon them if it ventures to try them on a petty scrap of pocket capital. And Hugh's

capital was grotesquely scrappy for such a large venture—he had only some seventy-five pounds about him.

How swift is thought, and how long a time it seemed before the pea jumped! He had reasoned out all this, and a thousand-fold more, in his own mind with lightning speed while that foolish wheel was still whirling and spinning. If he won at all, it could only be by a rare stroke of fickle fortune. Thirty-six to one were the odds against him! And if he lost, he must either leave off at once, or else, in accordance with the terms of the system, stake ten louis next turn on 14, or nine louis on odd or even. At that rate, his poor little capital would soon be exhausted. How he longed for Raffalevsky's twelve thousand to draw upon. He would feel so small if 27 lost. And if there was anything on earth that Hugh Massinger hated it was feeling small: the sense of ignominy, and its opposite the feeling of personal dignity, were deeply rooted in the very base and core of his selfish nature.

At last the pea jumped. A breathless second! The croupier looked over at it and watched its fall. 'Vingt-sept,' he cried in his stereotyped tone. Hugh's heart leapt up with a sudden wild bound. The fever of play had seized on him now. He had won at a stroke—a hundred and seventy-five louis.

Here was a capital indeed upon which to begin. He would back his own system with this against Raffalevsky's. Or rather, he would back Raffalevsky's discovery, as rightly apprehended and worked out by himself, against Raffalevsky's discovery as wrongly applied and distorted through an essential error of detail by its original inventor.

It was system pitted against system now. The croupier raked in the scattered gold heaped on the various cabalistic numbers, squares, and diamonds—and amongst them, Raffalevsky's five napoleons upon 24. Then he paid the lucky players their gains; counting out three thousand five hundred francs with practised ease, and handing them to Hugh, who was one among the principal winners by that particular turn. In two minutes more, the board was cleared; the wooden cue had hauled in all the bank's receipts; the fortunate players had added their winnings to the heap before them; and all was ready for a further venture. 'Messieurs et mesdames, faites le jeu,' the harsh voice of the croupier cried mechanically. The players laid down their stakes once more; the croupier waited the accustomed interval. 'Le jeu est fait,' he cried at last; and the pea again went buzzing and whizzing. Hugh was backing his system this time on the regular rule: three louis on the left-hand row of numbers.

He lost. That was but a small matter, of course. He had won to begin with; and a stroke of luck at the first outset is responsible for the greater part of the most reckless playing. Time after time he staked and played—staked and played—staked and played again, sometimes losing, sometimes winning; but on the whole, the system, as he had anticipated, proved fairly trustworthy. The delirium of play had taken full possession of him, body and soul, by this time. He was piling up gold; piling it fast;

how fast, he never stopped to think or count: enough for him that the system won: as long as it won, what waste of time at a critical moment to stop and reckon the extent of his fortune.

He only knew that every now and then he thrust a fresh handful of gold or notes into his pocket—for Elsie—and went on playing with feverish eagerness with the residue of his winnings left upon the table.

By two o'clock, however, he began to get hungry. This sort of excitement takes it rapidly out of a man. Lock had disappeared from the scene long since. He wanted somebody to go and feed with. So he leaned over and whispered casually to Raffalevsky: 'Shall we turn out now and take a mouthful or two of lunch together?'

Raffalevsky looked back at him with a pale face. 'As you will,' he said wearily. 'I'm tired of this play. Losses, losses all along the line. The system breaks down here and there, I find, in actual practice.'

So Hugh had observed with a placid smile for the last hour or two.

They left the tables, and strolled across the square to the stately portals of the *Hotel de Paris*. Hugh was in excellent spirits indeed. 'Permit me to constitute myself the host, monsieur,' he said with his courtliest air to Raffalevsky. He had won heavily now, and was in a humour on all grounds to spend his winnings with princely magnificence.

The Russian bowed. 'You are very kind, monsieur,' he answered with a smile. Then he added, half apologetically, at the end of a pause: 'And after all, it was my own system.'

The carte was tempting, and money was cheap—cheaper than in London. Hugh ordered the most sumptuous and recherché of luncheons, with wine to match, on a millionaire scale, and they sat down together at the luxurious tables of that lordly restaurant. While they waited for their red mullet, Hugh pulled out a stray handful of notes and gold and began to count up the extent of his winnings. He trembled himself when he saw to how very large a sum the total amounted. He had pocketed no less in that short time than fourteen hundred louis! Fools that plod and toil and moil in London for a long, long year upon half that pittance! How he pitied and despised them! In three brief hours, by the aid of a system, he had won offhand fourteen hundred louis!

He mentioned the sum of his winnings with bated breath to the unsympathetic Russian. Raffalevsky bit his lip with undisguised jealousy. 'And I,' he said curtly, in a cold voice, 'have dropped sixteen hundred.'

It's wonderful with what placid depths of heroism the winners can endure the losses of the losers. 'Never mind, my friend,' Hugh answered back cheerily. 'Fortune always takes a turn in the long-run. Her wheel will alter. You'll win soon. And besides, you know, you have an infallible system.'

'It's the cursed system that seems to have betrayed me,' the Russian blurted back with a savage outburst of unchecked temper. 'It worked out so well on paper, somehow; but on these precious tables, with their turns and their evolutions, something unexpected is always bobbing

up to spoil and prevent my legitimate triumph. Would you believe it, now, last turn but one, and the turn before it, I had calculated seven hundred and twenty-two distinct chances all in my favour to a miserable solitary one against me: and not one of the seven hundred and twenty-two good combinations ever turned up at all, but just the one beastly unlucky conjunction that made against me and ruined my speculations. You might play for seven hundred and twenty-two turns on an average again without that ever happening a second time to confound you.'

AUTOGRAPHS.

Of all the collecting manias of the present time, that of accumulating autographs is not only one of the most luring, but one of the most instructive. Nearly all of us seem possessed of a natural love for collecting something. The school-boy gloats over his postage stamps, and longs for certain three-cornered and oval specimens; the naturalist thinks his collection of birds' eggs and dried skins *par excellence*; the mineralogist delights in ticketing and arranging his precious wonders from beneath the earth's surface; and the lover of character and genius treasures up in a costly album fragments of thought and letters written by the hands of great men of the past and present.

It is an error to imagine that the autograph collector merely thirsts for the signatures of his heroes; the signature truly is a *sine quâ non*, but it must be at the end of a letter, dated, and containing some sentence or phrase likely to display something of the true character or work of the writer. More of the actual character of a man may occasionally be gathered from one letter than from a whole lifetime of public writing or public service. A signature cut from a letter, or a franked envelope, is considered next to valueless unless the signature be that of some person who seldom or never wrote long letters in his or her own hand. A holograph letter of our kings and queens is a thing seldom or never seen, so a document signed by any of them has to be accepted by the autograph collector. It is not the autographs of crowned heads and other persons who have become famous simply by virtue of their office that the true lover of autographs is eager for, but rather letters by such men as Thackeray, Dickens, Byron, Tennyson, Pitt, Disraeli, Gladstone, Stephenson, Johnson, Lamb, Lytton, and Carlyle. Documents written by Spenser, Raleigh, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Bacon, &c., are so rare that the hope of ever possessing such is seldom entertained by even the most enthusiastic collectors who have the best of chances at their command. Autograph collecting is not, therefore, a mere whim, but rather a pursuit, taken up with the idea of gleaning from their letters the real characters of great men and women, and the studying of the writing formed by the mind and hand of men such as the author of *Pendennis*; or of the man who, after ten years' sorrowing and solitude, immortalised his departed friend in *In Memoriam*. Putting aside the hard and fast rules laid down by persons who make a profession of delineating character from chirography, we seem to possess

a kind of instinct by which we can glean something of a man from his handwriting.

Unpublished fragments of prose and verse are highly prized by the collector, as are also letters containing literary and other advice, short criticisms of men and books, and proofs of friendship and love.

Apart from those collectors who devote their albums to autographs of popular and great men generally, there are many who make collections of the letters of men of a certain calling or a particular period. The Commonwealth is a very favourite subject, and letters and signatures of Cromwell and his contemporaries are becoming very scarce. The writer of this paper has devoted his collection to poets, and it contains nearly two hundred good letters, with but very few duplicates; the collection includes letters and fragments by Burns, Campbell, Longfellow, Keats, Poe, Goethe, Goldsmith, Scott, Wordsworth, Pope, Cowper, Willis, Gray, Coleridge, Tennyson, Holmes, Hood, Swinburne, Browning, Lewis Morris, and Edwin Arnold. Another collection with which the writer is familiar is devoted wholly to the Dr Johnson period, and contains specimens of Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith, Robertson, Burke, Hume, Smith, Gibbon, Garrick, Fielding, Richardson, Walpole, and Smollett. It is well known that our Queen has a very fine collection of autographs. The British Museum contains a very large number of autographic rarities; but it is usually said that the authorities there allow many documents of interest at sales to go to America, and thus be lost to us probably for ever. The Americans are great collectors, and by no means are they afraid of paying well for anything really good. A complete set of the signers of the Declaration of Independence was sold at the hammer a short while ago for no less than five hundred pounds.

The precise value of an autograph is always doubtful; from one shilling to three hundred pounds is about the usual range, and a pretty wide range too. An A. L. S. (that is, autograph letter signed) by Burns is usually valued at about eighteen pounds; but a long manuscript (published) of his was recently disposed of in a London auction room for two hundred and five pounds. An A. L. S. of Cowper is worth about four or five pounds; of Keats, about ten or twelve pounds; of Tennyson, about one or two pounds; of Browning, one pound or more; of Dickens, about two pounds; of Thackeray, quite double that; of Ruskin, about one pound or less; of Gladstone, about ten shillings; a sign-manual of the Queen, about one pound; of Charles I., about three pounds; an A. L. S. of Darwin, about two pounds; of Carlyle, about two pounds; of Johnson, nearly ten pounds; of Flaxman, about two pounds; and of Cruikshank, about two pounds. The autograph of a peer who is only a peer is valueless. Several large collections have been sold at the hammer two or three times over in this century, each occasion the price obtained being nearly double that of the previous time; that is, if not less than ten or fifteen years has intervened. Interesting state documents, orders to commanders, orders for executions, &c., often crop up, and generally sell at high prices.

It is usually the work of a lifetime to get

together a good collection of autographs, particularly when money is an object. Those who are anxious to have such must never be in a hurry; chances must be waited for, and never missed when they present themselves. Old family papers and any old documents that may be come across should always be ransacked. An autograph letter of any great person can always be begged of those who happen to have such, without feeling under obligation, if the donor is not a collector himself. What can be the use of just one or two interesting letters? The very prevalent method of writing letters, particularly 'catch' letters, to great persons for the sake of getting their handwriting is a poor way of making a collection, and such specimens cannot give much insight into the real character and style of the writer. Some men write many more letters than do others; epistles of all sorts of Charles Dickens are still fairly plentiful, whilst those of Thackeray are getting very scarce, as also are those of the poet-laureate, who is not easily inveigled into writing letters, and therefore it may safely be presumed that good letters of his will in a few years' time become valuable.

Autograph collecting brings us into close contact with many a man too often passed by as a nobody; and a well-arranged album, with portraits and notes added to the specimens, often leads us to view our great men in a new and better light, and it helps to keep fresh in our memories the names of those who are living, or have lived and died, in the public service.

BOLSOVER BROTHERS.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

'I TRUST, Wally, my boy, that you have not forgotten your promise—the solemn promise you gave me twelve months ago—to have nothing more to do with the turf, and never again to wager even as much as a shilling on a horse as long as you live. You have not forgotten—eh, now?'

'I have not forgotten, uncle—it is impossible that I ever should forget.'

'It does me good to hear you say that. Stick to your promise, my boy, and all may yet be well with you.—You tell me that your practice is increasing—very slowly, it may be, but still surely, which is as much as you can reasonably expect, seeing that it's only a little over a couple of years since you settled here. People have not had time to make your acquaintance, or to discover what a very clever young practitioner they have in their midst in the person of Mr Walter Lindley, F.R.C.S.'

The speaker, a fussy but good-natured elderly gentleman, lay back in his chair, and his ruddy visage broke into a broad smile. Then looking at his watch, he started to his feet. 'I mustn't stay another minute, or I shall miss the seven o'clock train,' he said. 'I shall hardly see you again before Christmas Day, when I hope we shall eat our turkey together, as we did last year; and I fancy I know where there's a drop of fine

old port to be found, although some people will persist in telling you that there's none to be had nowadays worth drinking.'

As uncle and nephew stood for a few moments at the door before parting, the former holding Walter's hand in his, said: 'Above all things, my boy, don't allow yourself to get down-hearted. That's not a bit of good. The struggle is no doubt a tough one just at present; but it ought only to serve to brace your sinews and make you more resolute to succeed in the end. In my opinion, there's no worse way of serving a young fellow than by making things too easy for him at the beginning of his career. But come what may, Wally, let no temptation induce you to break your promise.'

A minute later, Mr Tobias Lindley was trudging cheerily along on his way to the station. His nephew, after a glance up and down the quiet lamp-lighted street, turned indoors with a shiver and shut the door.

Medbury Royal, as all Londoners know, or ought to know, is situated some dozen or thirteen miles outside the metropolitan radius. It is said to be so called because at one time it could boast of having a royal residence in its midst, of which, however, not one stone is now left standing on another; indeed, the very site of the palace is so doubtful and open to dispute that the antiquaries of the neighbourhood have few finer bones of contention over which to wrangle and call names. Modern Medbury is a thriving little town, rendered still more busy and prosperous since two lines of railway have brought it within an hour's ride of the City; as a consequence of which a number of busy bees have found it a desirable place to flit to of an evening, away from the noise and uproar of the great hive where they make honey all day long. Streets and terraces of more or less pretentious villas and 'desirable residences' have sprung up like mushrooms on every side of the quaint old town: and if the old-fashioned quiet and semi-rurality of the place have disappeared for ever, the tradespeople and others are well contented that it should be so, seeing that where they had one customer twenty years ago, they can now count upon a dozen.

When Mr Tobias Lindley made up his mind to start his nephew in life as a medical practitioner on his own account, it seemed to the shrewd ex-linendraper that the young man could not do better than try his fortune at Medbury Royal; and there, accordingly, Walter was duly established. His uncle had agreed to allow him a hundred pounds the first year, and fifty the second, towards his rent and other expenses; after that time it was hoped that he would be in a position to dispense with further help, which, however, would not be withholden should the necessity for it still exist.

Walter had been more than ordinarily wild and reckless in days gone by; twice had his uncle saved him from disgrace and ruin. The young man was a born gambler; for him horse-racing possessed a fascination which minds differently constituted have no conception of. It was a failing he inherited from his father, who, after ruining himself on the turf, had put an end to his existence. After saving his nephew for the second time, Mr Tobias extorted from him a solemn promise never again to wager on a horse

as long as he lived. The promise was given in all sincerity at a time when Walter was full of the most abject contrition for his wrong-doing. On the strength of that promise, his uncle had shortly afterwards started him in practice at Medbury Royal.

Once a quarter always, sometimes oftener, the elder man made a point of 'looking up' the younger, as he called it, and it is on one of these occasions that we make the acquaintance of uncle and nephew.

Mr Tobias finding his nephew dull and out of sorts, had at once attributed his lowness of spirits to a cause which was far removed from the real one, and had striven to cheer him up with the hope of better days in store, when his name would have become more widely known and his practice treble or quadruple what it was at present. It was something far different which weighed so heavily on his nephew's heart.

When his uncle was gone, Walter went back to his little sitting-room and shut himself in. Black Care perched itself on his chair behind him. Without telling his uncle an absolute lie in the matter, he had undoubtedly led him to believe that he had had nothing whatever to do with horse-racing since the day he had given his promise to that effect, whereas the truth was that a three-months' bill for eighty pounds, which he had given in order to enable him to make good certain losses on the turf, would fall due in ten days' time, and he had not more than ten pounds in the world towards meeting it. At the time when he gave the bill he had felt morally sure that before it fell due he would not only be in a position to take it up, but would have at least a surplus of a couple of hundred pounds into the bargain. It was the old story. Certain information had been imparted to him as a profound secret that such-and-such horses could not possibly fail to win such-and-such races. The prospect was an alluring one: to Walter Lindley it proved one which he was unable to resist. He had laid all the money he could scrape together on the horses in question, not one of which had come in a winner, and the result was that ruin, absolute and irrevocable, stared him in the face. When the folly of which he had been guilty should come to his uncle's ears, and it would be impossible to keep it from him, Walter knew full well that it would be equivalent to a lifelong dismissal. Never would the elder man look upon his degenerate nephew's face again, never again permit him to cross his threshold. But bad as this might be, there was a still blacker feature in Walter's case which weighed more heavily upon him than aught else. Before being able to get his bill discounted, it was requisite that it should be 'backed' by some responsible person. That person Walter had found in a certain Mr Lobb, a retired officer of Excise, whom he had attended professionally through a rather dangerous illness; and who, in return, had contracted a great liking for the frank-seeming, pleasant-looking young doctor. Mr Lobb was an easy-going, good-hearted old bachelor; and when Walter, trumping up some story about having his rent to meet, and not being able to get in what was owing him by his patients, begged him as a great favour to endorse his little bill, Mr Lobb did so without a moment's hesitation. Unfortunately, however, there was one

peculiar feature about the transaction, unknown to any one but the young doctor himself. The bill endorsed by Mr Lobb was for eight pounds only, whereas the bill which would fall due a few days hence was for eighty pounds. Well might his soul shiver within him as he sat there in his lonely room. In flight lay his only chance of safety. He must put half the world between himself and his past life, but never could that past be redeemed. More than once he said to himself: 'Thank Heaven, my mother did not live to see this day!' And then he thought of the way his father had ended his life. He, the son, was treading the same downward path even faster than his father had done: what could he look forward to but a similar end?

His dark broodings were broken by a loud rat-a-tat at the front door, followed by a ring. He was in no mood this evening for visiting any patient; but of course if he were wanted he must go. He heard Hannah, his middle-aged house-keeper, who, with a youth in buttons—at this hour gone home for the night—formed the whole of his small establishment, cross the passage and open the door. Then came a murmur of voices, and then his sitting-room door was opened. 'A gentleman to see you, sir,' said Hannah. The gentleman walked in, and the door was shut behind him.

He was a tall, well-built man, about forty years of age, with a reddish-brown beard, rather closely cropped, and a moustache of the same hue. He had dark, keen, crafty-looking eyes, but was by no means ill-looking. He was well and fashionably dressed. A horse-shoe of brilliants glittered in his scarf, and when he took off his gloves, which he presently did, he displayed three or four rings of price. Of him it might be said, as of so many others, that he was gentlemanly looking without being a gentleman.

'I am addressing myself to Mr Walter Lindley, I presume?' said the stranger as he advanced and took off his hat.

'That is my name,' answered Walter, who had risen and now stood facing the other.

'And mine is Gazebrooke—Mr Weston Gazebrooke—a name you have probably never heard before. I have called to see you this evening on a purely private matter, thinking this would be as likely a time as any to find you disengaged.'

'Pray, be seated, Mr Gazebrooke,' said Walter, not without a slight tremor in his voice. Already the coming of this stranger seemed to him full of evil augury.

'I will come to the object of my visit without delay,' said Mr Gazebrooke, leaning forward with his elbows on the table and confronting the young surgeon. 'I have in my possession a certain bill for the sum of eighty pounds drawn by you, and accepted by a Mr Nicholas Lobb, which bill will fall due in little over a week from now. There is, I presume, Mr Lindley, no doubt as to Mr Lobb's ability to meet the bill in question on presentation?' As he put the query, his eyes were bent full on the face before him, which had faded to the hue of that of a dead man.

For a few moments Walter could not have spoken to save his life. The blow had stunned him. His eyes fell before the keen orbs that to his guilty conscience seemed to be reading him through and through. At length he made shift

to say: 'I see no reason, Mr Gazebrooke, why you should doubt Mr Lobb's ability to meet the bill any more than you might doubt that of any other person who happened to be a stranger to you.'

'Very fairly put,' replied the other. 'Still, you may take it as a fact that I should not be here this evening unless I had what seems to me ample warranty for my visit. Eighty pounds seems rather a large sum for a young man in your position—only just started in practice, as one may say—to negotiate a bill for. I presume there would be no objection to my calling upon the endorser, just by way of refreshing his memory that the eighty pounds will be due ten days from now, either from him or you, or the pair of you. Mr Lobb's house, if I am rightly informed, is only a little way from here, and— But, dear me, Mr Lindley, how dreadfully ill you look! Is there anything I can get you? Shall I ring for your housekeeper?'

'It is nothing. A spasm of the heart—a thing I'm subject to. I shall be better presently,' gasped the miserable young man.

'Ah, decidedly unpleasant, I should think, to have anything the matter with one's heart. Nothing the matter with mine, thank goodness—that is, as far as I know.' He busied himself with the papers in his pocket-book for a few moments while Walter strove to pull himself together.

'If I give you my assurance, Mr Gazebrooke,' he contrived to stammer presently, 'that the bill will be met in due course, there cannot, surely, be any reason why you should trouble Mr Lobb in the affair. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the genuineness of his signature?'

'Not at all, Mr Lindley, not at all,' answered the other with a curious little laugh; 'but what I do doubt is whether Mr Lobb is aware for what amount his endorsement has made him liable. To state the case as briefly as possible: Does Mr Lobb believe himself to be answerable for the sum of eight pounds or eighty?' Again he fixed the young doctor with his vulture-like eyes, but from the latter's frozen lips there came no response.

After a few moments of strained silence, Mr Gazebrooke drew from his pocket-book a long narrow strip of bluish paper, with a quantity of writing on it and a stamp at one corner. 'You may perhaps wonder a little, Mr Lindley, at the singularity of my question,' he went on to say, 'just as I might be surprised at your hesitation in answering it—only I'm not. However, the reason for my question is not far to seek. Here is the veritable document itself, made out in due form, for the sum of eighty pounds; but a very cursory examination of it reveals the singular fact that the letter "y" after the word "eight" and the cipher after the figure 8 have been filled in with a different ink, and presumably at a different time from the body of the acceptance; the added letter and the cipher have faded to a dullish brown tint, while the rest of the caligraphy remains as indelibly black as when first written. Now it seems to me, Mr Lindley, that should you not be in a position to explain this little anomaly, Mr Lobb might possibly be able to do so. What say you, young gentleman—what say you?'

'Nothing,' answered the other sullenly, to whom sheer desperation had lent a factitious courage for the time being. 'Go to Lobb, if it so please you. I care not what you do.' Resting his elbows on the table, he covered his face with his hands. At that moment he felt indeed as if he cared not what might become of him.

'Come, come, my friend; never say die,' remarked the other encouragingly. 'Things are seldom so bad but that they might be worse. As for this slip of paper, I won't hurt your feelings by alluding to it further. I understand all about the affair as well as if you had taken half an hour to tell me. You are not the first young fellow by many a hundred who has found himself in Queer Street. Assuming it to be a fact that you are not in a position to meet the bill, the question that presents itself is: What possible alternative is there under the circumstances?' There was a brief pause; then the stranger said interrogatively: 'Supposing I myself take up the bill when it falls due?'

Walter lifted his head from his hands and stared at the other as in doubt whether he had heard aright.

'In other words: supposing I take up the acceptance instead of Mr Lobb?' reiterated Mr Gazebrooke.

'Supposing you do—what then?' queried Walter presently. 'You are a stranger to me, Mr Gazebrooke, and strangers don't usually propose such things without having some object in view. Assuming that you take up the bill, what shall you want me to do in return?—for I'm morally sure you will expect a return of some kind. Shall you want me to administer a dose of prussic acid, or strychnine, to somebody that you are anxious to get rid of?'

Mr Gazebrooke laughed a hollow, mirthless laugh. 'No, no, my friend; I don't require anything one-quarter so terrible at your hands as that. It is creditable to the perspicacity of so young a man that you recognise already one of the hardest facts of life—that in this world nothing is to be had for nothing—that if I help you, I expect you to help me, and vice versa.—Such being the case, if I do this thing for you, it is superfluous to say that I shall expect you to do a trifle for me in return—a mere trifle, I give you my word.'

'I should like to know the nature of the "trifle" in question, Mr Gazebrooke.'

'That is a point, Mr Lindley, respecting which I am sorry to say I cannot at present enlighten you. However, as I said before, it is nothing dreadful—nothing that will in any way compromise you, or cause you to run any risk whatever.' Here he looked at his watch. 'As time is running on and I want to catch the next train back to town, I will state my proposition as concisely as possible. The bill in my possession shall be taken up by me, and neither you nor Mr Lobb shall hear a syllable more about it. Some day, it may be two, three, or even four months hence, I shall call upon you again and ask you to do me a certain little service, which will come entirely in the way of your profession and will cost you nothing. The moment the service in question is completed, the acceptance shall be handed over to you, to burn, or do whatever you like with, and all transactions between us will be at an end.'

What say you—yes or no? You must let me have your answer in two minutes.'

It is hardly necessary to say what Walter Lindley's answer was.

Time passed on. The dreaded day came and went, and for anything the young surgeon heard of the matter, no such document as the bill for eighty pounds might have been in existence. The mysterious stranger had evidently been as good as his word. Walter began to breathe more freely. The one great danger was over, and whatever might be the return required at his hands, it could hardly be of a nature to impose upon him a burden so terrible as that from which he had so narrowly escaped. It was impossible that he should feel easy in his mind while a document so fatally compromising as the one retained by Mr Gazebrooke remained in existence; but all he could do was to wait with such patience as he could summon to his aid the *dénouement* of the strange adventure in which, without any exercise of will on his own part, he found himself involved.

Five months and a fortnight had passed when one evening Mr Gazebrooke again made his appearance. 'Here I am once more,' he said with a smile, as he proffered his hand: 'come at last to claim the fulfilment of your promise. I hope you had not quite given up expecting me?'

The two men remained shut up together for upwards of an hour.

Next morning about ten o'clock, just as Lindley was getting ready to start on his first round of visits, a middle-aged woman, a domestic of some kind, to all appearance, was ushered into the surgery. 'If you please, sir,' she said, 'my master, Mr Bolsover of Laburnum Cottage, has sent me to ask you to call on him. He's caught a bad cold, and feels very queer and out of sorts this morning.'

The young doctor paused in the act of brushing his hat, and for a few seconds every vestige of colour fled from his face. His summons had come at last.

'Tell your master that I will be with him in the course of an hour,' he answered.

'If you please, sir, I be a little bit deaf,' responded the woman, putting her hand to her ear and going a step or two nearer.

Walter repeated his words in a louder tone, whereupon the woman courtesied and went.

GENTLEWOMEN IN QUEEN ANNE'S TIME.

It is common in the present day to hear much of schemes for the 'higher education of women,' of colleges where girls compete with their brothers for honours in academic learning, and of all that advance in culture of which we are so proud. But if we glance back at the domestic life of our ancestors as depicted, for instance, in the reign of good Queen Anne, shall we not be forced to own that we lack something of the industry, the energy, the household accomplishments, and the mental vigour as displayed by them? Finding what were some of the qualifications thought best to become a gentlewoman then, shall we say that our own ways are so vastly superior?

It was expected that a gentlewoman should

understand the Latin tongue, to enable her to write and speak true and good English: and that she should also master the French and Italian languages. Her reading, besides the books of piety in vogue, such as Bishop Usher's *Body of Divinity*, Mr Firman's *Real Christian*, and others, embraced those romances which treated of gallantry and virtue, whose old-fashioned names of *Chelia*, *Grand Cyrus*, *Parthenessa*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, &c., have passed from the range of modern book-lists, though the last-named may chance to be met with still, albeit but little read by our girls. She was also expected not to neglect authors in foreign tongues, by which her fancy might be tickled or her understanding furnished; and yet she was enjoined, when in public society, 'to tip her tongue with silence,' though 'not to be altogether silent, for that is a misbecoming error, but in speaking, to do it knowingly and opportunely.'

In the rush of life in these railroad and electric days, do not some of us almost sigh for the leisurely time when a gentlewoman also counted among her accomplishments, over and above singing, dancing, and playing on several sorts of musical instruments, these: 'Making all manner of pretty toys for closets. Frames for looking-glasses, pictures, or the like. Feathers of crewel for the corner of beds. Preserving all kinds of sweetmeats wet and dry. Setting out of banquets. Making salves, ointments, waters, cordials; healing any wounds not desperately dangerous. Knowledge in discerning the symptoms of most diseases, and giving such remedies as are fit in such cases. Limning. All manner of cookery. Great skill in all kinds of works wrought with a needle. Washing black or white sarsnets. Making sweet powders for the hair or to lay among linen.'

Surely, then, on the faces of the young girls, as their varied employments called forth sympathies and resource, there was none of the lassitude and melancholy that one can but notice with regret among the fashionable maidens of our day. The mere making of 'salves, ointments, and cordials' must, we think, have gone far to heal any wounds of their own 'not desperately dangerous.' And we can imagine the glow of healthy employment their cheeks would wear after the 'washing of black or white sarsnets,' to say nothing of the deeper tint displayed when they came forth from instruction in 'all manner of cookery,' with buoyant step, and dignified with a sweet content.

With us, a refined civilisation in removing the need for household production of various sorts has brought about the fact of an immense number of unemployed women, who have, as it were, to make work for themselves, which has none of the warm interest inspired by necessary or useful labour, and has set ennui and listlessness in our midst. Though we must own that this same civilisation has weeded out some uncouth behaviour which ill befitted gentlewomen; for what a shock our sensibilities would receive could we be present at table in 1672, when such advice as this to ladies was necessary: 'Fill not your mouth so full that your cheeks shall swell like a pair of Scotch bagpipes; neither cut your meat into too big pieces. Gnaw no bones with your teeth, nor suck them to come at the marrow. Be cautious and not over-forward in dipping or sopping in the

dish. Do not bawl out aloud for anything you want, as: "I would have some of that," "I like not this," "I hate onions," "Give me no pepper;" but whisper softly to one, that he or she may without noise supply your wants. In carving at your own table, distribute the best pieces first, and it will appear very comely and decent to use a fork; if so, touch no piece of meat without it. I have been invited to dinner where I have seen the good gentlewoman of the house sweat more in cutting up of a fowl than the cookmaid in roasting it; and when she had soundly beliquor'd her joints, hath suckt her knuckles, and to work with them again in the dish.

Poor lady! The emancipation of 'diner à la Russe' was not for her, and whether she would or not, 'sweat' she must over her work until she had obtained the mastery of the commendable art of cookery; ay, and she must too, would she be considered a complete housewife, learn the quaint terms used at home and abroad for dividing various sorts of food, as it was proper to say: 'Thigh that woodcock, thigh that pigeon; Mince that plover; Wing that quail, wing that partridge; Allay that pheasant; Untach that curlew, Unjoint that bittern; Disfigure that peacock; Display that crane; Dismember that hern; Unbrace that mallard; Fruit that chicken; Spoil that hen; Sauce that capon; Lift that swan; Rear that goose; Tire that egg, &c.

Let us hope that time and patience enabled her at last to deal with even so noble a bird as a swan, and that she could 'lift' it to her own and her friends' satisfaction. But it may be she was more skilful with the pen than with the knife, and was so polished in the matter and form of her compositions that we should scarcely believe—had we perused her writings—that they would have come from the same hand that played such an ungraceful part in the dish. It is not given to each to excel in all, and we may well believe that carving was her least virtue. To write well was esteemed an essential part of a woman's education, and it may be a fitting finish to our sketch if we learn something of the epistolary style then in vogue, as shown in the following letter. It is from a daughter in answer to her mother, who would have persuaded her from wearing spots and black patches on her face. Thus:

MADAM—It is as well religion as duty in me to render you all observances, which I shall make my delight as well as employment. My greatest blessing is the continuance of your love, which obligeth me to increase my thankfulness as well as my obedience. I perceive some censorious tongue hath been too busy with my face, and hath endeavoured to throw dirt on it, because it hath been lately spotted in the fashion, a fashion that hath as much innocence to plead for its excuse as custom for its authority. Venus the goddess of beauty was born with a *motticella*, or natural beauty-spot, as if nature had set forth a pattern for art to imitate. You may see every day some little clouds over the face of the sun, yet he is not ashamed of his attraction; nay, some of late with an optick-glass have discovered some *maculæ* or spots in the very face of the sun, yet they are not attributed as his deformities. The moon, when she is at full and shining in her greatest lustre, hath in her face some remarkable

spots, and herein is placed her chiefest glory, as being in everything inconstant but in this. When I put on my mask, which is no more nor better than one great patch, you do commend me for it; and will you be displeased with me for wearing a few black patches? which, if they are cut into stars, do represent unto me whither I would go; or if into little worms, whither I must go: it is the unhappiness of the most harmless things to be subject to the greatest misconstruction. Black bags on the head are not much older than the black spots on the face, and much less may be said for them, only they have had the good luck in the city not to meet with contradiction, although in the country they are much cavil'd at unless worn by gentlewomen of eminent note and quality. Nevertheless, according to the obligation of my duty to give you in all things satisfaction, I am determined to wear them no more, not that I find any such vanity in them, but that by the fruits of my obedience you may perceive what an absolute power your commands have over her who is, Madam, Your most humble and most obedient daughter. S. M.

Here is a style as alien from the popular post-card and sixpenny telegram as is the instantaneous photograph from a carefully painted miniature. All good in their own time and place; but let us beware lest our day should aptly illustrate the proverb of 'Much haste less speed,' for in some of our works we may find ourselves behind instead of in advance of those whom we are accustomed to consider as inferior to ourselves in learning and general culture.

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

JOHN WALLER carefully timed his murderous visit to Daniel Jaggard's bungalow. Jaggard's nigger, Quash, was out of the way, picking oranges for the market from the grove by the river-side. There was no living creature within half a mile of them, when he stepped into the room where Jaggard was sitting writing. A mocking-bird of course did not count. The bird was in a large cage in one corner of the room, while Jaggard's table was by the window fronting the pine-forest.

'You, John!' exclaimed Jaggard, laying down his pen. 'Well, I'm glad to see you. Sit down.'

'No,' said Waller. 'Reckon it's not pleasure I'm here for; it's downright business. Once for all, will you leave Sybil Macdonald to me? It's an old tale by this, and I'm not going through it again. Before you came, she cottoned to me, and no other man. I'm mad on her.—But it's different since'—

'My good man'—

'None o' that.—Yes or no?'

'Well, certainly "No" in that case.'

'Then, by thunder, your last minute has come.'

They were both strong men, at their strongest, but Jaggard was taken unawares. Waller's bowie was in him to the hilt before he could stand up. With a sob of pain, he sidled heavily to the ground in a widening pool of blood. The stab was mortal. He groaned, writhed, tried

to lift himself on his elbows, gasped forth the words, 'John did it,' and was then seized by the death-agony, and died. Waller, who had narrowly watched the whole scene, shrugged his shoulders, wiped the knife upon his victim's clothes, and left the house.

During the progress of this tragedy the mocking-bird had stood to attention, with its head on one side. Only by an occasional quick nervous movement of its long tail did it show sign of life. But when Waller had left the room and stealthily glided into the pinewoods adjacent to the house, then, with erect head and a grand air, the bird mimicked the gruesome spectacle from beginning to end. It gave the various intonations of the two men in their brief interchange of speech; and finished with a wondrous mockery of the dying efforts of its master. This done, the bird stalked to a piece of meat at one end of its cage, and dined to its contentment.

Now, when this sad occurrence came to be discussed, it seemed clear to every one that Quash, the nigger, had murdered his master. What more obvious? Quash was a peculiar man, even for a ducky. His emotion over Jaggard's body was pronounced exaggerated. It was indeed the sublime of black cunning. They carried him off to the prison-house of Waterville, and put his very tears and wailing about the goodness of the man who was dead in the balance against him. There was talk about lynching him. But that the City Marshal took pains to guard against. The City Marshal had a long white beard and a broad brow. He was the Nestor of Hernando county, and he said that it was possible Quash was not the culprit. This oracular ruling saved the nigger.

Among all the orange growers round Waterville none were more interested in the murder than Mrs Macdonald and her daughter Sybil. They had emigrated from England in 1884. Mrs Macdonald was a masterful woman. Sybil was nineteen, with purpled eyes beautiful to look upon, notwithstanding the swart complexion she owed to the Florida sun. It was these purpled eyes that had fascinated Waller. By-and-by, when Jaggard arrived and took up land in the neighbourhood, he also sacrificed to them. Sybil respected Waller as a shrewd steady worker, sure of a competence in a few years. Jaggard she grew to love, though he was poor. But to Mrs Macdonald there was no crime like poverty, and so Sybil had kept her love in her own heart. However, Jaggard had learnt to read in her eyes, and he understood her. Therefore, when the murder was bruited, the shock to the Macdonalds was great, and to Sybil, stunning. 'Mother,' she said quietly, when they had brought over the news, 'I believe I could kill that wicked brute if he were here—kill him with my own hands.'

'It will be all one to Quash in the end whether you or the Marshal kill him,' remarked Mrs Macdonald. 'I guess he'll hang ere this day week.'

It was decided to hold the inquiry in Jaggard's own room. In the interval the house had been put in charge of a poor Seminole who had wandered up into Hernando county. He knew little English, but that little was more than enough, as he had no one to talk to except the mocking-bird, whom, with the craft of a child of nature,

he coaxed into the utterance of a multitude of excruciating noises.

The room was filled, and a block of people stood outside also, between the open window and the pine-forest. All Jaggard's intimate acquaintance had been subpoenaed. Thus the Macdonalds and John Waller himself were there—Sybil and Waller looking somewhat uncomfortable; but Mrs Macdonald with merely a tight mouth, as if she resented such an unprofitable waste of time. Quash, with bracelets on and shedding tears as fast as he could, was present of course. Never did an innocent nigger offer so pitiable a spectacle as he. But no one compassionated him. The only pity at his service was what he might receive from the cold barrels of seven or eight six-shooters.

This lively gathering in the room which it had been wont to consider sacred to itself and its master (whom it loved in bird-fashion), at first frightened the mocking-bird. It tried to obliterate itself in the darkest corner of its cage. By-and-by, however, it appeared to take an interest in the proceedings. It trod forward, inch by inch, until it was as near to the assembly as its cage permitted. Some one gave it a lump of sugar, but it neglected the sugar when the City Marshal began to speak. Quash interrupted the Marshal with a passionate repudiation of something the Marshal said. At this the bird cocked its head, and redoubled its attention.

The evidence was purely circumstantial. Quash, when called upon to defend himself, could say nothing but commonplaces. He loved Mister Jaggard too much to think of killing him—would rather put the knife into his own black bosom: and so forth. He shed additional tears, too. All which was no defence at all. And so, when he was silenced, it was apparent that he would be judged 'guilty.'

But the City Marshal was not satisfied. He had never seen a nigger weep like Quash, he said. 'I want to know something about Jaggard's personal habits,' he observed. 'Was he likely to commit suicide, for instance?—Mr John Waller, you, I think, knew him pretty well.'

'Yes, I knew him well,' replied Waller, standing up, and feeling very sick.

You should have seen the excitement of the mocking-bird when it heard Waller's voice.

'Now, what do you think about this business, Mr Waller?' asked the Marshal.

'John did it! John did it!' screamed the bird, which then, with a splutter of effort, reproduced the sounds emitted by Jaggard when he died. The noise of its wings against its cage-bars drew every eye towards it; and holding fast to the side of the cage, it once more stammered forth in low clear tones, but agonised, as if exhausted: 'John did it.' But what electrified the audience was the unmistakable imitation of a death-rattle and choke with which it favoured them. After the performance, it leaped lightly back to its centre bar, and with the toes of one leg demurely scratched its head-feathers. There was no misconstruing this mock-drama.

The City Marshal was the first to give Waller a look of scrutiny. Sybil and her mother were hardly less alert. As for Quash, his black face lit up with a sudden glory. And the assembled townspeople, having briefly wondered, were led by

the tendency of the eyes of the Marshal, the ladies, and Quash, to look where they looked. What did they see?

Waller, when he heard the bird speak, was not immensely moved; but the terrible iteration of the death-agony put a seal of veracity upon the words, and instantly he realised that his doom was upon him. An acute pain took him at the heart; he went ghastly pale; his eyes dimmed, so that he saw the eyes of his neighbours and acquaintance centred upon him as it were through a mist; and he reeled forwards, doubled upon the chair in front of him. When they tried to lift him, they found that he was dead.

'I rather guess,' observed the City Marshal, 'there's a kind of a link between the inquest we're holding to-day and the one we'll hold to-morrow which it'll be awkward to lay hands on.'

OCEAN CONCERTS.

To those who love the sea, it supplies an ever-varying source of actual and speculative pleasure. Whether it be in the physical delights of boating or sailing, walking over the ozone-laden cliffs, or sitting in dreamy self-forgetfulness where the waves plash ceaselessly against the base of the pier, the illimitable restless ocean is always enchanting to the view; whilst its near contiguity soothes the troubled mind. It is given but to a small minority of the human race thoroughly to appreciate the qualities of the mermaid's beautiful domain. Every one of course is gratified by the appearance of the sea when its placid bosom reflects in rich shades of gold and ultramarine the bright concave hemisphere of sunlit sky overhead. But to the true lover each and all of the changeful moods of his mistress are dear; and so it is with those who are wedded to this great half of nature. There is much of beauty as well as of impressive majesty in the giant waves as they dash their curling crests of tawny-coloured foam against the base of some huge rock, or seize madly upon the pebbly beach as though they would beat their way deep into the earth. And on the day succeeding a storm, what a wealth of romantic association there is in the long sweep of the yet sullen discontented roller which rebelliously submits to the prospect of peaceful calm, so gloriously heralded in by the keen clear air and cloudless sky. What cruel pitiless deeds this angry beauty may have committed in the preceding hours of relentless fury no one shall ever know, and it seems as though her inward spirit were still chafing at being balked of further excesses.

But amidst the many strange sights and sounds of which the ocean is so prolific, few can compare with what may be aptly termed an 'ocean concert.' Perhaps the first picture conveyed to the mind of the reader by such a phrase will be that of a transatlantic liner ploughing her way from Liverpool to New York, whilst in her main saloon some of the passengers are giving the time-honoured and praiseworthy 'instrumental and vocal enter-

tainment, the proceeds of which will be devoted to the funds of the Sailors' Orphanage,' the affair being precisely similar, save for the surroundings, to some hundreds of others which may be in progress at the same moment in various towns and villages of the United Kingdom. No; it is of a very different musical performance we speak, a dramatic and weird natural oratorio not often to be heard or witnessed, full of grandeur and awe and mystery. Come quietly down to the seashore and an imaginary dress-rehearsal shall take place, for the bountiful goddess of fancy will supply any necessary elements which may not be present for the occasion. The night is not dark, for the moon is high in the firmament, and her silvery rays are reproduced in a million glimmering fragments of sheen on the dancing surface of the water. The air is very still, and the waves plash quietly on the sand, whilst far away in the deep blue vista shine little dots of light, the sole indications of the presence of mighty steamers and more graceful sailing vessels.

But what is that white moving mass over there in the horizon? It is a thick wall of fog, which rapidly yet imperceptibly makes its insidious approach, and, almost before the spectator feels its chilly embrace, the fair scene of sea and sky, with the twinkling lights and the dancing moonbeams, is shut out from view, and nothing remains but an opaque luminosity, which obscures all objects except a few stones or a sand-drift at one's feet. This is but the prelude to the concert, which is speedily inaugurated by a hoarse note from the foghorn of a neighbouring steamer. One loud and long-sustained blast, and then, for a moment, silence, which is soon broken by the shrill cry of a seagull hurtling through the air *en route* to some distant cliff. And then, with a terrific concatenation of sound, the entire orchestra exerts its full force. Foghorns of every conceivable note and pitch, some hoarse and deep-toned; some shrieking in the treble clef; some tuned in double notes; some alternately ascending to a third or a fifth; some giving vent to a chord the existence of which Mozart or Beethoven never dreamed of even in their most delirious moments of harmonic conception; some in irregular spasmodic efforts breaking from B flat into F sharp, but all wild, incoherent, weird in the extreme, join in this unique double-forte passage with abnormal unison.

High over this indescribable din resounds the shrill scream of the steam-whistle, fitfully asserting its ear-splitting power by short jerky snaps or long-drawn shrieks; whilst in regular, even pulsation may be heard through all the noise the deep full clang of the warning bells on board the sailing-vessels. For fully a minute does this solemn *ensemble* continue; but at last, as though in obedience to an unseen conductor's baton, the different instruments are hushed, and the sad low song of the waves is heard, as in mournful cadence they fall on the shore, and retreat again to the watery depths, churning up the shells and pebbles and seaweed as they go.

But now another sound breaks on the ears, for in fitful irregular beats the distant bell-buoy,

faithfully performs its duty by warning the unsuspecting mariner of the whereabouts of the hidden rock on which it is anchored. No wonder that Ralph the Rover was roundly cursed by the Abbot of Aberbrothock; and full richly did he deserve the fate which met him on the self-same spot where the bell sank gurgling in the waves. For now, listen to that loud sharp whistle which travels like an arrow through the air. It is the signal that some gallant bark is about to haul in her halliards and change her course, owing to her captain having heard the guardian bell. Not for long, however, does this peaceful interlude continue.

Again does the great crash of instruments come across the water in a grand diapason, seeming as though the musicians of Pandemonium were out for a holiday, and fantastically reminding the listener of some elfin performance of the overture to *William Tell*. Yet, notwithstanding all the force of the steam-breath issuing from multitudinous brazen throats, the gentle wash of the breakers cannot be altogether stilled, whilst the invisibility of the many agents employed in this ocean cantata lends a degree of speculative mystery thereto which can only be felt, not uttered. And so the great concert goes on, becoming more weird and gruesome every moment, until suddenly the listener on the shore is aware that there has been a longer period of silence than usual. At once the mind flies to mad conjecture. What can have happened? Has there been a collision, and have two of those ponderous steamers, with their great staring eyes and huge funnels emitting dense clouds of smoke, remorselessly attacked each other, and gone down with a gurgling rush beneath the waves, accompanied by the cries and prayers of drowning men? And what a fearful fate is this. Oliver Wendell Holmes somewhere speaks of the two vessels running, from the moment they were launched, from different ends of the same groove, so that, no matter how tortuous or extended its windings, they were finally destined to crash together in its track with a sickening thud. Has one of these dread encounters taken place out there in the midst of the watery waste, and are the other vessels rendered silent with awful expectancy of the same fate? Even while such thoughts course through the brain, a veil is taken from before the eyes. As though by a magician's wish, the ocean discards its foggy shroud, the moonbeams again ripple on the water, and the fleeting lights stand out in diamond specks on the deep ultramarine carpet. So after all the fogbank has only come up from the seaward with a gentle breeze, and its white ghostlike wraiths are now vanishing over the distant hills.

Yet its advent was sufficient to cause anxiety on board every vessel in the offing.—Hark! What causes that loud throbbing sound away to the left? It is a large steamship, whose iron framework has polarised her compasses, and when the fog cleared off, her captain found that she was heading direct for the land.

As we turn to leave the grand amphitheatre which has so lately staged our ocean concert, a noise of puffing and blowing and tumbling about in the water is heard at some little distance. It is a porpoise, perhaps a descendant of the gentle-

man who aided the dolphin in his endeavour to win for Neptune the affections of Amphitrite. He also has been an auditor of the oceanic cantata, and he has evidently enjoyed it.

SOMETHING GREAT.

THE trial was ended—the vigil past;
All clad in his arms was the knight at last,
The goodliest knight in the whole wide land,
With eyes that shone with a purpose grand.
The king looked on him with gracious eyes,
And said: 'He is meet for some high emprise.'
To himself he thought: 'I will conquer fate;
I will surely die, or do something great.'

So from the palace he rode away;
There was trouble and need in the town that day:
A child had strayed from his mother's side
Into the woodland dark and wide.
'Help!' cried the mother, with sorrow wild—
'Help me, Sir Knight, to seek my child!
The hungry wolves in the forest roam;
Help me to bring my lost one home!'

He shook her hand from his bridle rein:
'Alas! poor mother, you ask in vain.
Some meaner succour will do, maybe,
Some squire or varlet of low degree.
There are mighty wrongs in the world to right;
I keep my sword for a noble fight.
I am sad at heart for your baby's fate,
But I ride in haste to do something great.'

One wintry night, when the sun had set,
A blind old man by the way he met:
'Now, good Sir Knight, for Our Lady's sake,
On the sightless wanderer pity take!
The wind blows cold, and the sun is down:
Lead me, I pray, till I reach the town.'
'Nay,' said the knight; 'I cannot wait;
I ride in haste to do something great.'

So on he rode in his armour bright,
His sword all keen for the longed-for fight.
'Laugh with us—laugh!' cried the merry crowd.
'Oh weep!' wailed others, with sorrow bowed.
'Help us!' the weak and weary prayed.
But for joy, nor grief, nor need he stayed.
And the years rolled on, and his eyes grew dim,
And he died—and none made moan for him.

He missed the good that he might have done;
He missed the blessings he might have won.
Seeking some glorious task to find,
His eyes to all humbler work were blind.
He that is faithful in that which is least,
Is bidden to sit at the heavenly feast.
Yet men and women lament their fate,
If they be not called to do something great.

FLORENCE TYLEE.

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MEN OF THOUGHT AND MEN OF ACTION.

THERE is a well-known sentence in Lockhart's *Life of Scott* which has had perhaps undue importance attached to it. 'Scott,' says Lockhart, 'never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of life. To have done things worthy to be written was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach who had only written things worthy to be read.'

Scott was by nature the humblest of all men of genius, and in this respect presents a singular contrast to men like Milton and Wordsworth, who stood so loftily on the consciousness of their own powers. Milton and Wordsworth willingly recognised the conventional distinctions of society, yet in his heart each was profoundly convinced that by the special gift committed to him he was a vessel chosen to far higher uses than prince or statesman or commander. This is certainly the true mental attitude we look for in creative genius of the first order. The work of Scott is doubtless on a lower plane than the work of Milton and Wordsworth; yet in its kind it is so unique, so fruitful in influences that make glad the heart, that we feel a certain disappointment when we learn that he would have preferred to be a general or a statesman rather than the man of genius he was. But, as has been said, it is possible to attach too much importance to Lockhart's words, even though certain expressions of Scott's own may seem to support them. The opinion they suggest may be due partly to Scott's own humble estimate of himself, and they may be partly a concession to the conventions of the society in which he moved. It has often been said that of all the joys that fall to the lot of man, the highest and most enduring is the unrestrained exercise of his own best gifts. During the greatest part of his life, this good fortune was Scott's; and if his readers may trust the impression they gain from

his work, never did genius fulfil its function more happily, more free from that distemperature which nature so often makes the condition of her choicest gifts. In spite, therefore, of Scott's own word to the contrary, the very nature of things leads us to believe that in moments when he was most himself, he, like all other men of creative genius, was conscious of the real value of his endowment, and had no impotent desires to be one of the 'masters in the higher departments of practical life.'

But apart from their reference to Scott, the words of Lockhart are misleading as to the true relation in which men of thought stand to men of action. A sentence of Emerson goes far deeper, and is a far truer statement of the real relation between them. 'Homer's words,' he says, 'are as costly and admirable to Homer as Agamemnon's victories to Agamemnon.' This is said in Emerson's quaint manner; but in this remark he has sacrificed less to epigram than is often the case with him. It is but the simple truth that to the highest utterance of the poet or inspired teacher, no less than to the victories of the great commander, there must have gone all that makes human character strong and admirable. Milton and Goethe and Dante strike us as being essentially as much men of action as Cromwell or Napoleon, and this not because these poets actually took their share in the public life of their day, but because the quality of their poetical work is such that we inevitably think of them as 'kings of men.' What Heine said of Luther is, with the necessary variation, true of all great writers—their words are battles.

Whether or not Scott was of opinion that the statesman or the commander is a being of a higher order than the poet, it is certain that the feeling of inferiority has usually been on the other side. The story of Wolfe at Quebec immediately occurs to one as a curious comment on the opinion ascribed to Scott. It is satisfactory to know that the truth of this story has been put above question, since a more striking tribute was never paid to that divineness of the poet's function

which men have never failed to recognise since they began to think. When Wolfe exclaimed, as he was being rowed to the scene of his brilliant victory and untimely death, that he would rather be the author of Gray's lines than the conqueror of Quebec, he was undoubtedly but giving expression to the feeling of the best men of his type. But even in great men of action of the least scrupulous character, it is curious to note the distinct recognition of the claims higher than their own that the great men of letters have upon the world. The absurd attempts of Richelieu and Frederick the Great to distinguish themselves as poets, while they are a lamentable proof of human vanity, are certainly a notable tribute to the dignity of literary genius. The illustrious instance of Aristotle and his pupil Alexander the Great, is the impressive reminder to all these great personages of what account they are held in the final estimate of things. It is indeed when we think of such a pair as Aristotle and Alexander that the ordinary distinction between men of thought and men of action seems to break down. Which seem to us now the greater reality, the writings of the one or the victories of the other? The old conception of Alexander as a mere soldier of fortune on a large scale is no longer held. There is good reason to believe that he saw the real significance of his work in opening communication between the East and the West. Yet, as a living force in the thoughts of succeeding generations, no doubt can exist as to which, the pupil or the master, has the higher claim to consideration.

The question has of late been again renewed, as to the real importance of famous books in effecting great revolutions in human affairs. In questions of this kind, of course, dogmatic answers cannot be given. On the one hand it may be held that the tendencies to which the writer appeals are already in action, and that these tendencies are ultimately determined by the conditions of the people among whom they are found. But it may be also maintained that it is the very function of a book to evoke tendencies, and supply the inspiration necessary to realise them. The crucial test of both theories is the case of the French Revolution. Would that event have taken place at the time and in the manner it did, if Voltaire and Rousseau had not written? Perhaps the saying of Fletcher of Saltoun is as near the truth on the subject as we are likely to get, even with all the aids of systematic philosophy. There are certainly remarkable instances on record, which it would be sheer perversity not to recognise, of the power of literature to inflame the minds of a people to great undertakings. Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, and Luther's *Address to the German Nobility*, are as notable examples as can be cited of the truth of what has been said—that words have on occasion a force and reality beyond that of action. But besides this revolutionary

literature, there is another class of books which do not appeal to the passions of men, but which lay deep the foundations on which the society of the future must rest. The influence of such books cannot by their very nature be immediate; often, indeed, the generation among whom they have been produced is hardly aware of their existence. Spinoza is a curious example of a great thinker hardly known to his own contemporaries, but who has since so powerfully influenced the speculation of philosophers and the imaginations of poets. To the vital force of such books we need seek for no higher tribute than that paid to Adam Smith by Pitt, and lately emphasised by a great statesman of our own day.

It is apt to be forgotten that the broad distinction we usually make between men of thought and men of action is really a comparatively modern notion. It is simply the complex conditions of modern civilisation that have thrust the distinction upon us. In the nature of things, the gifts that go to make the really great writer would in other circumstances make of him an energetic ruler or commander. If we go to societies simpler than our own, we see the two characters conjoined in the most natural manner. In ancient Greece, one of the greatest of her poets was first in fight, first in manly sports, and first in letters. The greatest of the Greek historians was a military commander and a statesman; and it was said of Julius Cæsar that he wrote as well as he fought. It is worthy of note, also, that in the sixteenth century, during the Revival of Learning, and before the modern division of labour in intellectual things had taken place, the majority of the most eminent writers were likewise illustrious men of affairs.

It was the opinion of Locke and Dr Johnson that genius consists in great general powers accidentally determined to some special line of activity. The definition is, of course, utterly unsatisfactory, since it leaves unexplained the very point that calls for explanation—what it is in the man of genius that responds to the determining circumstances. Yet it must be regarded as a singular comment on this opinion that Wordsworth, the most consciously self-dedicated of poets, was firmly convinced that he had by nature the temper and aptitudes of a soldier. According to Lord Macaulay, Byron during his short career in Greece evinced all the qualities of a successful commander and administrator. It is surely, also, no fanciful supposition to think of Carlyle fulfilling the function of his countryman Knox in the sixteenth century. It will be remembered that a similar thing has been said of Scott himself—that, had he so chosen, his general force of mind and balance of character must have made him eminent in his original profession. All this is certainly far from making good the opinion of Johnson and Locke. Because Byron might have made a brilliant soldier and Scott a weighty lawyer, it does not follow that every great soldier and lawyer might be a poet like Byron or a

novelist like Scott. What it proves is only that literary genius of a high order is supported by qualities of mind and soul that ensure an extraordinary career in practical life.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XLV.—PACTOLUS INDEED!

AFTER a sumptuous lunch, Hugh and the Russian returned to the rooms. To the rooms!—say rather to the treasure-house of Croesus! On the steps, they passed a young English lad, who looked barely twenty. 'Don't tell mamma I played,' he was saying to a companion ruefully as they passed him. 'She'd break her heart over it, if she ever knew it.' But Hugh had no time to notice in passing the pathos of the remark. Who could bother his head about trifles like that, forsooth, when he's coining his hundreds on the turn of a roulette table?

He meant to win hundreds—thousands—now. He meant to build up a colossal fortune—for Elsie, for Elsie.

These years had taught him a certain sort of selfish selfishness. It was no longer for his own use that he wanted money; he longed to lay it all down at Elsie's feet. She was his Queen: he would do her homage.

The tables had filled up three files deep with players by this time. Hugh had hard work to edge his way dexterously in between them: the Russian followed with equal difficulty. But a croupier, recognising them, motioned both with a courteous wave of his hand to two vacant chairs he had kept on purpose. Men who win—or lose—large sums command respect instinctively at Monte Carlo. Hugh and the Russian had each qualified, on one or other of these opposite grounds, for a seat at the table. Hugh's turn by the system, however, had not yet come on: he had to wait, according to his self-imposed law, till one of the four middle numbers should happen to turn up before he again began staking. So he gazed around with placid interest for some minutes at his crowded fellow-players. Success excites some nervous heads; it always made Hugh Massinger placid. There they sat and stood, not less, he thought, than five hundred busy men and women, fifty or sixty jostling one another round each separate board, playing away as if for dear life, and risking fortunes giddily on the jump of a pea in that meaningless little whirligig of a spinning roulette wheel. She was a German, he conjectured, that flat-faced impassive lady opposite, gambling cautiously but very high, and laden on her neck and arms with an atrocious dead-weight of vulgarly expensive jewelry. Then the bold but handsome young girl at her side, with the exquisite bonnet and well-cut mantle, and the remarkably full-blown Pennsylvanian twang, must surely by her voice be an American citizen. By her voice and by her play; for she risked her broad gold hundred-franc pieces with true-born American recklessness of consequence. And there, a little way off, stands a newly married English-

man, with his pretty small bride nestling close up to him in wifely expostulation. Hugh could even catch snatches of their whispered colloquy: 'Don't, George, don't.'—'Just this once, Nellie: a napoleon on red.'—Black wins: he loses.—'H'm, the chances there are only even. If I win next time, I get nothing but my own old napoleon back again. I'll go it one better now: a nap on a column. Then if I win, you see, I get four times my stake, Nellie.'—Lost again! How fast they rake it in!—'Well, then, I'll back a number this time.'—'Oh, but, George dear, you know you really can't afford it.'—George, unabashed by her wifely reproof, plumps down his napoleon on 32. Whir goes the roulette.—'Dix-huit,' cries the croupier, and sweeps in the gold with a careless curve of his greedy hand-rake. Poor souls! In his heart, Hugh Massinger was genuinely sorry for them. If only they had known his infallible system!

But even as he thought it, he roused himself with a start. Eighteen was one of the very numbers he had just been waiting for. No time for otiose reflections now; no time for foolish waste of sympathy: the moment had arrived for vigorous action. With a sharp decisive air, he plunged down a hundred louis on white. Bystanders stared and whispered and nudged one another. White won, and he took up his winnings with the utmost complacency. How quickly one accustoms one's self to these big figures! A hundred louis seemed nothing now, in pursuance of the system. Then he glanced across at George, poor luckless George, with a mute inquiry. How that smooth-faced young Englishman envied him his success; for George, poor George, had lost again. 'Madame,' Hugh said, addressing himself with an apologetic smile to the pretty young wife, 'allow me to venture ten louis for you.'—The blushing girl shrank back timidly. Hugh laid down ten pieces of gold on a number again, backing his own luck separately by the regular rule on a column of figures. Chance seemed to favour him: he was 'in the vein,' as gamblers say in their hateful dialect. The number won for poor shrinking little Mrs Nellie, and the column also won as well for Hugh himself. He pulled in his own pile of gold carelessly, and handed the other to the pretty young Englishwoman. 'It isn't ours,' she murmured with a shy look. 'You mustn't ask me; I really couldn't take it.'

Hugh laughed, and pressed it on the anxious husband, who cast a sidelong glance at the heap of gold, and finally in some vague half-hearted way decided upon accepting it. 'Now go,' Hugh said with a fatherly air. 'You don't understand this sort of thing, you know. You belong to the class predestined to be cheated. The sooner you leave this place the better. Let nothing induce you ever to risk another penny as long as you live at these precious tables.' We can all be so wise and prudent for others.

'But it's really yours,' the young Englishman went on, glancing down at it sheepishly. 'You risked your own money, you see, to win it.'

'Not at all,' Hugh answered with his pleasantest smile; he knew how to do a gracious act graciously. 'I've taken back my own ten louis out of it for myself. The rest is your wife's. I staked it in her name. It was her good luck alone that won for both of us. If you compel me

to keep it, you spoil my break. A burst of fortune must end somewhere. Don't stand in my way, please, for such a mere trifle.'

The Englishman's hand closed, half reluctantly, over the ill-gotten money, and Hugh, undisturbed, turned back again with a nod to his own gambling. The episode warmed him up to his work. A pleasant sense of a generous action prettily performed inspired and invigorated his play from that moment. He went on with his game with an approving conscience. Some people's consciences approve so blandly. The other players, too, observed and applauded. Gamblers overflow with petty superstitions. One of their profoundest is the rooted belief that meanness and generosity bring each its due reward: whoever gambles in a lavish free-hearted open-handed way is sure, they think, to become the favourite of fortune.

The Russian, on the other hand, kept on losing steadily. Now and again, indeed, he won for a while on some great *coup*, raking in his fifty or a hundred louis; but that was by exception: for the most part, he frittered away his winnings time after time, and had recourse with alarming frequency of iteration to his bundle of notes, from which he changed a thousand francs every half-hour or so with persistent ill-fortune. Turn upon turn, he saw his money ruthlessly swept in by the relentless bank with unvarying regularity. Now it was zero that turned up, to confound his reckoning, and the croupier with his bow made a clean sweep, offhand, of the entire table: now it was a long succession of left-hand numbers that won with a rush, while he had staked his gold with unvarying mishap upon the right-hand column. It was agonising each time to him to see the bank carelessly ladling out large sums to Hugh, while he himself went on losing and losing. But at all hazards, he would follow his calculations to the bitter end. Luck must have a turn somewhere; and at anyrate, plunging would never improve matters. Hugh pitied him from his heart, poor ignorant devil. Why couldn't he find out with an exercise of reason that obvious flaw in his own system?

A thousand francs on seven! The table stares, gapes, and whispers. Heavy for a number! Who puts it on? This Monsieur on the seat here—pointing to Hugh. The croupier shrugs his shoulder and spins. Out jumps the pea. Fourteen wins.—Monsieur was very nearly right again, *voyez-vous?*—Fourteen, my friend, is just the precise double of seven. Monsieur's luck is something truly miraculous.—He goes a thousand francs once more, still on seven. *Ciel!* but he has the courage of his convictions, *mon ami!* Twenty-three wins.—Wrong again! He drops on that a second thousand. But with what grace! A thousand francs is nothing to these milords. Hugh smiles imperturbably and stakes a third. On seven again! The man is wonderful. What wins this time?—'Sept gagne,' cries everybody in hushed admiration; and Hugh, more sphinx-like in his smile than ever, but conscious of a dozen admiring eyes fixed full upon him, takes coolly up his thirty-five thousand. Thirty-five thousand francs is not to be sneezed at. Fourteen hundred pounds sterling! The biggest haul yet, but nothing when you're accustomed to it. What a run of luck! Monsieur was in the vein indeed. He played on and on, more

elated than ever. At this rate, he would soon earn a fortune for Elsie.

Elsie, Elsie, Elsie, Elsie! Through the din and noise of that crowded gambling-hell, one sacred name still rang distinct and clear in his ears. It was all for Elsie, for Elsie, for Elsie! He must make himself rich, to marry Elsie.

He played on still with careless eagerness till the tables closed—played with a continuous run of luck, often varying, of course—for who minds a few hundreds to the bad now and then when he's winning one time with another his thousands?—but on the whole a run of luck persistently favourable. Raffalevsky, meanwhile, had played and lost. At the end of the day, as the lackeys came in to bow the world out with polite smiles, they both rose and left the rooms together. Then a sudden thought flashed across his soul. Too late to return to San Remo now! Awkward as it was, he must stop the night out at Monte Carlo. Full of himself—of play and of Elsie—he had actually forgotten all about Winifred!

They walked across side by side to the *Hotel de Paris*. Hugh was far too feverishly excited now with his day's play to care in the least about the slight and the insult to that poor dead girl. The mere indecency of it was all that he minded. A cynical hardness possessed him at last. Nobody need know. He strolled to the telegraph office and boldly sent off a message to the *pension*:

'Detained at Mentone with sympathising friends. Return to-morrow. Make all arrangements on my account.—MASSINGER.'

Then he presented himself at the bureau of the *Hotel de Paris*. Monsieur had no luggage; but no matter for that: the hotel made haste to accommodate him at once with the best of rooms, not even requiring a deposit beforehand. All Monte Carlo knew well, indeed, that Monsieur had been winning. His name and fame had been noised abroad by many-headed trumpeters. His pockets were literally stuffed with gold. He was the hero of the day. He had carried everything at the Casino before him. Attentive servants awaited his merest beck or nod; everybody was pleased; the world smiled on him. Alphonse, Marie, look well after Monsieur! Monsieur has had the very best of fortune.

He supped with Raffalevsky in a beautifully decorated *salle-à-manger*. They recounted to one another, gleefully, gloomily, their winnings and losses. The totals were heavy. They totted them up with varying emotions. Hugh had won three thousand four hundred pounds. Raffalevsky had made a hole in his larger capital to the tune of something like two thousand seven hundred. At the announcement, Hugh smiled his most benevolent and philosophical smile. 'After all,' he said, as he scanned the wine-card, toothpick in hand, in search of a perfectly sound Burgundy, 'if one man wins, another *must* lose. You have there the initial weak point of gambling. It's at bottom a truly anti-social amusement. But these things equalise themselves in the longrun; they equalise themselves by the doctrine of averages. Taken collectively, we're better off than we were at lunch at anyrate. Then, his Serenity of Monaco had pocketed a couple of hundred louis out of the pair of us, viewed in the lump. This evening, on the contrary, we're seven hun-

ded pounds to the good, as a firm, against him.—I like to beat these hereditary plunderers. It's a comfort to think that, in spite of everything we're more than even with him on the day's transactions !'

ODDITIES IN ITALY.

THE American tourist was not far wrong, perhaps, who described Italy as 'a one-horse place anyhow.' Absurdities are certainly to be noticed there which are met with nowhere else. To begin with, Italy is a land of beggars, and a more barefaced, shameless set of swindlers do not exist the wide world over. In Italy, every one who is too lazy to work for a living begs for one. The young and the old, the cripple and the strong, the ragged and the well dressed, all are at it from morning till night. In the streets, your path is blocked by mendicants; in the shops, your sleeve is plucked by them; in church, they kneel beside you. If your carriage stops a moment, a score of dirty hands appear before the windows. The nuisance is everlasting and indescribable. The blessings which an Italian beggar showers upon his benefactors are only equalled by the curses he heaps upon the stony-hearted who refuse him aid. At every corner, in every town, a beggar can be found at every hour of the day. The really cripple are drawn to their places in handcarts in the morning, and called for and taken away by their friends at dark. If time hangs heavy on their hands, they smoke their cigars in luxury, literally sitting still, while wealth rains into their laps. For persistent attack, unblushing effrontery, and resolute mien, the American book-agent fades into insignificance beside the humblest of Italian beggars.

The Italian is either very musical or very discordant. The real musicians delight in wandering about the streets under the starlit sky thrumming guitars or mandolins and making night musical; but the discordant ones pass your windows yelling their songs with such utter disregard to time and tune as to be perfectly sickening. The police take no notice of these midnight disturbances, which would certainly not be tolerated in any other civilised land.

In the shops, fixed prices are unheard of. The Italian shopkeeper starts in to make as much as possible out of his customer, and invariably demands for the article he is selling three or four times its value and what he expects to receive. The customer, on the other hand, listens to the price asked, and offers just one-fourth of it. Then comes a gradual meeting half-way, attended with piteous cries on the part of the seller, countless gesticulations, and assurances that he is being robbed, but is compelled to sell owing to the dullness of trade. A scene such as the following can be witnessed any day in Italy :

Tourist to Shopkeeper. How much are these gloves ?

Shopkeeper. Ten francs, honoured sir.

T. I will give you four francs for them.

S. The illustrious stranger is fond of joking !

T. Come along now—four francs or nothing.

S. Sir, it is impossible. Think of my starving family; have pity on—

T. That'll do, that'll do. (*Exit.*)

Half an hour later, the tourist passes the same

shop, when out runs the proprietor with a neatly folded parcel in his hand. 'Gentle sir,' says he, 'here are your gloves. I would rather accept four francs than offend you.—Is there anything else your honour requires to-day ?'

The workman in Italy performs his tasks at the same rate at which the average cabman drives when engaged by the hour. Everything he does is done slowly and lazily, with frequent pauses for rest, and numerous intervals for smoking and gossip. An English foreman would go mad in a day if compelled to superintend the labours of a squad of these slow-going, jabbering, gesticulating idlers. There is a story told illustrative of their proverbial sloth to the effect that the Italians once determined to build the largest ship that ever floated. For years the work went slowly on, and at last it neared completion; but alas, when the last half of the vessel was finished, the first half was found to be unseaworthy and rotten from old age.

In the public offices, one meets with vexatious delays, and absurdly little red-tape rules that are in the highest degree exasperating. It will hardly be credited that the delivery of letters to the householder is left entirely to the discretion of the letter-carriers. If the weather is fine and the postman has no more pressing engagement, the mail has a fair chance of being promptly delivered; but a shower of rain or an unusually good opera shuts off the chance completely. Registered letters sent to England must be sealed with wax, whilst letters to America must have none. A letter tendered for registration which is enclosed in a mourning or black-bordered envelope is refused, although no reason for this is ever vouchsafed or given. The money-order office—there is but one in every city—contains but a single clerk. This unfortunate wretch is supposed to be kept writing like lightning from early morn till dewy eve. When wearied, he pauses to roll and light a cigarette, or yawn and stretch himself—sometimes varying the performance by indulging in a friendly chat with a fellow-labourer in an adjoining department. Meantime the weary public waits patiently, nor ever dreams of agitating for a speedier and better organised system. It is by no means an unusual thing to wait three or four hours in the post-office for the issue of a money order, whilst an hour's delay is so common as to be unworthy of a moment's notice.

In the telegraph offices the same delays exist; and it is only necessary to mention concerning them, that the scoring out of a word, the addition of a sentence, or the alteration of a single letter, necessitates the rewriting of the entire message. Truly, time is not money in sunny Italy !

In Italy the churches are always open; prayers are for ever being chanted, confessions for ever being heard, and the incense-swingers never pause in their labours. All seats are free, and lord and beggar worship side by side. The weary tramp, the busy housewife, the successful merchant, all drop in to rest a while and to set apart a moment from the cares and duties of the day. The baptisteries adjoin the churches, and, like them, are always open. A priest, also, is always in readiness to perform the rite if desired.

The gesticulations of the Italians are simply wonderful. The shrugging of shoulders, tearing of hair, and waving of arms which goes on every-

where is a source of never-ending amusement to the traveller. Another sight which excites his derision is that of grown-up men kissing one another, which they often do most affectionately when they meet.

The Italian sportsman would, anywhere but in his own country, be held in contempt. He is *par excellence* a pot-hunter, and no quarry is too small, no game too insignificant for him. He is gorgeous in appearance with his retinue of dogs, his huge top-boots and spaciouly pocketed coat, his cartridge belts, winding-horn, and feathered cap; but his shots are all 'sitting' ones; and he will stalk a little thrush or linnet all day, and feel proud and content if he brings it home as the solitary result of his day's outing. There are no songbirds in Italy, for the simple reason that they are all shot at sight by the hordes of would-be sportsmen, who massacre them by the thousand. It is a sorry sight to see the market stalls piled high with feathered songsters, while woods and fields lie silent and unmusical. Many of the small birds are snared by the peasants for market purposes after a decidedly novel fashion. A spot being selected for the day's operations, a few cages containing some loud singing birds are hung in the neighbouring trees or thickets to allure their wilder brethren; a perch is then driven into the open ground, upon which is fastened a tame owl. This unfortunate bird, dazzled by the sunlight, and unable to fly or move away, bobs lazily up and down, cogitating no doubt as to how he may best escape from bondage. His ludicrous movements, odd as it may seem, attract the birds from all sides, which fly round him and perch upon the trees. Alas for their confiding innocence; the branches and boughs have all been smeared with the strongest birdlime; once they alight, escape is impossible. When evening comes, they are torn away by cruel hands, their necks are quickly wrung, and the owl is rewarded with a lump of raw meat and put away until the slaughter of the innocents is commenced again.

The Italian cab-drivers as a rule have the neatest of cabs and the fastest of horses. Some of them have certainly prehistoric vehicles and antediluvian quadrupeds; but the light *carozella*, drawn by the fast-trotting Sardinian pony, affords a means of locomotion unexcelled anywhere. The drivers are exorbitant in their demands to tourists and foreigners; but, on the other hand, will, if pressed, make a bargain which is but little in advance of the ordinary street-car fare, so that driving becomes a really inexpensive luxury. Carriages pass each other to the right instead of to the left, as in England, and it seems to be the rule that vehicles shall have the right of way over all pedestrians. It is no uncommon thing to see three or four carriages with horses at full gallop in the midst of the most crowded thoroughfare; and the idea of pulling up at a crossing, slowing at a corner, or waiting for a foot-passenger to pass, is a thing unheard of.

The Italian police are divided into so many different bodies and attired in so many different uniforms as to bewilder the average tourist. They are armed with swords instead of batons; but in spite of their clanking sabres, magnificent cocked hats, and nodding plumes, they are on the whole an inferior lot of men. Judging from the rate of pay they receive, this is not to be wondered at,

the marvel being that recruits for such a poorly remunerated service are ever found at all.

The trains in Italy are started by the sound of trumpet instead of by whistle, and the switch and flag men are—to use an Irishism—generally women.

In Italy, the men seldom or never shave themselves, and as a consequence barbers' shops abound. But one misses the luxurious ease of the transatlantic barbers' chairs, and groans escape involuntarily from the victim who finds himself wedged in the narrowest of seats, whilst a chattering apprentice experiments upon his chin. There is no fixed price for haircutting or shaving, the amount to be paid being left to the discretion of the customer. This is decidedly inconvenient, and leaves the stranger in awkward doubt, by which naturally the barber profits. It is only just to add, however, that a single copper will be accepted with as much dignity and as many thanks as would the largest fee.

Italy is the land of high taxation; everything is taxed, and the country is groaning under the awful load. Custom-house officers swarm in myriads over the land, and are so closely stationed to one another that it is a common thing for a traveller to have his luggage opened and searched half-a-dozen times in the course of a hundred yards. It will hardly be credited that a pound of cake, an egg, or a fowl bought in Pisa will be seized and confiscated at the Leghorn gates, only fifteen miles away, unless duty is paid on it.

In many of the streets of the larger Italian cities are to be found dinner stalls where for a sou a plate of temptingly cooked fish or dish of macaroni may be bought. The beautiful cooking, the freshness of the viands, the snowy whiteness of the tablecloth, and the good-natured gossip or banter of the stall-keeper, make the repast a most delicious one; and beside it, the ordinary English coffee-house meal, and the disgustingly dirty penny dinner of the New York coffee-stalls, are nowhere.

The opera in Italy is of course a national institution. The theatres are very large, the seats wide and roomy, and the ventilation almost perfect. Smoking is allowed in all parts of the house, and the rule is freely taken advantage of. The musical taste of the audience is evinced by the soft humming and beating of time which one sees and hears on all sides. The chorus of a popular song is not unfrequently joined in by the spectators; and a singer ending an air, or taking an unusually high note, is never allowed to finish it, for fear of failure, the effort being invariably drowned in vociferous applause.

The Italian soldiers, with the exception of the grenadier regiments, are decidedly undersized; but they are neatly uniformed, and but for the system of recruiting by conscription, would be popular. The officers, unlike our British warriors, are compelled to wear their uniform continually. Whilst on duty, a broad blue sash is worn diagonally across the tunic; but on no occasion and under no pretext may the uniform be laid aside or exchanged for mufti. Generals alone are exempt from this regulation, but even they must report the when and wherefore of donning their civilian attire. No officer is allowed to marry unless he can deposit one thousand pounds sterling with the War Office. This sum is at the husband's death

returned to the widow, and is supposed to keep her from the necessity of applying to the country for a pension. As the sum is a large one, and but few of the officers can afford its outlay, there are more bachelors than Benedicts amongst them.

The Italian boatman stands with his back towards you, and rows in this position by pushing the oars forward instead of pulling them backward. The boats, even when built for pleasure, are heavy and unwieldy things, and the oars so thick and stiff as to be well-nigh unmanageable.

Italian sweethearts are at marriage tied in a double knot, for, not content with the church ceremony performed by the priest, the law compels them to be also married by the mayor at the council chamber. Instead of wedding-cake, sweetmeats are provided, and distributed with lavish hands.

The death-bed in Italy is never the scene of tender parting or affectionate farewell. Whether on account of custom or emotion, it is hard to say, but the Italians declare they cannot bear to watch the last struggles of dying relatives, and so they leave the room in charge of strangers and nurses, and only return when the weary eyes have closed for ever and the struggling limbs are at rest.

No ladies ever dream of marketing in Italy; this duty is relegated entirely to the cook. To ask the price of a pound of butter or buy a melon in the market is unladylike and vulgar; and the mistress, if her dinner be not to the liking of her lord, can only wring her hands and bemoan the stupidity of her witless cook.

When day is over and the night draws down, the Italian seeks a café, where he may sip his cup of coffee or eat his ice and smoke his cigar in peace and comfort. Here, in the open air, listening to the band or strumming his own guitar, he spends an evening of delightful pleasure. He has endured the burning noontide, why grudge him the evening rest? He takes life easily, and as he goes, smokes and eats and sings his songs. The cafés are invariably filled, and the waiters are kept busy. The customary gratuity of a half-penny, which would make an English waiter burst with indignation, is received with murmured blessings and profound obeisances.

Italian landlords must imagine that the dwellers outside their classic shores have small faces, or never wash at all, for the jugs and basins provided in their rooms are truly lilliputian. On paying his bill, the traveller always finds that the soap has been charged for, as if it was an unusual luxury.

Besides being natural musicians, the Italians are natural gamblers. The national game of Lotto, now under the patronage and control of the government, is patronised to an incredible extent. The chances of winning are less than few and far between; but rich and poor, priest and peasant, patronise it with persistent regularity. The poor actually go without food and pawn the very beds they lie on in order to buy their weekly tickets. The game itself is of simple form: numbers from one to ninety inclusive are placed in a large revolving wheel, and at noon on Saturday, in the presence of the municipal officers and government representatives, five numbers are drawn forth by five different children gathered at random from the waiting crowd. These numbers are then

publicly proclaimed as the winning numbers for the week, and telegraphed far and near. Previous to the Saturday drawing—that is to say from Sunday morning till Friday night—tickets are sold. The purchaser chooses his own numbers, and he may buy two or three or four or five just as he pleases. It is needless to say that to choose five winning numbers is akin to a miracle. Two numbers not unfrequently come out, and occasionally a lucky investor hits on three; but these are rare exceptions, and, as at Monaco and other public tables, the percentage is so heavily in favour of the bank that the people lose their money with delicious regularity. To prevent cheating and possible collusion, the offices are closed for the sale of tickets on Friday night, and remain unopened till the day after the drawing takes place. The prizes vary in value in proportion to the amount paid for the ticket, and are tempting enough to keep the poor still poorer, while the government coffers grow full and overflow.

The Italian lover has always an eye to the main chance. Before venturing upon any marriage proposal, the lover makes it his business to find out what dowry is likely to be settled on the bride, and should it not come up to his expectations, at once transfers his affections elsewhere. The question of dowry is discussed, and the amount bargained for, much in the same way as the shopkeepers haggle over their wares; and the unfortunate girl who has no money in her own right, or upon whom her parents can afford to make no settlement, stands but a sorry chance of securing a husband, and accepts the inevitable with a calmness worthy of a better cause.

The bride in Italy is always supposed to furnish all the household linen for her establishment; not to be able to do so is a matter of disgrace. The number of articles included in her trousseau is enormous, and each one must be numbered by dozens. This is an excellent rule as far as the husband is concerned, for it frees him from any anxiety for years to come on account of the state of his wife's wardrobe; but, on the other hand, the poor are often unable to scrape together the clothes which the unwritten rule of society demands from them, and in many cases marriages are postponed from year to year until the requisite amount is provided.

This article has grown apace, or allusion might be made to other oddities still. Let what has been written therefore suffice. To the truth of the foregoing remarks many who read them will doubtless be able to testify.

BOLSOVER BROTHERS.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

LABURNUM COTTAGE was a small but genteel domicile standing in its own plot of garden ground, in rather a lonely part of the suburbs of Medbury Royal. About two months previously to Walter's visit, it had been taken, furnished, by a certain Mr Evan Bolsover, a man about forty years old, and presumably a bachelor. Like so many of the male inhabitants of Medbury, Mr Bolsover went to London by train every morning and returned every evening. A few times, however, business had detained him in town all night,

on which occasions he had not failed to give Mrs Mims, his housekeeper, notice beforehand of his intention.

Mr Bolsover seemed to have no friends, or acquaintances even, in Medbury, neither did any one seem to be aware of the nature of the business which took him daily to the City. Two or three times he had brought a friend home with him—it was always the same person—who stayed all night and went away with him after breakfast next morning.

The only other inmate of the Cottage was Mrs Mims, the housekeeper, who was the person chosen by Mr Bolsover out of a score of other applicants for the post in response to his advertisement in the *Medbury Weekly News*. It was a wonder to many people why 'Mother Mims,' as she was called, should have been selected out of so many apparently far more eligible candidates. To begin with, she was short-sighted and partially deaf; all her movements were slow and mechanical, and any orders or instructions which might be given her, beyond those of the simplest kind, had usually to be impressed upon her a second time before she seemed to thoroughly comprehend them. She had large, vacant, fishy-looking eyes; and her face was generally as devoid of feeling or expression as the figure-head of some storm-battered Indianan. On the other hand, the woman was warranted as being clean, honest, and thoroughly trustworthy; and it may be assumed that in choosing her for his housekeeper Mr Bolsover knew quite well what he was about.

Dr Lindley called at the Cottage in due course, and was admitted by Mrs Mims, who ushered him up-stairs, where he found Mr Bolsover in dressing-gown and slippers, seated in an easy-chair before the bedroom fire. As soon as Mrs Mims had shut the door behind the young doctor, the two men stared for a few moments in silence, as if mentally taking stock of each other. Then Mr Bolsover said with a little laugh: 'Good-morning, doctor. Sorry to have had to send for you. Hope we shall become better acquainted by-and-by.'

He had a low square forehead, rather high cheek-bones, and an aquiline nose. A long black silky beard and moustache hid the lower part of his face. His eyes were clear and resolute-looking; and Lindley had not been two minutes in his company before the conviction grew upon him that he was in the presence of a man of more than ordinary force of character.

Dr Lindley was down-stairs again about ten minutes later. He found Mrs Mims, broom in hand, sweeping the lower passages. 'Your master's cold is a very bad one,' he said, speaking a little above his ordinary tone. 'I will send him a bottle of medicine in the course of an hour, and will call again in the morning. Meanwhile, you had better lay in a little arrowroot and black currant jelly, if you haven't any in the house; and be careful that the fire in his room is not allowed to get too low.' Mrs Mims blinked her fishy eyes and nodded and gasped: 'Yes, sir—just so, sir. I'll not forget, sir.'

Next morning Mr Bolsover was worse, and was ordered to keep his bed till further orders. 'I'm afraid the cold has settled on his chest and that he won't be able to leave the house

for some days,' explained Dr Lindley condescendingly to Mrs Mims, who expressed herself as being deeply concerned at the news.

When he reached Laburnum Cottage the following day, Mrs Mims said to him in a low voice as she admitted him: 'There's a gentleman up-stairs with master. He kem about half a hour ago. He's been here two or three times afore, and stayed all night.'

The young doctor's shoes took a deal of wiping on the mat this morning. 'You needn't trouble to show me up,' he said to the housekeeper; 'I know the way by this time.'

On opening the bedroom door he found, as he had quite expected to do, that the visitor was none other than Mr Gazebrooke.

When Dr Lindley came down-stairs, he looked very grave indeed. 'I am sorry to say'—speaking into the housekeeper's ear—'that there is a great change for the worse in your master's condition. It is highly necessary that he should have a trained nurse to attend to him, and I am now going to telegraph for one to one of the London hospitals. No doubt she will arrive in the course of the day, and it is Mr Bolsover's wish that the spare back-room should at once be got ready for her.'

It took the housekeeper's slow-working wits a minute or two to assimilate such a mass of information, conveyed to her in a breath, as it were. Then she flung up her hands, and her watery eyes looked more watery than ever. 'Heart alive! and is the poor dear gentleman as bad as that?' she exclaimed. 'And a nurse from London, too! Well, well. I'll have everything in apple-pie order for her, sir, never fear.'

Although Walter Lindley unaccountably neglected to telegraph for the nurse, as he had told Mrs Mims he would do, that person duly arrived at Laburnum Cottage about six o'clock the same evening, and after partaking of a cup of tea, at once proceeded to take up her new duties in the orderly methodical manner peculiar to her class. Mr Gazebrooke had taken his departure some hours earlier.

Doctor and nurse looked curiously at each other when they met for the first time next forenoon. The nurse was a rather good-looking woman of thirty or so, plainly attired after the fashion of her calling. She had a firm, rather hard-set mouth and steel-gray eyes, with a curiously watchful expression in them, like that of one who is constantly listening for a summons of some kind and knows not from moment to moment when it may come. Her manners were quiet and self-possessed, and from what little the doctor could judge, she seemed to be a person of some education. She was a good deal in the young man's thoughts both that day and for some days afterwards; but after all, as he said to himself, she was merely one more factor added to the mystery in which he himself was playing a part without any clue to the why or the wherefore of that which he was called upon to do.

Day by day Mr Bolsover's malady increased, and presently the doctor found it advisable to call at the Cottage both morning and evening. Nurse Goodson was indefatigable in her attention to her patient, and scarcely left his room by day or night. Occasionally, when he was asleep, she would ask Mrs Mims to relieve her for a

couple of hours while she took a little much-needed rest on the sofa in her own room.

On the afternoon of the eighth day from the beginning of his illness Mr Bolsover died. Mr Gazebrooke and the nurse were with him at the time. The doctor had seen him two hours previously, and although he had whispered his fears to Mrs Mims on leaving, he did not seem to have anticipated that the end was so close at hand. The housekeeper was sent in hot haste to fetch him the moment it was seen that a sudden change for the worse had set in; but by the time he reached the Cottage all was over.

A little later, the doctor having gone by that time, Mr Gazebrooke sent for Mrs Mims and gave her a list of some trifling purchases he wished to have made in the town. He also made her a present of a sovereign with which to buy a mourning dress for herself. The housekeeper set out at once, and was away about an hour. When she got back, Mr Gazebrooke was gone. She and the nurse partook of supper together, soon after which they separated for the night.

While they were at breakfast next morning Nurse Goodson said: 'I expect Mr Bolsover's brother here in the course of the day. Mr Gazebrooke promised to telegraph for him last evening. As soon as he comes, I shall go about my business.'

'I should like to see him,' said the housekeeper a little later, with a significant nod of her head at the ceiling. 'Perhaps I mayn't have a chance after his brother comes. He was a kind master to me, and I should like to bid him good-bye for the last time—though of course, poor dear, he won't know nothing about it.'

'I'm sorry not to be able to gratify you,' answered the nurse; 'but Mr Gazebrooke took the key of the room with him last evening. He was to meet the other Mr Bolsover—Mr James, I think they call him—on his way through London this morning, and no doubt the latter will bring the key with him.'

If Mrs Mims' countenance had been able to express disappointment, she would doubtless have expressed it; as it was, she merely blinked her eyes and made an odd snuffling noise in her throat.

'Where be they going to bury him?' she presently asked.

'That is more than I can tell you. No doubt all the arrangements are left till Mr James's arrival.'

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when Mr James Bolsover made his appearance at the Cottage. After a brief interview with the nurse, the latter at once took her departure.

There was a strong family likeness between the brothers; both were about the same height and the same build, but Mr James looked considerably the elder of the two, his hair being thickly sprinkled with gray; and whereas the dead man had worn a long beard and moustache, his brother was closely shaven except for two short side whiskers. Mr Evan Bolsover's accent had been that of a Londoner, or at least of a south-country man: Mr James spoke with a pronounced north-country burr.

At his request, Mrs Mims went out and bought a steak and cooked it for him, after which he busied himself about the house, up-stairs and

down, for a time, and seemed as if he were hunting for something he had a difficulty in finding.

'Mebbe it's the will he's trying to find,' muttered the housekeeper to herself. He found something else, however, that seemed to his taste, namely, a bottle of brandy in the sideboard. Having his cigar-case and a newspaper with him, he contrived to make himself tolerably comfortable till the shades of evening began to gather apace. Then Mrs Mims ventured to disturb him by taking a lighted lamp into the room.

'My good woman, you needn't have brought that thing,' he said a little testily. 'I shall be off back to London in the course of a quarter of an hour. I suppose there's some place in the town where you can sleep?'

'Sleep, sir!' gasped the startled housekeeper.

'I mean at some friend's or relation's house. Of course I couldn't think of leaving you all alone here for the night.'

'I shouldn't mind it, sir; I ain't a bit frightened of dead folk.'

'Anyhow, we won't put you to the test. No doubt you'll be able to get a bed somewhere, and you may as well set about it at once. But first fasten all the lower doors and windows, and bring me the key, or keys, if there are more than one, of the front door. If you get here by mid-day to-morrow it will be time enough.'

At the door Mrs Mims paused. 'Be the funeral to take place in Medbury, sir?' she ventured timidly to ask.

'O dear, no. We have a family grave in one of the London cemeteries, and my poor brother will be buried there. The undertakers will be here in the course of to-morrow evening with a shell and a hearse to remove the body.'

'I don't like him a bit,' Mrs Mims confided to herself as she was putting on her bonnet and shawl a few minutes later. 'He ain't got half such a nice way with him as the poor dear up-stairs had. To turn me out in this way! it's just shameful. And what does he mean with his talk about a shell?—I never heard tell of dead folk being put into shells; besides, where would he find one big enough?'

Mrs Mims' mind was a peculiar one, with queer crotchets in it, and out-of-the-way corners in which lurked many strange fancies and old-world notions. She was possessed by a strong desire to look once more on the face of her dead master and to bid him good-bye, as she termed it. He had been kind to her after a careless, easy-going fashion during the short time she had been in his service, and a little kindness went a long way with the housekeeper. It seemed to her that she would be wanting in respect to his memory if she were to let him pass out of her sight for ever as if he were no more than a clod or a stone. She had a sort of vague notion that so long as the dead man remained under the roof where he had died, he was somehow aware of all that was happening around him. More than once she had made up her mind to ask Mr James Bolsover for the requisite permission; but there was something in that hard, clear-cut, close-shaven face which caused the words to die away on her lips.

The front door of Laburnum Cottage was fitted with a Chubb's lock, to which there were two

keys, one of which had been held by Mr Bolsover, and the other by Mrs Mims. Both these keys the housekeeper now gave into the keeping of Mr James. As she made her way towards her daughter's house after leaving the Cottage, she came to a stand for a moment every now and again and chuckled vindictively to herself. 'Won't even trust me with the key, won't he? He's a fine one, if he thinks to keep me out by doing that!'

The fact was that Mrs Mims had a third key in her possession unknown to any one, which she had found one day amongst some rubbish left by the previous occupants of the Cottage. The tenants in question had comprised a widow lady and three grown-up sons, and each of the young men had doubtless possessed a latchkey of his own. The key thus found, Mrs Mims cleaned and put away in her own room, thinking that it might come in useful should either of the others get lost or mislaid. This evening, however, she took it away with her in her pocket.

METEORIC IRON.

THE fall of bodies from the sky has been recorded by the early writers of many nations, but a century ago the occurrence of such an event seemed so improbable, that scientific-men and the world in general did not believe in its possibility. In 1794, however, the German philosopher Chladni collected accounts of the fall of a large number of these meteoric bodies, and directed special attention to the existence of several masses of iron which appeared to him to be undoubtedly of extra-terrestrial origin. Some eight years afterwards a paper on the same subject was read before the Royal Society by E. Howard. This stirred up so much interest in the scientific world, that the French Minister of the Interior directed the Academician Biot to endeavour to settle the question of the existence of these bodies by a careful examination of a fall of stones which had been reported at l'Aigle, in the neighbourhood of Paris. These papers, and especially the exhaustive memoir of Biot, compelled the scientific world to recognise the fall of bodies upon the earth from extra-terrestrial regions as an undoubted fact.

We may conveniently divide meteorites into two classes—namely, those which consist almost entirely of iron, and are therefore termed aerolites or sky-irons; and those which are composed almost wholly of stone, and are called aerolites or sky-stones. A very useful and interesting collection of meteoric irons and meteoric stones is to be found in the Mineralogy department of the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

The masses of meteoric iron which have actually been observed to fall are only seven in number, although more than one hundred pieces of metallic iron have been discovered in different parts of the globe, which are undoubtedly of meteoric origin. Chemical examination of these aerolites reveals the fact that they are composed chiefly of iron alloyed with nickel. More than twenty of the other elements which occur most frequently in the earth's crust have also been found in different masses of meteoric iron. The iron present usually varies from eighty to ninety-

five per cent., while the nickel ranges from six to ten. These meteoric masses generally possess the characteristic properties of bar-iron, and are therefore readily worked with the hammer; in fact, the ancients employed this iron, which they regarded as the gift of the gods, in the manufacture of their weapons of war. This custom still holds among certain semi-civilised tribes, such as the Eskimos and the inhabitants of Central Africa.

Aerolites are often of considerable size, and thus they present a remarkable contrast to the aerolites or sky-stones, which are never of very great weight. The largest meteoric stone known is that which fell at Knyahimja, in Hungary, on the 9th June 1866. It weighs six hundred and forty-seven pounds, and is preserved in the Vienna Museum. One of the masses of meteoric iron to which Chladni drew attention in 1794 is the now famous mass known as the Pallas iron, so named from the traveller Pallas, who discovered it in 1772 on the face of Mount Kemirs, situated between Krasnojarsk and Abekansk, in Siberia. This mass was of irregular form, and weighed sixteen hundred pounds. It possesses large pores, which are filled with a yellow-coloured olivine (a silicate of iron and magnesium, also known as 'chrysolite'); but the interior of the mass consists of iron which can be worked either cold or at a moderate heat. The iron brought from the Red River, in Texas, and known as Gibb's meteorite, is about equal in weight to the Pallas iron. It is three feet four inches in length, two feet four inches in breadth, and one foot four inches in height. The Tucson meteorite is ring-shaped, and measures forty-nine inches in its greatest diameter. It was found at Sonora, in Mexico, and weighed fourteen hundred pounds. A far larger mass of iron was that which a band of roving Indians found in the Gran Chaco Gualamba, near Otumpa, in South America, and which they imagined to be an iron mine. So early as 1783 Don Rubin de Celi was sent to investigate the matter; and he reported that the district was uninhabitable from want of water, and that for many miles around he could discover neither iron mines, mountains, nor the smallest stones. He estimated the weight of the mass at thirty to thirty-two thousand pounds. Again, masses of meteoric iron have been found in the Bolson de Mapini, or Mexican Desert, situated in Cohahuila and Chihuahua, two of the northern provinces of the Mexican republic. Three masses were discovered here in 1854 (one of these was the Tucson iron described above); while fourteen years later eight more were taken to the United States; and in 1871, a large mass weighing seven thousand seven hundred pounds was found near El Para. Rumours, too, are not wanting of a still larger meteoric mass which may be seen in the centre of this lone and desolate region.

That these falls of aerolites are not confined to any particular quarter of the globe is seen by the instances already cited. In Australia, too, the great Cranbourne meteorite was discovered near Melbourne in 1861; while in our own island, a small mass was seen to fall at Rowton, near Wellington, in Shropshire, on the 20th of April 1876. The Rowton meteorite weighed seven and three-quarter pounds, and fell at forty minutes past three P.M. in the midst of a heavy shower of rain. A peculiar rumbling noise was said to have been

heard, followed almost immediately by an explosion somewhat like the discharge of heavy artillery. The iron penetrated to a depth of eighteen inches, and was quite warm when extracted, an hour after its fall. Except where it struck the ground, the whole surface of the meteorite, as is usually the case, is covered with a thin crust or varnish, caused by the fusion of a small portion of the mass by the heat generated during its rapid passage through the air.

As might be anticipated, it is not always easy to distinguish a mass of iron of meteoric from one of terrestrial origin. This is well shown by the controversy which has taken place as to the origin of the large masses of nickeliferous iron discovered in 1870 by Professor Nordenskiöld on the seashore at Ovik, Disko Island, in Western Greenland. One of these masses weighed fifty thousand pounds, while two others weighed twenty thousand and nine thousand pounds respectively. At one time it was held that the presence of nickel in these iron masses was a proof of their meteoric origin; but a careful examination of the rocks in the neighbourhood showed that the basalt contained nickeliferous iron disseminated through it, and that, therefore, these masses are probably of terrestrial origin, having been left exposed upon the beach by the weathering of the rock-matter which formerly enclosed them.

It is interesting to notice that meteorites contain a considerable volume of various gases condensed or confined within their mass. These gases consist of one or more of the following: carbonic acid, carbonic oxide, hydrogen, nitrogen, and marsh gas. When the meteoric mass is heated in a vacuum, these gases are evolved, and may be collected. On examination it is found that the volume of the gas evolved, as well as its percentage composition, varies much with the meteorite experimented with; thus, the Lenarto aerolite yielded Professor Graham nearly three times its volume of gas, containing eighty-six per cent. of hydrogen, ten of nitrogen, and four of carbonic acid; while the Arva iron contained no less than 47·13 times its own volume of gas, composed of sixty-eight per cent. of carbonic oxide, thirteen of carbonic acid, eighteen of hydrogen, and one of nitrogen. Meteoric stones generally contain all these gases, together with a small percentage of marsh gas or firedamp, a gas which is well known as the cause of the death-dealing explosions which occur in our coal-mines from time to time.

The theories which have been proposed to account for the existence and fall of these meteorites are extremely unsatisfactory. At one time it was suggested that they were ordinary stones which had been struck by lightning; that they had recently been ejected from terrestrial volcanoes; that they had been carried into the air by a whirlwind; or that they had been formed by the condensation of a cloud which had been carried from some distant volcano. All these theories are found to be untenable in the face of more recent observations. Laplace imagined that they might have their origin in *active* lunar volcanoes; but no active volcanoes are known to exist in that luminary. That they are projectiles from ancient lunar volcanoes seems equally hopeless; for if once the projectile failed to touch this

planet, its chance of doing so afterwards would be extremely small. In a contribution to *Nature*, Professor R. S. Ball has discussed the possibility of a volcanic origin for meteoric masses, and comes to the conclusion that if a volcanic origin were possible, he would be inclined, on mechanical grounds alone, to believe that they had been discharged in bygone ages from the volcanoes of our own planet. Having passed away from the attraction of the earth, they would take up a path around the sun, which at some time or other would intersect the orbit of the earth, and that then the projectile would reappear in the form of a meteorite.

Others have imagined that these masses have been produced by the collision of two planets, or the breaking up of a former satellite of the earth. This theory seems extremely improbable; for the initial velocity required to carry a body from one of the smaller planets to within the earth's orbit is very considerable, and the chances of its striking the earth are very small; besides, it would then be reasonable to expect the appearance upon the earth of larger meteoric masses than those with which we are at present acquainted. In addition to all this, the rapid and peculiar motion of these meteorites is inconsistent with the many and ingenious theories which would confine them to the solar system. For the present, therefore, the origin of these interesting bodies must be ascribed to that part of space which is termed 'interstellar,' and of which nothing is known.

MY UMBRELLA.

SOME years ago I happened to be at that most picturesque old city of Würzburg on a showery May market-day. The window of my hotel commanded the square. The moment that the first sprinkle came over the busy scene of market-women and chafferers, the whole square suddenly flowered like a vast garden. Every woman at her stall expanded an enormous umbrella, and these umbrellas were of every dye—crimson, blue, green, chocolate, and—yes, there was even one of marigold yellow, under which the huckstress crouched as beneath a mighty inverted escholia. Nor were these umbrellas all *selfs*, as horticulturists describe monotonous pansies; for some were surrounded with a perfect rainbow of coloured lines as a border; and others were wreathed about with a pattern of many-hued flowers. Presently, out came the May sun, and, *presto*, every umbrella was closed and folded and laid aside: the flower-garden had resolved itself into a swarm of busy marketers.

On reaching Innsbruck, I lighted on an umbrella-maker's shop under one of the arcades near the Golden Roof of Frederick with the Empty Pockets. I saw suspended, before the vault in which the man dwelt or did business, umbrellas the exact reproductions of what I had seen at Würzburg—red, green, brown, blue, white—lined with pink, like mushrooms: and for the sum of about fifteen shillings I became the happy possessor of one of these articles, which I proceed to describe. The covering was of a brilliant red, and imprinted round it was a wreath of flowers and foliage, white, yellow, blue, and green; around the ferrule also was a smaller wreath similar in colour and character. This cover was stretched on canes, such canes as are well known in schools;

and the canes were distended by twisted brass strainers, rising out of a sliding tube of elaborately hammered brass, through which passed the stick of the umbrella. The whole, when expanded, measured nearly five feet, and was not extraordinarily heavy, nothing like the weight of a gig-umbrella. Walking under it was like walking about in a tent, taking the tent with one; and walking under it in the rain filled one with sanguine hopes that the day was about to mend, so surrounded was one with a warm and cheerful glow. On a hot climb over a pass, when I spread this shelter above my head against the sun, I felt that I must appear to the shepherds on the high pastures like a migratory Alpine rose.

I met with no inconvenience whatever from my umbrella till I reached Heidelberg on my way home, and innocently walked with it under my arm in the Castle gardens on Sunday afternoon. Then I found that it provoked attention and excited astonishment. Such an umbrella had its social level, and that level was the market-place, not the Castle gardens; it was sufferable as spread over an old woman vending *sauerkraut*, but not as carried furling in the hand of a respectably dressed gentleman. So much comment did my umbrella occasion, as to annoy me, spoil the pleasure of my walk, and force me finally to thrust it up my back under my coat, and with crossed arms to the rear, hug it to my spine. But even so I was not able to escape observation, for the black handle, crooked, appeared below my coat, a fact to which I was aroused by the exclamations of a nursemaid: '*Ach Tausend!* the Herr has a curly tail!' and then of a Professor, who, beckoning some students to him, said: 'Let us catch him—the Missing Link, *homo caudatus*.'

On reaching England, the great scarlet-crimson (it was neither exactly one nor exactly the other) umbrella was consigned to the stand in the hall. Those were not the days when ladies spread red parasols above their bonnets, and had sun-shades to match their gowns: in those days all parasols were brown or black; consequently, the innovation of a red umbrella would be too great, too startling for me to attempt. But one morning—it was that on which the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh made their entry into London after their marriage—I started early to drive to the station and go to town and join the sightseers. It may be in the recollection of those who were out that day that snow fell—in the morning early, in the country, there was a good deal of snow, so much, that I thought I might safely take my Tyrolese umbrella to cover me in my gig. I intended to furl it before I reached the station and such places where men do congregate. It was remarkable that just as the snow spoiled the picturesque effect of the procession in Regent's Street by making the redcoats draw on their overcoats, it induced me to unfurl my marvellous red travelling tent—which is only one more instance of the compensation there is in nature.

As I drove along, I chanced on an umbrella-maker trudging through the snow, head down, with a bundle of his manufacture under his arm. He neither saw nor heard the dogcart till it was close on him, when the driver shouted to him to stand aside. Then he started back, looked up; and I saw the change of expression in the man's face as his eyes took in the apparition above him

of the expanded red umbrella, flower-wreathed and brass-mounted. The face had been inanimate; a wild enthusiasm or astonishment kindled it, and down into the snow at his feet fell the umbrellas he was carrying. I drove on, but looked back at intervals, and as long as he was in sight, I saw him standing in the straight road, with eyes and mouth open, hands expanded and every finger distended, and his umbrellas uncollected scattered about him in the snow.

These reminiscences of my remarkable umbrella lead me to say something of umbrellas in general.

I hardly think that the true origin, development, and, shall I say, degradation of the umbrella, is generally known. Yet it deserves to be known, for it supplies a graphic and striking condensation of vast social changes.

The umbrella comes to us from the East, from nations living under a burning sun, to whom shade is therefore agreeable. We can understand how the giving of shade came easily to be regarded as a symbol of majesty. In the apocryphal book of Baruch occurs the passage, 'We shall live under the shadow of Nebucodonosor, king of Babylon, and under the shadow of Balthasar, his son.' Primitively, kings gave audience and delivered judgment seated under trees, not only because of the comfort of the shade, but also because of the symbolism. So, when Ethelbert, king of Kent, received St Augustine, it was seated under an oak; and Wagner is quite right when, in the opening scene in *Lohengrin*, he makes King Pepin hold his court enthroned under a tree.

But when sovereigns took to receiving suitors and dispensing justice indoors, they transferred with them to within the symbol of the tree. Phylarchus, in describing the luxury of Alexander, says that the Persian kings gave audience under plane-trees or vines made of gold and hung with emeralds, but that the magnificence of the throne of Alexander surpassed theirs. Curtius relates how the kings of India had golden vines erected so as to overspread their thrones, in their judgment halls. The throne of Cyrus was over-canopied by a golden vine of seven branches. Firdusi describes a similar throne-tree at the festival given by Kai Khosru:

A tree was erected, many-branched,
Bending over the throne with its head:
Of silver the trunk, but the branches of gold;
The buds and the blossoms were rubies;
The fruit was of sapphire and cornelian stone;
And the foliage all was of emerald.

From the East, the idea or fashion was transplanted to Byzantium, and the emperors had similar trees erected above and overshadowing their thrones. William of Rubruquis describes a great silver tree in the palace of the Khan of the Tartars, in 1253, of which leaves and fruit as well as branches were of silver. But kings went about, and wherever they went their majesty surrounded them; consequently, with the double motive of comfort and symbolism, the umbrella was invented as a portable canopy or tree over the head of the sovereign.

The Greeks noticed and disapproved of the use of the umbrella. Xenophon says that the Persians were so effeminate that they could not content themselves in summer with the shade afforded by trees and rocks, but that they employed portable contrivances for producing artificial shade. But

when he says this, he most certainly refers to the kings, for they alone had the right to use umbrellas. On Assyrian and Persepolitan reliefs we have a eunuch behind the sovereign holding an umbrella over him when walking, or when riding in his chariot, or when seated; on a bass-relief of Assur-bani-pal, however, the king is figured reclining under an overshadowing vine, which is probably artificial. Firdusi says of Minutscher: 'A silken umbrella afforded shade to his head.'

Indeed, the umbrella came to be as identified with royalty as the crown and the throne; and among the Buddhists it remained so. Four feet from the throne of the Great Mogul, as described by Tavernier, were two spread umbrellas of red velvet fringed with pearls, the sticks of which were wreathed with pearls. Du Halde says that in the imperial palace at Peking there were umbrellas always ready for the emperor; and when he rode out, a canopy was borne on two sticks over his head to shade him and his horse. Of Sultan Mohammed Aladdin we are told that he adopted insignia of majesty hitherto used in India and Persia and unknown in Islam; among these was a canopy or umbrella held over his head abroad. Of one Sultan's umbrella we are told that it was of yellow embroidered with gold and surmounted by a silver dove.

But as the umbrella was the symbol of majesty held over the king's head, it behoved the royal palace to imitate the same, and by its structure show to all that it was the seat of majesty. Thus came the cupola or dome into use, and what was given to the king's house was given also to the temples. In Perret and Chapui's conjectural reconstruction of the temple of Belus, near Babylon, above the seven stages of the mighty pyramid is the shrine of the god surmounted by a dome. In all likelihood this really was the apex of the pyramid; the dome was a structural umbrella held over the supreme god.

The great hall of audience of the Byzantine emperors was surmounted by a cupola. Two Councils of the Church, in 680 and 692, were held in it, and obtained their designation in *Trullo* from this fact. From the royal palace the cupola passed to the church, as the crown of the House of the King of kings; and a dome was erected over the church of the Holy Sepulchre by Constantine, and over the church of the Eternal Wisdom by Justinian. But it had already been employed as the crown of a temple, not only in the Pantheon at Rome, but in the Tholos, the temple of Marnas or Dagon at Gaza.

But the great dome or umbrella by no means excluded the lesser one beneath it, and kings' thrones under cupolas were also over-canopied by structures of wood or marble or metal. Such a *baldacchino* is seen over the sungod in a bass-relief at Sippar. It became common, and was sculptured, or when of textile work, was embroidered with leaf and flower work, retaining a reminiscence of the original tree beneath which the king sat and held court. It also passed to the church, and became a subsidiary umbrella over the altar. Paul the Silentary in the sixth century describes that in the church of St Sophia at Constantinople as a dome resting on four silver pillars. Constantine erected much the same sort of domed covering above the tomb of the apostles in Rome.

In the Catacombs the vaulted chapels and the overarched recessed tombs are all attributable to the same idea; nor has the original notion been lost in them, for they are frescoed over with vines, bays, and other foliage. The most beautiful instance is also the earliest, the square crypt in the cemetery of Prætextatus, which dates from the second century. Here the entire vault is covered with trailing tendrils and leaves with birds perched on them. A couple of centuries later, the original idea was gone, and we find, instead of a growing tree, only bunches and sprigs of flowers.

So!—the umbrellas that pass in the rain under the shadow of the mighty dome of St Paul's are its poor relations, and my flower-wreathed *parasol* preserves in its leafage a reminiscence of the original tree; and the old German woman sits and vends carrots under what was once the prerogative of the sovereign. Is it not a token that sovereignty has passed from the despot to the democracy?

SOME OLD BRITISH BALLADS.

II.—'THE FAMOUS FIGHT OF MALAGO.'

WE have dealt with the martial valour of landmen, and it is only fair that we should now give a specimen or two of the old ballads in which the deeds of our brave sea-lions are extolled. These sea-ballads seem to have been great favourites with the land-lubbers, for though a large number of them are printed, yet few specimens are now extant—which rarity goes far to prove their popularity. Perhaps the most singular feature of these black-letter ballads is their pictorial ornamentation. Most of them had at their head a square wood-engraving of more or less doubtful artistic merit. The heroes and heroines of pastoral or amorous ballads were depicted in all the bravery of huge ruffs, collars, fardingales, sombreros, swords, plumes, and all the rest of the theatrical wardrobe. The war-pieces are really surprising—those heading the ballads of *Oudenarde* and the *Courageous English Boys* are revelations in the way of drawing and workmanship. One thing is noticeable—the booksellers seemed to have but a poor idea of the fitness of things, for they constantly make use of old blocks, and often without the slightest reference to the matter of the ballad. We find chubby Cupids dodging behind pillars, bow in hand, with arrows drawn to the head, adorning war-songs; ships in distress over love-songs; and so on—all of which is ludicrous and out of place. The plan, laudable from an economic point of view, still seems rather like imposing upon the artists and the good-natured public.

When the black-letter went out of fashion—to the ruin of many respectable makers of spectacles—these curious engravings also became less frequently used. As for the wood-engraving which heads the ballad of *The Famous Fight at Malago*, it is curious, but still seemingly a serious attempt to illustrate the subject of the song. There are three vessels, or parts of vessels—as much of them as the artist could crowd into the limited space—great waves with crested tops, and one or two drowning men—real giants, judging from their proportions. This spirited ballad has the following long

sub-title: 'The Englishmen's Victory over the Spaniards: Relating how Five English Frigates—viz., the *Henry*, *Ruby*, *Antelope*, *Greyhound*, and *Bryan*, burnt all the Spanish Ships in their Harbour at Malago; battered down their churches and their houses about their ears, kill'd abundance of their Men, and obtained a Victory.' The motto is:

Where ever English seamen goes,
They are a terror to their foes.

The minstrel's welcome on this occasion seems to be rather more restricted than was generally his wont; he says:

Come all you brave sailors that sail on the main,
I'll tell you of a fight that was lately in Spain,
And of the sail of frigates bound to Malago,
For to fight the proud Spaniards, our orders was so.

Grammar was never a strong point with the ballad-mongers; but we need not stop to discuss this point. The rhyming historian tells us that the frigates were the *Henry*, and the *Ruby*, and the *Antelope* also; while the *Greyhound* and the *Bryan* as fireships must go; and so bravely did they play their parts, that they made the proud Spaniards quake in their hearts. They came to an anchor quite near the mole, being very bold; and they were so short a distance from the town that they battered much of it down:

They hung out their flag of truce for to know our intent,
And they sent out their long-boat to know what we meant.

But our captain he answered them bravely, it was so,
'For to burn all your shipping before we do go.'
'For to burn all our shipping you must us excuse,
'Tis not five sail of frigates shall make us to muse,
But we burnt all their shipping and their gallees also;
And we left in the city full many a widow.

The gallant captain directed the fire, and so brought down the church spire; then the belfry came down with a crash, although it was so high, and made many of the gentry to the monasteries to flee. And so great a confusion did their guns make in the town, that nearly all their tall buildings were knocked down; while the poor little children for help did cry, though nobody could relieve from the danger which was so nigh. The narrator waxes warm with his description, and tells us that the smoke created so much terror that many poor wights confided themselves to the flood, only, alas! to perish in water and mud.

Our guns we kept firing, still shooting amain,
Whilst many a proud Spaniard was on the place slain:
The rest being amazed, for succour did cry:
But all was in vain—they had nowhere to flee.
At last being forced, they thought it most fit
Unto the brave Englishmen for to submit.
And so a conclusion at last we did make,
Upon such conditions as was fit to take.

And there the matter ended. But our loyal ballad-writer has a few more words to say, inspired by a high patriotic admiration; and thus he spake:

The Spanish Armada did England no harm;
'Twas but a bravado to give us alarm;
But with our fine frigates we did them bombast,
And made them of Englishmen's valour to taste.
When this noble victory we did obtain,
Then home we returned to England again,
Where we were received with welcomes of joy,
Because with the frigates we did them destroy.

And so endeth this naively told tale.

That there are some graphic bits of description, we must confess; and as for the warlike and patriotic feeling it displays, we can only say that it is admirable. Of its historical value we will not say much. It depicts, truthfully enough, however, some of those desperate descents our sailors were wont to make in those days on the Spanish coast and on her rich colonies. These sudden expeditions, though actuated by patriotic motives, only too often assumed the form of lawless and almost piratical maraudings. But we must take the times as they were, and this spirited ballad gives us a capital insight into the feelings of the people and the kind of maritime adventures of those distant days.

The black-letter *Royal Victory* obtained (with the *Providence of Almighty God*) against the *Dutch Fleet*, June 2d and 3d, 1665, is a very good type. We are told to be merry without exception:

Let England, Ireland, and Scotland rejoice,
To render thanksgiving with heart and voice,
That surly fanatic that now will not sing,
Is false to kingdom, and foe to the king. . . .
For why should my nature or conscience repine
At taking of his life, that fain would take mine?

A pertinent query enough, but one which involves many serious questions.

Ritson, in his collection of Songs and Ballads, has preserved a very brilliant one, commemorating Admiral Russell's victory over the Chevalier de Tourville. The engagement took place on the 22d of May 1692, off the coast of Normandy, and was fought between ninety-nine English ships of the line and an almost equal force of French men-of-war, which French fleet was about to make a descent upon fair England with the view of replacing James II. on his throne. The Chevalier de Tourville had his flag hoisted on board *Le Soleil Royal*, a magnificent ship, the largest, indeed, that had ever been built. It is this *Soleil Royal* which is justly the centre figure, as it were, of the ballad.

Thursday in the morn, the ides of May,
Recorded for ever the famous ninety-two,
Brave Russell did discern, by dawn of day,
The lofty sail of France advancing now.
'All hands aloft, aloft; let English valour shine:
Let fly a culverin, the signal of the line;
Let every hand supply his gun;
Follow me,
And you'll see
That the battle will be soon begun.'

Tourville in his splendid ship, and his fleet about him, bore down upon the British line, determined to sink Russell beneath his feet; but both sides were thirsting for victory; the encounter was terrible:

And mighty Fate stood looking on,
Whilst a flood,
All of blood,
Filled the scupper-holes of the *Royal Sun*.

Sulphur, smoke, and fire filled the air; while the French on shore, looking eagerly on, were alarmed by the continual roar of the contending cannon. All in vain did the brave Frenchmen stick to their guns; the red ensign flew out victorious. The vessels with their gay banners bearing the flower-de-luce, fly before the British fire, even seeking destruction amidst the rocks and on sands, to the

horror of the spectators on land. *Le Soleil Royal* is lost on the strand :

For evermore adieu, thou *Royal Sun*. . . .
Enough, thou mighty god of war !
Now we sing,
Bless the king ;
Let us drink to every British tar.

But let us turn from the scenes of war to those of peace. We have a very graphic description of the hardships of a sailor's life in *Neptune's Raging Fury*; or, *the Gallant Seamen's Sufferings*. It has a lengthy sub-title, which we need not transcribe, for the song itself will tell us all we want to know, and to it we turn.

You gentlemen of England
That live at home at ease,
Ah, little do you think upon
The dangers of the seas !

They are manifold and terrible ; and ye youngsters, take warning, for

All you that will be seamen
Must bear a valiant heart,
For when you come upon the seas,
You must not think to start.

As for us, the seamen :

If enemies oppose us,
When England is at wars
With any foreign nations,
We fear not wounds nor scars ;
Our roaring guns shall teach 'em,
Our valour for to know,
Whilst they reel in the keel,
When the stormy winds do blow.

And, moreover, the storm is often fierce :

In claps of thunder
Which darkness doth enforce. . . .
Sometimes in Neptune's bosom
Our ship is tost in waves,
And every man expecting
The sea to be their graves ;
Then up aloft she mounteth,
And down again so low ;
'Tis with waves, O with waves,
When the stormy winds do blow.

The marine bard does not forget to dwell on the other dangers—of climates, strange savages, and other wonders. But then, when the jolly 'salts' are back in port amidst relatives and friends, they show they have warm hearts, and wish all and sundry to join in their merriment and joy.

On the whole, these sea-songs, with which we conclude these papers, are fresh and rollicking, smell of the 'briny,' have more heartiness and less bravado than the same class of military war-songs. Both classes, however, are fairly illustrative of different phases of English life and thought.

A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

NATURE, in her wondrous kindness to mankind, has placed many a tranquil and cool valley along the sunny Mediterranean shore: delightful retreats where one may take refuge from burning sun-rays. For when the heat becomes intense during the May summer days, even the natives are chased indoors, glad to retire into darkened rooms, and perchance sleep, until the fiery chariot has nearly run its course. Then they come forth and watch the Lord of Day preparing to retire far beyond the stern gray mountains, behind a

crimson curtain inlaid with gold, suffusing the attendant hills and cloudlets with his glory, while the sea gently tosses to and fro sparkling ruby bubbles.

Now, every mortal does not possess the god-like power of compelling Morpheus to come to his aid, and to such as do not, during the May mid-day sun the mountain valleys are as an earthly paradise. The stream at its birth, bubbling up from primeval rock, comes to light as cold as ice and as pure as crystal. Overflowing its natural basin, it runs its course amidst hard and rugged rocks, plashing with gentle bell-like sound over a perpendicular fall, sending up clouds of soft spray, while the waters below are tossed against jagged rocks into gay and sportive foam. It rests not ; on it leaps, meandering along over its stony bed, between the gray bare mountains, gathering force as it goes, until it gradually finds its way into a deeper, cooler, more silent, and luxuriant retreat. The silvery water is now in the true valley ; and here may be found that repose from care or the tyranny of the burning orb, whose face may not be looked on in its mid-day splendour.

How peaceful everything is !—the silence only broken by the music of the stream on its headlong and heedless journey. In ambitious rivalry, we have the gladsome song of the birds, flying busily from tree to tree, and hastily retiring from a noisy bath in a crystal pool on the approach of human footsteps. On and on the water flows, over rock, sand, pebbles, and stones ; now cosily retreating under the shelter of high and hanging banks, almost hidden beneath rich masses of vegetation, then emerging into full view and tumbling merrily over the pebbles ; anon filling up a wide pool, as though it would usurp the whole width of the valley. Suddenly swirling round with startling rapidity, it sweeps everything before it, carrying off a plank of wood, a leaf, or a luckless beetle in bewildering gyrations to the middle of the stream ; hurrying off in breathless haste over stones, past waving reeds, and then, as though tired of its game, landing its prey on a sandy bank, sharply turning aside to follow its bent, and repeat its vagaries over and over again.

Like the melodious stream, let us go peeping everywhere. Here under the bank we may see the industrious ants bringing food to their habitations ; their interference with nature seemingly only beneficial ; they do no harm. The nest lies close beside a brier root ; and not two paces off, the late violet and primrose mingle their sweet fragrance in the air. Just a few inches farther on we espy the curious retreat of the trapdoor spider, that wonderful and most intelligent of insect house-builders, now choosing a grassy patch for the site of its abode, now a mossy bank, or perchance a sandy soil, and cleverly adapting its architecture to its surroundings. A beetle with an outer coat of green and gold most marvellously blended, finds a home in the heart of a ruddy dogrose, while the brick-red and black-spotted wax-like little ladybird flies from leaf to leaf.

But, like the gorgeously coloured butterflies,

we must flit from spot to spot; staying to watch the odd antics of the pixies' ferrymen or water-spiders, as they skate rapidly over the glassy water; or, moving swiftly forward, endeavouring to catch a glance of the erratic cuckoo, or see the energetic woodpecker in the act of performing its loud rap-rap-tap on the hollow bark of the cork-tree as it speeds on its upward course. No excessive heat can reach deep down into these peaceful regions, and the vegetation sprouts up with magic luxuriance. The tall graceful trees tower above flowering shrubs with their variegated greens relieved by the late blushing roses, pure white clematis, golden honeysuckle, and pink bramble flowers. Under this shelter, again, are flowers innumerable, peeping out of the grass and bed of sear and yellow leaves. Closer to the water, the quivering maiden-hair hangs its exquisite fronds, mingling with the hardy harts-tongue, which forces its way between the stones, and bathes its curved glossy leaves in the sparkling stream. On that steep sandy bank, the Barbary fig or prickly-pear offers a formidable barrier to the too adventurous climber; its thick leaves, covered with the smallest and most irritating prickles, are enough to put the most daring to flight. Notwithstanding its beautiful yellow and bright orange-coloured flowers, the plant has a very ungainly and eccentric look. Yet it is useful, for it will grow where no other plant but the cactus would, and makes a really efficacious hedge. The common stonepine probably is, after the Barbary fig, the least exacting of plants as regards soil; provided its roots encounter nothing more formidable than sand-rock, it will make itself a home and flourish. It is, however, too often the victim of a cruel plague of caterpillars (*Bombyx processionaria*), which build their nests among the spiky leaves and devour every atom of green. When that is accomplished, they migrate in long processions to a fresh tree, and thus soon destroy a healthy clump of pines. It is very curious to see these long lines of caterpillars on their voyages of discovery making their way from tree to tree in perfect order.

A little farther down the valley, the opposite side offers a strange contrast—the banks are gentle slopes covered with rich grass, watered, and kept emerald green by tiny trickling streams, and shaded by chestnut trees. These tall trees, with their long straight trunks and graceful bouquets of broad tender green leaves, form an exquisite frame to the humble shepherd's hut, built of rough chestnut logs, and roofed with boughs, wherein the weary man lies down at night to rest his tired limbs on a couch of dried leaves, unconscious of the majestic beauty of the scene outside, as the setting sun reddens the sky with fire, warming the trees and rocks with pink tints, and seems to turn the water below into a gory stream. As the sun dips, and dim twilight takes the place of its warm rays, the heavens become crowded with bright twinkling stars, and the butterflies in all the glory of their gorgeous colours retire to their mysterious resting-places, while the moths, nocturnal spiders, crickets, and noisy frogs come forth to sport, and the cool evening air echoes faintly the myriad sounds of busy insect and animal life.

Poets should live here and sing of these various beauties, and the changing aspects that come and

go as the day waxes and wanes and the season gives way to season. What lessons might be drawn from the industrious ant; the busy bee as it flies from flower to flower in this beautiful garden of nature's own designing and planting; the ingenious trapdoor spider at the bottom of its home in the depths of mother earth; the birds with their bright and gladdening hymns of life and joy; from the lovely delicate flowers peeping from amidst their verdant beds, each at its appointed time, and lifting their pure coloured petals towards the light from above! What songs of tender, peaceful thoughts might be sung of the silver moon as it arose and suffused the silent valley with soft pure light, the rays turning the rippling water into a stream of molten silver, now bright and glistening, now inky, and almost appalling in its dark, and seemingly unfathomable depths! What glorious thoughts would steal upon the poet as he listened to the sighing of the boughs, the rustling of the leaves, all reflecting the pale light of the midnight moon, as they bent under the gentle breeze, sweeping down from rocky fastnesses high in cold regions to the rippling sea!

THE COUNTRY DANCE.

Who comes here, with patch on cheek,
Looking so demure and meek,
Moving slowly, shy of glance,
Through the quaint old country dance?
Who's this, with an air of grace,
As they move in measured pace,
Meets her, greets her, bowing low?
'Tis her rich and lordly beau!
Who, here, looks across the room,
Heart of doubt and brow of gloom?
Ah, the song has oft been sung;
'Tis her suitor poor and young!
But he meets her roving eyes,
Sees the blushes sweet that rise;
Ah, what matters what may be—
They are lovers, he and she!

But the dance is over now,
Sweeping curtsey, courtly bow;
Beats one true heart 'mid the press;
Is it no, or is it yes?
Once, just once, their glances meet—
Ah, it is the signal sweet;
Where's the one white rose she wore?
Lying there upon the floor!
Hark, the clock is striking four;
Who's this at the postern door,
Cloaked and hooded, in alarm,
Clinging to her lover's arm?
Fare thee well, O lordly beau—
They'll be wed long ere you know.
Love that has the will, folk say,
Soon or late will make the way!

CLIFTON BINGHAM.

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THE PROPOSED NATIONAL CANAL.

So long have we been accustomed to the development of railway enterprise, that we are apt to regard with indifference, if not with a species of scorn, the idea of perfecting the internal communication of the country by means of waterways. The iron-horse, it has been long supposed, has driven away the canal boat from the active lines of industry, and the uses of canals seemed destined to be consigned to the limbo of ancient history or left to the monopoly of the Dutch. But this is a great error, and all the greater because it is so common. Undoubtedly, the canal system of the United Kingdom did suffer a very severe blow when the railway enterprise bloomed and 'boomed' under 'King Hudson.' More recent experience, however, has shown that canals are not necessarily competitors of railways—that they are more often auxiliaries—and that they are capable of performing services to the community which railways cannot achieve; or, to put it in another form, which it can never pay railways to attempt. Let us not forget that the prosperity of the Dutch, the most enterprising, commercial, thrifty, and successful people in the world—next, of course, to our noble selves—is founded upon canals; and that a large measure of the prosperity of the United States is also due to the immense advantages presented by the great continuous line of waterways which human ingenuity has contrived out of natural provisions. There is no country in the world in which railways occupy a more prominent and important place than in America, yet canals there are neither scorned nor neglected, but are carefully preserved and industriously extended in all directions as feeders to and aids of the railways.

This nineteenth century, too, is notable for, and will in future generations be famed for, the prosecution of the three largest and most remarkable enterprises in the construction of artificial channels ever known. The Suez Canal, of course, is no novelty to us now, and that a canal across the isthmus existed in the days of the ancient

Egyptians is supposed to be known to every schoolboy. But there is a very wide difference between the Egyptian ditch and the noble channel which now enables stately five-thousand-ton steamers to pass without a pause from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The Panama Canal, if not yet an accomplished fact, is actually in process of formation, and in many respects is a more remarkable work than that which pierces the Isthmus of Suez. And then the Manchester Ship Canal is one of the pet projects of the day in our own country, and is probably destined to enable the inland capital of the cotton trade to rank among the seaports of the world.

In fact, renewed attention is being given by engineers and traders and capitalists to the many and great attractions of inland waterways for the promotion of commerce and the development of industrial enterprise. If we look at a railway map of the British Isles we shall see that there is practically no further room for railway extension in the matter of trunk-lines. Branches and feeders are needed, and are being constructed wherever the traffic, present or prospective, seems to warrant the outlay; but no more great iron arteries can be added to the land until new centres of industry are created. Not only is the first cost of a railway immense, but the annual outlay necessary for maintenance and working it is enormous. Unless there is a very large traffic, there must be very high charges for carriage, so as to cover actual expenses. Now, whatever may be the comparative cost in the construction of a canal, it is obvious that the cost of maintenance and working must always be insignificant in comparison with a railway. The 'silent highway' can afford to wait for traffic, because it costs next to nothing to lie idle.

Few people are perhaps aware that we have actually over 3900 miles of canals already in the United Kingdom, and that many of these canals pay very handsome dividends to the proprietors of them. Indeed, it may be said generally that canals yield a far higher percentage

overhead to the investing capitalists than do railways. We have now almost 20,000 miles of iron road to our 3900 miles or so of water-road, and 2500 miles of navigable rivers. In China, the Grand Canal stretches for over 2000 miles, and connects with some fifty cities. The latest returns give the length of navigable canals in the United Kingdom at 3931 miles, of which about three hundred miles are in Ireland.

Canal-making in this country may be said to have begun in the year 1761, for it was in that year that the Bridgewater Canal was definitely projected. The scheme was as hotly opposed as, at a later period, was that of railway construction. The landowners and other representatives of 'vested interests' threw every obstacle in the way. It was asserted that the rivers were quite sufficient for all the traffic there was or could be, and that canals would displace the packhorses and wagons which had been so serviceable, and would also injure the trade of the towns through or near which they would pass. Dr Samuel Johnson, philosopher though he was, could only see in canals a means for destroying 'country seclusion,' and for making food dear where it used to be cheap, by taking rural produce to crowded centres!

But in spite of opposition, the Bridgewater Canal was begun in 1767, and was opened in 1772, to the great profit of its promoters and the great advantage of the public. It was followed by quite a number of smaller enterprises; in fact, prior to 1800, there was a canal mania almost as great as the railway mania which set in about 1844. It has been said of this canal era, by Mr Clifford, in his *History of Private Bill Legislation*, that 'Parliament by its furtherance of legislation for the development of canals and of agriculture, probably contributed more largely to the national prosperity than by any other group of public or private measures passed towards the close of the last century.' Before the nineteenth century opened, over a hundred Canal Acts had passed through Parliament. Upon at least one of these canals—the Forth and Clyde—a steam-vessel was employed to draw the barges as far back as 1785.

But it is certainly remarkable that a country so naturally adapted for canals as is Great Britain should not have developed them to a much greater extent. We have a large number of copious rivers, we have a most favourable watershed, we have an ample rainfall to keep up the supply of water, and we are encircled by the sea. There is probably no country in the world so well adapted for the construction of artificial waterways, and this is a fact which now seems to be becoming more and more generally recognised. The tediousness of transport by the old mode of traction by horses is no longer a deterrent; for steam can be employed to secure transport, if not so rapid as by railway, at least rapid enough for a certain class of traffic.

Of the comparative cost of railway and canal transits, we have seen various estimates. But one authority puts it that the cost of conveying a ton of goods by railway is 1·21d. for every mile traversed; while the cost of conveying a ton by canal is only 0·37d. for every mile

traversed. This means the actual cost of carrying, and does not include the charges for handling, which are vastly greater on a railway—for the loading, unloading, packing, arranging, shunting, &c., of trucks. Roughly speaking, the cost of conveying traffic by canal is from a fourth to a fifth of the cost of conveyance by railway. There is less speed by the canal, but there is also less handling, which in many cases is a very great advantage indeed.

The great defect in the canal system of this country is that it has not been constructed on any uniform principle. Thus, the traffic is not interchangeable, or is so only to a limited extent. There are different widths and depths, different-sized locks, different tolls and regulations, on the existing waterways. The largest, we believe, is that of the Severn Canal, which admits vessels two hundred and seventy feet long by thirty-five feet broad; the Aire and Calder comes next, with two hundred and twelve feet by twenty-two feet; and the Gloucester and Birmingham Canal can only pass vessels one hundred and sixty-three feet long by twenty-nine feet broad. It should be mentioned that a large proportion (about one-third) of the canals in existence are now owned by Railway Companies, who use them as feeders. This is all very well, but it prevents the healthy competition of rates, which some of our industries would be the better of, in view of the advantages which foreigners have in transmitting their produce to our great ports.

There is at present a notable project for the canalisation of Great Britain. The idea is, so to utilise and enlarge existing waterways as to make a continuous navigable channel for ships from London to Liverpool, and from the Severn to the Humber. The two lines would cross at Birmingham in something like this form X, and the effect would be to cut England into four islands, and to unite the four tidal rivers—the Thames, the Mersey, the Severn, and the Trent. Already, indeed, schemes are actually under weigh for the improvement of the Severn and the Trent, and it is noteworthy that the latter river was, even so recently as forty years ago, navigable as far up as Burton. To re-open the channel, and, by utilising the river Tame, to carry it in to Birmingham, is not a very stupendous task, and involves no engineering difficulties. Not only Birmingham, but a whole nest of populous towns—West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, Willenhall, Wolverhampton, Tipton, and Dudley, with the adjacent coal-fields, all lie in the basin of the Humber, and are drained by tributaries of the Trent. There is already a canal between Birmingham and London; there is a system of canals between Birmingham and Liverpool, and there is in project a canal from Birmingham to the Severn. It is only needful to bring them all under one uniform system, to enlarge, deepen, and modify those in existence, so as to complete the grand work. This is the scheme which is being advocated under the name of 'A National Canal,' and which Mr Samuel Lloyd of Birmingham has recently explained in an interesting pamphlet. A great deal of data is advanced in support of the contention that it will 'pay;' and the great object is the national one of encouraging the industries of the large inland populations, who are at present severely handi-

capped by their distance from ports. 'Many favourable sites for industrial villages,' says Mr Lloyd, 'would be found along its course, and the dwarf walls would afford places for good wharfs, available for the loading and unloading of heavy goods. The rateable value of hundreds of square miles would increase, and new traffic, the inevitable result of an increased population, would be brought into existence. Farmers on each side of the canal within a day's drawing for their teams, with the various wharfs, would be able to deliver their agricultural crops to the boats or barges; and tens of thousands of tons of produce would be delivered to the ever-increasing populations on the banks of the Thames and Mersey so cheaply as to prevent their importation from abroad. Ten miles on each side of the canal, by three hundred length through agricultural land, makes six thousand square miles in the heart of Old England directly benefited.'

We cannot here go into the commercial and financial aspects of the scheme. But it is proposed that the canal should be so constructed as to be available for the passage of swift gunboats and torpedo-boats, which could thus pass rapidly in time of need from point to point of our coasts without the tedious and dangerous passage round Land's End. To do this would, of course, add greatly to the cost of construction; but the obvious advantages of such a waterway for the purposes of national defence are put forward in favour of making the scheme in every sense a national one. Upon these points, however, we do not enter.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XLVI.—THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

AT Paris, Warren Relf parted with Elsie. He saw her safely to the Northern Railway Station, put her into the first night-train for Calais, and then wriggled back himself to his temporary lair, a quiet hotel on the Cours-la-Reine, just behind the Palais de l'Industrie. He went back to bed, but not to sleep. It was a gusty night, that night in Paris. The wind shook and rattled the loose panes in the big French windows that opened on to the balcony; the rain beat wildly in sudden rushes against the rattling glass; the chimneys on all the neighbouring roofs moaned and howled and shivered in concert. Warren Relf reproached himself bitterly, as he listened to its sound, that he hadn't decided on escorting Elsie the whole of her way across to England. Mrs Grundy would no doubt have disapproved, to be sure; but what did he care in his heart, after all, for that strange apotheosis of censorious matronhood? It would have been better to have seen Elsie safe across the Channel, Mrs Grundy to the contrary notwithstanding, and installed her comfortably in London lodgings. He wished he had done it, now he heard how the wind was roaring and tearing; a north-east wind, yet damp and rain-laden. Warren Relf knew its ways and its manners full well. It must be blowing great-guns across the North Sea now, he felt only too sure, and forcing whole squadrons of angry waves through the narrow funnel of the Straits of Dover.

As the night wore on, however, the wind rose steadily, till it reached at last the full dignity of a regular tempest. Warren Relf couldn't sleep in his bed for distress. He rose often, and looked out on the gusty street for cold comfort. The gas was flaring and flickering in the lamps; the wind was sweeping fiercely down the Cours-la-Reine; and the few belated souls who still kept the pavement were cowering and running before the beating rain with heads bent down and cloaks or overcoats wrapped tight around them. It must indeed be an awful night on the English Channel; Warren stood aghast to think to himself how awful. What on earth could ever have possessed him, he wondered now, to let Elsie make her way alone, on such a terrible evening as this, without him by her side, across the stormy water!

He would receive a telegram, thank Heaven, first thing in the morning. Till then, his suspense would be really painful.

As for Elsie, she sped all unconscious on her way to Calais, comfortably ensconced in her first-class compartment 'pour dames seules,' of which she had fortunately the sole monopoly. The rain beat hard against the windows, to be sure; and the wind shook the door with its gusts more than once, or made the feeble oil-lamp in the roof of the carriage flicker fitfully; but Elsie, absorbed in deeper affairs, hardly thought of it at all in her own mind till she reached the stretch of open coast that abuts on the mouth of the Somme near Abbeville. There, the fact began at last to force itself upon her languid attention that the Channel crossing would be distinctly rough. Still, even then, she hardly realised its full meaning, for the wind was off-shore along the Picardy coast; and it was not till the train drew up with a dash on the quay at Calais that she fully understood the serious gravity of the situation. The waves were breaking fiercely over the mouth of the harbour, and the sea was rising so high outside that passengers were met with stern resolve at the terminus wall by the curt notice:

'Owing to the rough weather prevailing to-night, the Dover boat will not sail till morning.'

So Elsie went perforce to an hotel in the town and waited patiently for the sea to calm itself. But she, too, got no sleep; she lay awake all night, and thought of Winifred.

Away at Monte Carlo, no wind blew. Hugh Massinger went to rest there at his ease at the *Hotel de Paris*, and slept his sleep out with perfect complacency. No qualms of conscience, no thoughts of Winifred, disturbed his slumber. He had taken the precaution to doubly lock and bolt his door, and to lay his winnings between the bolster and the mattress; so he had nothing to trouble about. He had also been careful to purchase a good six-chambered revolver at one of the numerous shops that line the Casino gardens. It isn't safe, indeed, at Monte Carlo, they say, for a successful player, recognised as such, to go about with too much money as hard cash actually in his possession. Raffakevsky, in fact, had told him, with most unnecessary details, some very unpleasant stories, before he retired to rest, about robberies committed at Monte Carlo upon the helpless bodies of heavy winners. Raffakevsky was clearly in a savage ill-temper that evening at having dropped a few thousand pounds at the

tables—strange, that men should permit themselves to be so deeply affected by mere transient trifling monetary reverses—and he took it out by repeating or inventing truculent tales, evidently intended to poison the calm rest of Hugh Massinger's innocent slumbers. There was that ugly anecdote, for example, about the lucky *boulevardier* in the high financial line who won three hundred thousand francs at a couple of sittings—and was murdered in a first-class carriage on his way back to Nice by an unknown assailant, never again recognised or brought to justice. There was that alarming incident of the fat Lyons silk-merchant with the cast in his eye who deposited his gains, like a prudent bourgeois that he was, with a banker at Monaco, but was nevertheless set upon by an organised band of three well-dressed but ill-informed ruffians, who positively searched him from head to foot, stripped him, and then threw him out upon the four-foot way, a helpless mass, in the Mont Boron Tunnel, happy to escape with bare life and a broken leg from the merciless clutches of the gang of miscreants. And there was that dramatic incident of the Nevada heiress who, coming to Monte Carlo with the gold of California visibly bulging her capacious pockets, had to fight for her life in her own bedroom at this very hotel, and defend her property from unholy hands by the summary process of shooting down with her own domestic revolver two of her cowardly midnight visitors. She was complimented by the authorities on her gallant defence, and replied with spirit that, for the matter of that, this sort of thing was really no novelty to her; for she'd shot down more than one importunate suitor for her hand and heart already in Nevada.

Then Raffalevsky had grown more lugubrious in his converse still, and descended to tales of the recurrent suicides that diversify the monotony of the Monegasque world. He estimated that twelve persons at least per annum, on a moderate average, blew their brains out in the Casino and grounds, after risking and losing their last napoleon at the roulette tables. To kill yourself in the actual saloons themselves, he admitted with a sigh, was indeed considered by gentlemanly players as a boorish solecism: persons of breeding, intent on an exit from this vale of tears, usually retired for the purpose of shooting themselves to a remote and sequestered spot in the Casino gardens, behind a convenient clump of picturesque date-palms. This spot was known to habitual frequenters of Monte Carlo as the *Place Hari-kiri*, or *Happy Despatch Point*. But if, by hazard, any inconsiderate person was moved to shoot himself in the *salles de jeu*, a rapid contingent of trained lackeys stood ever at hand ready to rush in at a moment's notice to drag away the offender's body or wipe up the mess; and play proceeded at once the same as usual.

Nevertheless, Hugh slept soundly in spite of it all in his bed till morning, and when he woke, found his goodly pile of gold and notes intact as ever between bolster and mattress. He had never slept so well since he went to Whitestrand.

But at Whitestrand itself that night things went quite otherwise. Such a storm was hardly remembered on the German Ocean within the memory of the oldest sailors. Early in the even-

ing, the coastguardman at the shelter just beyond the Hall grounds, warned by telegram from the Meteorological Office, had raised the cone for heavy weather from the north-east. By nine o'clock, the surf was seething and boiling on the bar, and the waves were dashing themselves in huge sheets of foam against Hugh Massinger's ineffectual breakwater. The sand flew free before the angry gusts: it blinded the eyes and filled the lungs of all who tried to face the storm on the sea-front: even up the river and at the Hall itself it pervaded the air with a perfect bombardment of tiny grains. It was only possible to remain outdoors by turning one's back upon the fierce blast, or by covering one's face, not with a veil, but with a silk pocket-handkerchief. The very coastguardmen, accustomed by long use to good doses of solid silica in the lungs, shrank back with alarm from the idea of facing that running fire of driven sand-particles. As for the smacks and boats at large on the sea, they were left to their fate—nothing could be done by human hands to help or save them.

By midnight, tide was well at its full, and, the beach being covered, the bombardment of sand slowly intermitted a little. But sheets of foam and spray still drove on before the wind, and fishermen, clad in waterproof suits from head to foot, stood facing them upon the shore to watch the fate of Hugh Massinger's poor helpless breakwater. The sea was roaring and raving round its sides now like a horde of savages, and the scour was setting in fiercer than ever to wash away whatever remained of Whitestrand.

'Will it stand, Bill?' the farm-bailiff asked in anxious tones of Stannaway the innkeeper, as they strained their eyes through the gloom and spray to catch sight of the frail barrier that alone protected them—the stone breakwater which had taken the place of the old historical Whitestrand poplar.

Stannaway shook his head despondently. 'Sea like that's bound to wash it away,' he answered hard through the teeth of the wind. 'It'd wash away anything. An' when it goes, it's all up with Whitestrand.'

The whole village, indeed, men, women, and children alike, had collected by this time at the point by the river, to watch the progress of the common enemy. There was a fearful interest for every one of them in seeing the waves assail and beat down that final barrier of their hearths and homes. If the breakwater went, Whitestrand must surely follow it, now or later, bit by bit, in piecemeal destruction. The sea would swallow it up wholesale, as it swallowed up Dunwich and Thorpe and Slaughden. Those domestic examples gave point to their terror. To the Suffolk coast-dwellers, the sea indeed envisages itself ever, not as a mere natural expanse of water, but as a slow and patient yet implacable assailant.

By two in the morning, a fresh excitement supervened to keep up the interest: a collier hull, deserted and waterlogged, came drifting in by slow stages before the driving gale across the broad sand-flats. She was a dismasted hulk, rickety and unseaworthy, abandoned by all who had tried to sail her; and she drifted slowly, slowly, slowly on, driven before the waves, foot by foot, a bit at a time, over the wet sands, till at last, with one supreme effort of force, the breakers

cast her up, a huge burden, between the shore and the breakwater, blocking with her broadside one entire end of the channel created by the scour behind the spot once occupied by the famous poplar. The waves, in fact, dashed her full against the further end of the breakwater, and jammed her up with prodigious force between shore and wall, a temporary barrier against their own advances. Then retiring for a moment to recruit their rage, they broke in sheets of helpless foam against the wooden bulwark they had raised themselves in the direct line of their own progress.

What followed next, followed so fast that even the sturdy Whitestrangers themselves, accustomed as they were to heavy seas and shifting sands and natural changes of marvellous rapidity, stood aghast at its suddenness and its awful energy. In a few minutes, before their very eyes, the sea had carried huge masses and shoals of flying sand over the top of the wall and the stranded ship, and lodged them deep in the hollow below that the scour had created in the rear of the breakwater. The wall was joined as if by some sudden stroke of a conjurer's wand to the mainland beyond; and the sea, still dashing madly against the masonry and the ship, set to work once more to erect fresh outworks in front against its own assaults by piling up sand with incredible speed in dunes and mounds upon their outer faces. Even as they looked, the breakwater was rapidly lost to view in a mountain of beach: the broken stump of mast on the wrecked collier hardly showed above the level of the mushroom hillock that covered and overwhelmed with its hasty debris the buried hull of the unknown vessel. Hummock after hummock grew apace outside with startling rapidity in successive lines along the shore to seaward. New land was forming at each crash of the waves. The Æolian sand was doing its work bravely. By five in the morning, men walked secure where the sea had roared but six hours before. It had left the buried breakwater now a quarter of a mile inland at least, and was still engaged with mad eagerness in its rapid task of piling up fresh mounds and heaps in endless rows, to seaward and to seaward and ever to seaward.

Whitestrang was saved. Nay, more than that: it was gaining once more in a single night all that it had lost in twenty years to the devouring ocean.

When morning broke, the astonished Whitestrangers could hardly recognise their own beach, their own shore, their own salt marshes, their own river. Everything was changed as if by magic. The estuary was gone, and in its place stretched a wide expanse of undulating sandhills. The Char had turned its course visibly southward, bursting the dikes on the Yondstream farms, and flowing to the sea by the old channel from which Oliver's engineers had long since diverted it. The Hall stood half a mile farther from the water's edge than it had done of old, and a belt of bare and open dune-land lay tossed between its grounds and the new high-tide mark. The farm-bailiff examined them in the gray dawn with a practical eye. 'If we plant them hills all over with maram-grass and tamarisk,' he said reflectively, 'they'll mat like the other ones, and Squire'll have as many acres of new pasture-land north o' Char as ever he lost o' salt marsh and meadow south of the old river.'

If Hugh Massinger had only known it, indeed, the storm and the strange chances of tempest had done far more for him that single night while he slept at Monte Carlo than luck at roulette had managed to do for him the day before in that hot and crowded sink of iniquity in the rooms of the Casino.

For from that day forth Whitestrang was safe. It was more than safe; it began to grow again. The blown sand ceased to molest it: the sea and the tide ceased to eat it away: the breakwater had done its work well, after all; and a new barrier of increasing sandhills had sprung up spontaneously by the river's mouth to guard its seaward half from future encroachment. If Hugh could only have known and believed it, the estate was worth every bit as much that wild morning as ever it had been in the palmiest days of the Elizabethan Meyseys. And the family solicitor, examining the mortgages in his own office, remarked to himself with a pensive glance that the Squire might have raised that little sum, if only he'd waited, at scarcely more than half the interest, on his own security and his improved property. For Whitestrang now would fetch money.

SYMBIOSIS.

HERE is a word but recently coined in the mint of Science, and hence rarely found even in our new dictionaries and cyclopædias. Compounded of two Greek words, it signifies the living together for mutual benefit of very dissimilar types of life; but here it must not be supposed that parasitic life is suggested. The equivalent term to *symbiosis* is *commensalism*, that is, a dining at the same table.

The phenomena are remarkable, and occur more widely throughout organic existence than they have hitherto been supposed. We may roughly divide these cases of mutual support or co-operation into three classes—those of animals with animals; of plants with animals; and of plants with plants.

One of the earliest noticed instances of this clubbing together of creatures of very different species is that to which Herodotus refers as follows: 'As the crocodile lives chiefly in the river, it has the inside of its mouth constantly covered with leeches. Hence it happens that while all other birds and beasts avoid it, with the trochilus it lives at peace, since it owes much to that bird; for the crocodile when he leaves the water and comes out upon the land is in the habit of lying with its mouth wide open, facing the western breeze. At such times the trochilus goes into his mouth and devours the leeches. This benefits the crocodile, who is pleased, and takes care not to hurt the trochilus.'

In this exchange of benefits the poet Spenser saw an instance of 'the small constraining the mightie.' He thus describes the crocodile and his benefactor:

Beside the fruitful shore of muddy Nile,
Upon a sunny bank outstretched lay,
In monstrous length, a mighty crocodile,
That, cramm'd with guiltless blood and greedy prey
Of wretched people travelling that way,
Thought all things less than his disdainful pride.

When there came along

A little bird call'd Tedula,
The least of thousands which on earth abide ;

and which

Forced this hideous beast to open wide
The grisly gates of his devouring hell,
And let him feed, as Nature did provide,
Upon his jaws, that with black venom swell.

But a poet of our century sees in this little bird
an emblem of audacity, for Moore sings of

The puny bird that dares with teasing hum
Within the crocodile's stretched jaws to come.

What 'the father of history' so plainly states, the bird actually does, for one of the most familiar objects on the Nile banks is the sic-sac plover, which the modern traveller may sometimes see in the act of feeding within the extended jaws of 'the autocrat of all the Rushes.'

But, strange to say, the crocodile has another companion, one who is a born sycophant, for the 'monitor lizard' warns him of coming danger by running before him through the reeds and plunging into the water. He, however, does not forget to eat the crocodile's eggs and young whenever there is a chance. What a fine moral is here! The zealous sycophant will not let others rob the lordly man, but is, after all, not so zealous as to be quite disinterested.

Another example of this communal life is that the rhinoceros, and also hippopotamus, are often attended by small birds known as the rhinoceros birds. They feed on the ticks and parasites that infest these animals, and, moreover, serve to warn them of approaching danger.

A daily paper of March last reported that the Rev. L. M. Lyle, of Maryland, suspected that some one was fraudulently milking his cow. He kept watch, and discovered that a hog which ran in the same pasture was the culprit. There seemed to be a perfect understanding between the two; and the hog while taking his liquor sat on his haunches and grunted with supreme satisfaction. This little game has generally been laid to the charge of hedgehogs. Obviously, the cow was glad of the hog's attentions, because thereby its distended udder was relieved.

Marine life is rich in examples of commensalism. A graceful fish (*Donzelina*) seeks its fortune in the body of a holothuria or 'sea-cucumber.' Naturalists have long known it as the Fierasfer. It has an eel-like and scale-clad body, which is somewhat compressed. Lodging in the digestive tube of his companion, and regardless of this hospitality, he seizes on his share of all that enters. In their visits to the holothurians, the fierasfers are often accompanied by small crabs, &c. They are known in various seas, and all have similar habits.

The Angler or fishing-frog lodges in its enormous branchial sac a fish named *Apterychtus*. This same angler lives in the northern seas, and there it lodges an amphipod crustacean. Dr Collingwood saw a sea-anemone in the Chinese Sea at least two feet in diameter, and inside it lodged a frisky little fish, the name of which is not given.

Oxybelas, a fish of the Indian seas, takes up its abode in a starfish.—A siluroid or mud-fish of Brazil, which is a skilful fisherman, because of his

many barbules, lodges in the cavity of its mouth some very small fishes, long mistaken for young siluroids. These tenants are fully developed; but instead of living by their own labour, install themselves in their big friend's mouth and share what enters. Not unfrequently, small fishes may be seen alive within the bell-shaped hollow of some jelly-fishes.

The pilot-fish and shark furnish an instance of association at present unexplained. But the pilot has sometimes been confounded with a very different fish—that is, the remora. This latter is simply anchored to his host, and wants from him nothing more than to be towed through the sea. The Mozambique fishermen take advantage of this faculty to catch turtles and certain large fish.

Although symbiosis relates to non-parasitical modes of life, yet there are almost insensible gradations between parasites and messmates and some free animals. The changes which creatures of the barnacle kind termed Cirrhipedes undergo are very curious. At the first period of life they have an elegant body and beautifully divided fins, and their movements are as graceful as those of any insect. After freely swimming about for a time, they then select a resting-place in some retreat. But many settle on the back of a whale or a shark's fin, and are thereby enabled to get such food as comes within reach, while they cross the ocean. Each whale lodges a particular species of these cirrhipedes. The Great Whale of the north is, however, an exception, for it carries no such companions.

Some marine turtles bear many of these organisms. Sometimes they are accompanied by a whole forest of zoophytes, and hence the turtle so situated carries quite a motley colony on his back. Among fixed messmates are some very remarkable polyps. Many naturalists tell of vast colonies of these in which various animals find lodgment and shelter. Forster speaks of colonies not less than three feet in diameter and fifteen feet high, with a crown of eighteen feet diameter. Dana also mentions an *Astræa* or star-coral twelve feet high, and of another kind of coral twenty feet high, 'which contain more than five millions of individuals, among which a number of animals come to take refuge.'

Another set of creatures, too long regarded as parasites, are now known to be strictly scavengers. The commonest instance is that of the frog, certain canals of its body being always full of infusoria termed *Opalinæ*, which doubtless live on what they find there. Similar infusoria are also found in various sea-worms termed annelids.

Many creatures produce a large number of eggs, some of which decompose for want of fecundation, or die in course of development. Some years ago, Van Beneden made a most singular discovery bearing on the fact just referred to. He announced it in terms we cannot forbear quoting: 'It is known that lobsters, as well as crabs and the greater part of the crustacea, carry their eggs under the abdomen, and that these eggs remain suspended there till the embryos are hatched. In the midst of them lives an animal of extreme agility, which is perhaps the most extraordinary being which has been subjected to the eyes of a zoologist. It may be said, without exaggeration, that it is a biped or even quadruped worm. Let

us imagine a clown from the circus, with his limbs as far dislocated as possible, we might even say entirely deprived of bones, displaying tricks of strength and activity on a heap of monster cannon-balls, which he struggles to surmount, placing one foot formed like an air-bladder on one ball, the other foot on another, alternately balancing and extending his body, folding his limbs on each other, or bending his body upwards like a caterpillar of the geometridæ, and we shall then have but an imperfect idea of all the attitudes which it assumes, and which it varies incessantly. The lobster gives him a berth, and the passenger feeds himself at the expense of the cargo; that is to say, he eats the eggs and the embryos which die, and the decomposition of which would be fatal to his host and her progeny.* This remarkable creature, which is named *Histiobdella*, is provided with an egg-sucking apparatus. The common crab of our shores lodges a kind of threadworm or nemertian, which it is considered probably performs the same sanitary office. The sturgeon also lodges among its eggs a polyp which plays the same part.

A few other noteworthy examples of symbiosis must here be mentioned. A large species of bivalve (*Modiola*) of northern seas, and dwelling in deep water, always encloses a couple of crabs about the size of a hazel nut. Hundreds of these *modiolæ* have been opened, and never have been found without their crabs.—A little crab, near the coast of Peru, exists under somewhat different conditions; he lodges in a sea-urchin, and near the termination of its intestine. One crustacean, provided with beak and claws, enjoys himself in the pantry of a jelly-fish or medusa. Another kind of commensalism is that shown by the *Dromiæ*. These are ordinary-sized crabs, and lodge from earliest youth under a growing family of polyps, which increases with them. There is in the Mediterranean a species which sometimes comes to our coast.

The soldier-crabs look like little lobsters lodging in deserted shells. But the creature is not such a lonely hermit as it appears, because an annelid generally establishes itself by its side and takes the refuse food of its neighbour. Another soldier-crab which lives on our coasts has for its chief messmate a sea-anemone. This crab is remarkable for the attention it pays to its companion, for when he has fished, he always gives the choice bits to the anemone, and often during the day ascertains the state of its appetite.

Those animal-mosses of the sea, the Bryozoa, attach themselves to all kinds of solid bodies. One species is almost as a rule found on the common mussel. 'The class of polyps,' says Van Beneden, 'includes species which seek assistance from others, and are classed among messmates. The most remarkable is the gigantic Medusa, which can extend its arms to one hundred and twenty feet; the disc is seven feet and a half in diameter, and when the animal is on the surface of the water, the fringes which surround the cavity at its mouth occasionally afford lodging in the midst of them to a species of actinia, which lives there as a messmate.'

The beautiful sponge familiar to most persons as Venus's Flower Basket, is known to shelter three kinds of crustaceans. This sponge was first obtained from Japanese waters. But in the *Chal-*

lenger expedition, Sir Wyville Thomson found it to the south-west of Cape St Vincent at the immense depth of one thousand and ninety fathoms. Some sponges actually make a home inside another organism; for instance, a small one ensconces itself in the substance of the shell of oysters.

The insect world furnishes not a few instances of symbiosis. The fur of animals and the feathers of birds afford shelter to them. They live upon and thus remove from the superfluous hair or feathers the pellicle or skin débris which encumber them, thereby adding to the cleanliness and good looks of their host. In a word, they perform the same service as do some minute crustaceans for many kinds of fishes. They are not living at their host's expense, but for his benefit. There is a distinct species on each of the domestic animals, the ox, dog, and cat.

In his work on *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*, Sir John Lubbock remarks that 'the nests of our common yellow ant [*Lasius flavus*] contain in abundance four or five species of aphids,* more than one of which appears to be as yet undescribed. In addition, however, to the insects belonging to this family, there are a large number of others which live habitually in ants' nests, so that we may truly say that our English ants possess a much greater variety of domestic animals than we do ourselves. André gives a list of five hundred and eighty-four species of insects which are habitually found in association with ants, and of which five hundred and forty-two are beetles.

The caterpillar of that beautiful beetle the rose-chaffer finds congenial lodgings among the bits of stick collected by some ants, and with which they construct their nests. A species of *Podura*, a little white wingless insect, also runs about the chambers and galleries of the nests of English ants. Then, too, there is a white woodlouse quite as happily situated. This *podura* and the woodlouse are both blind, and most likely have become so because generations have thus lived in darkness. Sir John Lubbock thinks they have through this cause 'become blind'—'because their ancestors no doubt had eyes.' This naturalist goes on to say that the ants allow these insects to live in their nests, and that an interloper would be promptly killed. He thinks these insects may be scavengers.

But in other cases there is a closer bond of association, for many insects secrete a fluid which is food to ants. There is a little blind beetle with club-shaped antennæ which seems quite dependent on the ants. He appears not able even to feed himself, or at any rate is habitually fed by ants.

Of the association of plants with animals but a few examples can here be given. Within recent years, the important discovery has been made which serves to show how the supply of vegetable food on the ocean is supplemented, and accounts also for the enormous abundance of marine animal life. All over the ocean-surface in temperate regions there are immense numbers of Radiolarians. The *Challenger* sailed for days through water full of these small masses of living jelly, one of the most crowded regions being off

* The aphid is that common green, sometimes black insect found under the leaves of shrubs, and termed 'the blight' by English country-folk.

the Azores. These Radiolarians are transparent spheres with a globule of oil in them—such is their appearance under the microscope. When they want to rise to the surface, they expand the oil globule, and of course perform the converse in order to sink.

In one of his lectures on Ocean Life, Professor Moseley says: 'These animals have in them a number of minute yellow bodies (that is, *Xoos-anthella*), and these are of great interest and importance. They are really cells; they contain a nucleus and certain globules, which can be microchemically shown to be starch globules, and are provided by an outer wall, which by further chemical testing can be proved to consist of cellulose—as the walls of the component cells of the cabbage or potato. They are proved in this way to be really unicellular plants, minute algae which live combined with these oceanic animals. The animals apparently cannot get on without the plants, and the plants cannot get on without the animals. They live together by an arrangement of mutual benefit.' Nature's wondrous economy is here seen to perfection. The oxygen given off by the plant and the starch found in its cell serve to feed the animal. On the other hand, the carbonic gas and nitrogenous waste products given off by the animal nourish the plant.

The naturalist Mr Belt mentions a species of acacia which, if unprotected, is apt to be stripped of its leaves by a leaf-cutting ant, which uses leaves not directly for food, but to grow mushrooms on. The acacia, however, bears hollow thorns, and each leaflet produces honey in a crater-formed gland at its base, and a small sweet pear-shaped body at the tip. In consequence, it is inhabited by myriads of a small ant which nests in the hollow thorns, and thus finds meat, drink, and lodgment all provided for it. These ants are continually roaming all over the plant, and make a most effectual bodyguard, not only driving off the leaf-cutting ants, but even, in Mr Belt's opinion, rendering the leaves less liable to be eaten by herbivorous animals. Writing to Fritz Müller on this subject, the late Charles Darwin expressed his entire approval of Mr Belt's view.

A sort of sympathy between certain plants has long been observed to exist, just as though one loved the shadow or company of the other. But it is highly probable this association is based upon mutual interests. Beside some streams, the purple loosestrife constantly adorns the vicinity of the willow. Other plants, on the contrary, seem to have an aversion one to the other, and if this apparent dislike be interfered with by compulsory association, such plants languish or die. The flax-plant, for instance, seems to have an invincible dislike to the scabious. Most likely the roots of one plant emit products favourable to some and noxious to other species. The old Italian botanist Matthioli, observing some curious sympathies in plant-life, termed the phenomena, 'the friendship of plants.' In his work, he says there is so much affection between the reed and the asparagus that if we plant them together both will prosper marvellously. German agriculturists have learned to make profitable use of these plant affinities.

A remarkable observation made during recent years has attracted the attention of physiological

botanists in France and Germany. It is the fact that a considerable number of forest trees do not draw their nourishment directly from the soil, but through the medium of an investing layer of fungus—mycelium. The botanist B. Frank states that all our native oaks, chestnuts, beeches, hornbeams, and hazels are provided with a dense covering of this mycorrhiza, organically associated in growth with the root, and completely enveloping it, even to the growing point.

BOLSOVER BROTHERS.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT half-past eight next morning the housekeeper made her appearance at the Cottage and let herself in by means of latchkey number three. She had no fear of being caught in what she was about to do, Mr James having intimated that he should not arrive before mid-day. Having shut the door and wiped her shoes carefully on the mat, she went at once up-stairs. As she had expected, she found the door of Mr Bolsover's room locked and the key taken away. But this by no means disconcerted Mrs Mims. Going to her own room, she took out the key from the lock, and inserted it without hesitation into the lock of Mr Bolsover's room; for the housekeeper had not been many days at the Cottage before she discovered that the locks of all the up-stairs rooms were of one pattern, and that the key of any one door would open the other doors. From this it may perhaps be inferred that Mrs Mims was not quite the stolid, wooden-headed person she was commonly credited with being.

She turned the key in the lock, drew a long breath, opened the door, and went slowly in. She was not in the room more than two minutes at most. When she came out she was very white and scared-looking, and her hands shook so much and were so nerveless that it was all she could do to relock the door. After taking back the key, she went down-stairs, her face more dazed and expressionless, and more like the carved figure-head of a ship than perhaps it had ever looked before. She sat down on one of the lower stairs to recover herself in some measure before leaving the Cottage.

To all appearance she was exactly the same woman that she always was when, in answer to her knock, Mr James opened the door to her about half-past twelve.

'I need not detain you more than a few minutes, Mrs Mims,' he said. 'As I told you yesterday, the body will be fetched away some time after dark this evening for conveyance to London. I should like you to be in attendance about eleven o'clock to-morrow, when the landlord's agent will be here, to whom, after he has satisfied himself that the fittings and furniture are all in proper order, possession of the Cottage will be given up.—You have told me already that my brother paid ready-money for everything, and that there are no bills owing, so that when I have settled with you and the doctor, everything will be cleared off. I shall remain here for an hour or two to-day, having some letters to write.'

Mrs Mims being thus dismissed for the day, called to mind that she had a long-standing invitation to go and take tea with her particular friend, Mrs Baylis. As it happened, Mrs Baylis lived in the street which led direct to the railway station; thus it fell out that Mrs Mims, while leisurely sipping her tea behind the open-work curtains of her friend's window, had a view of Mr James posting along at double-quick time, evidently bent on catching the four-thirty train.

Daylight was fading into dusk when Mrs Mims found herself once more at Laburnum Cottage. As before, she let herself in with her private key. On this occasion she did not go up-stairs, but having shut the door behind her, she produced from some part of her dress a couple of pins, one of which, with the help of her thimble, she fixed firmly in the jamb of the door; and the other one, in a line with the first, into the door itself, leaving a space of about a couple of feet between the two, and a space of about three-quarters of a yard between them and the floor. Then from one pin to the other she stretched a piece of ordinary sewing-cotton and left it there. When she had brought this singular proceeding to an end, she stood for a minute or two and regarded her handiwork with much complacency, rubbing her elbows and purring softly to herself as an ancient tabby might have done. Then she let herself out by way of the door which opened on the back garden, and having locked it behind her, took away the key. As already remarked, the Cottage was in a lonely part of the suburbs, and at that hour of the evening there was not a creature anywhere about, so that when Mrs Mims forced her way through the low straggling hedge which divided the garden from the fields beyond it, she had little fear of being seen.

At half-past seven next morning the housekeeper made her way back into the Cottage by the way she had quitted it the night before. She chuckled to herself with a sort of uncanny glee when, on examining the front door, she found the two pins and the thread exactly as she had left them. It was clear that no one had obtained access to the Cottage by way of the front door between the time of her leaving it overnight and her visit this morning. Having removed the pins and thread and made the back door safe, she let herself out by the front as usual.

She was there at the time appointed to meet Mr James, who had brought the landlord's agent with him. Half an hour sufficed for the agent to check over the furniture, linen, &c., with the inventory in his possession, and to satisfy himself that the property had suffered no deterioration beyond ordinary wear and tear at the hands of its recent tenant. While this was being done, Mr James called the housekeeper into the parlour and proceeded to pay her what small amount of wages was due to her, to which he added a gift of two sovereigns, 'as a little recognition,' he said, 'of the faithful and conscientious way in which you did your duty to my poor brother.'

Mrs Mims was profuse in courtesies and thanks. Then she ventured to say: 'I suppose the undertaking people came last night, sir?'

'Why, of course they did,' he answered with unmistakable surprise. 'If they hadn't done so,

how should I be able to give up the key this morning?'

After this, the housekeeper felt there was nothing left her to do but bid Mr James a respectful good-morning and get out of the room as quickly as possible. Five minutes later she bade farewell to Laburnum Cottage.

Mr James Bolsover, having settled with the agent and given up the keys of the Cottage to him, followed Mrs Mims's example. At the corner of the main road he was joined by Mr Gazebrooke, who was smoking a cigar, and seemed to have been waiting for him. Together the two proceeded to the house of Dr Lindley.

He had evidently been expecting them, and had got through his morning round of visits earlier than usual. He looked pale and worn, as if from want of sleep: his manner was nervous and flurried.

'I presume the little document is ready?' said Mr Gazebrooke as soon as the three men were seated in Walter's sitting-room.

'Yes, here it is, together with a duplicate,' answered the latter as he took a couple of slips of paper out of his desk and handed them across the table.

Mr Gazebrooke having carefully read the papers, passed them to Mr James, who accorded them an equal amount of attention. One was a certificate of the death of Evan Bolsover, drawn up in accordance with the prescribed formula in such cases and signed by Walter Lindley; the other purported to be, and was, an exact copy of the original. The cause of death was put down as being congestion of the lungs.

'This ought to fix 'em—hey?' said Mr James with a laugh directed at his friend, as he put the two documents carefully away. Mr Gazebrooke merely smiled. From his pocket-book he was extracting the long blue slip of paper which we have seen before. 'Exchange is no robbery,' he said with a significant nod as he tossed the paper over to Walter. 'You will always find Septimus Gazebrooke a man of his word.'

The young doctor gave a great sigh of relief—a sigh that was almost a sob—as his fingers closed over the paper. There was a fire burning in the grate. Taking the paper between his thumb and finger, he lighted it at the bars and held it till it had burnt itself out. What a terrible load was lifted off his mind as he watched the gray ashes flutter up the chimney, no one but himself could have told. But alas! he had only succeeded in throwing off one incubus to find that he had taken on himself the burden of another.

In one of the offices of the Heron Life and Fire Insurance Company, Lothbury, London, sat two middle-aged gentlemen, one of whom was Mr Bysouth, the chairman of the Company, the other being Mr Smiley, the secretary.

Mr Bysouth had not long held the position of chairman, and in his anxiety to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the details with which he was expected to deal, he was in the habit, once or twice a week, of spending a quiet hour with the secretary, an old and experienced official, who had all the ramifications of the Company's business at his fingers' ends. By these means Mr Bysouth was enabled to get

himself posted up in readiness for the Board meetings, so that whatever questions might be brought forward at such times, he was pretty sure to have some acquaintance with them beforehand. It is on one of these semi-official occasions that we make the acquaintance of the two gentlemen.

'That matter being so far disposed of,' said Mr Smiley as he pushed a batch of papers on one side, 'I will now proceed to lay before you the particulars of a very singular and complicated case, as to which I must admit that I am more puzzled than I have been with any case that has come before me for some years past.' As he spoke he took another batch of tape-tied papers from the basket by his side and placed them on the table in front of him.

'On the 5th of last October,' the secretary resumed—'that is to say about seven months ago—we received a proposal from a certain Mr Evan Bolsover, at that time residing at Fairfax Lodge, Fulham, for a policy of insurance on his own life for the sum of five thousand pounds. The proposal went through the routine usual in such cases. Mr Bolsover was examined, and passed by both the Company's doctors, whose reports were highly favourable. As a consequence, his proposal was accepted; his policy was made out in due course, and half a year's premium was paid by him in advance. About three months later, we were advised by Mr Bolsover that he had changed his address to Laburnum Cottage, Medbury Royal. Nothing further is heard from him; but about the middle of March we receive a notification of his death; and a little later the authenticated documents demanded by us in such cases are duly sent in, from which we learn that Mr James Bolsover, a brother of the deceased, is appointed sole heir and legatee. So far everything has run in its ordinary groove, and although it is somewhat unusual for a fine healthy man in the prime of life, such as the insurer is represented as having been, to die so shortly after having effected a policy for so large an amount, still it is within our experience that such things have happened before, and that circumstance in itself would have aroused no suspicion in our minds. So far, so good.

'Our next step, which is one we nearly always take where a heavy policy is in question, is to employ one of our most trusted subordinates to make certain private inquiries, with the view of satisfying ourselves that we are not being made the victims of fraud in any of the numerous disguises it occasionally assumes in such cases. Our Mr Lomax was the person in the present instance to whom this delicate task was entrusted; and I have before me the two Reports in which are summarised the results of his inquiry. With your permission, Mr Bysouth, I will now lay before you certain salient points of the Reports in question, as to which I purpose taking the opinion of the Board at their meeting on Thursday next.'

Mr Smiley having untied the papers in front of him, and replaced his spectacles more firmly on his nose, took up Mr Lomax's Report marked 'No. 1.'

'The first person upon whom our agent called,' resumed the secretary, 'was the medical prac-

titioner who attended Mr Bolsover during his last illness. Of this person Mr Lomax writes as follows: "Dr Lindley is a young man, whose practice in Medbury only extends over a period of something like a couple of years. The moment I introduced myself and stated the object of my visit, the colour died out of his face, a strange frightened look came into his eyes, and for a few moments he was evidently powerless to utter a word. I need scarcely say that my suspicions were at once on the alert; but I am bound to admit that when once he had regained his composure, he answered all my questions in a clear and straightforward manner. His attendance on Mr Bolsover had extended over a period of eight days. No other medical man had been called in. Mr Bolsover's illness had begun with a severe cold, which had quickly developed into congestion of the lungs. The patient grew worse rapidly; and on the third day, at Dr Lindley's suggestion, a trained nurse was obtained from one of the London hospitals. On the seventh day the illness took an unfavourable turn, and on the eighth day the patient died. The nurse and a certain Mr Gazebrooke, a friend of the deceased, whom the doctor had seen there a few days previously, appear to have been the only persons present at the last. Dr Lindley was sent for hurriedly; but by the time he arrived all was over. Except that the end came rather suddenly, there would appear to have been nothing out of the ordinary way in the course taken by the illness. Finally, Dr Lindley assured me that he had made a careful autopsy of the body, and that there was not the slightest reason to suspect the existence of any foul-play. As regards the nurse, it appears that her name was Goodson, and that she was sent by Mr Gazebrooke. Beyond that, Dr Lindley could supply no information about her." So far the Report.

'Our agent's next call was upon Mrs Mims, a middle-aged woman, who had acted as housekeeper to Mr Bolsover, and was indeed the sole domestic employed at Laburnum Cottage. Mr Lomax describes her as being short-sighted and partially deaf, and with a mind which, to use his own phrase, "seems to be belated and wandering in a perpetual fog. How such a woman," he goes on to say, "could contrive to fulfil the duties of housekeeper with any satisfaction to her employer, is more than I can imagine." It was not much that this worthy person had to tell. She had entered the service of Mr Bolsover on the 12th of January. Her employer was a stranger to Medbury, who had taken Laburnum Cottage ready furnished—a small seven-roomed house in the outskirts of the town. Mr Bolsover went away by train every morning, presumably to London, returning in the evening, generally at rather a late hour. Now and then his friend Mr Gazebrooke returned with him and slept at the Cottage. The information elicited from Mrs Mims as to Mr Bolsover's illness and death threw no fresh light on the subject. She saw her master several times in the course of his illness; and even after the nurse's arrival she sat in his room more than once while the latter took a little rest. As a matter of course, the nurse was an absolute stranger to her. Mrs Mims did not see her master after his demise, the room in which the body lay being kept

locked, by order of Mr James Bolsover, who arrived on the scene on the morning of the day following that of his brother's death. It was on Tuesday that Mr Bolsover died, and it was in the course of Thursday night that the body was taken away by the undertaker sent by Mr James Bolsover, with the avowed intention of having it removed to London for interment. To this transaction Mrs Mims was unable to depose as an eye-witness, she having been dismissed for the time being, and the Cottage shut up and the key taken away by Mr James. Next forenoon, the housekeeper, the landlord's agent, and Mr James, met by appointment at the Cottage. The woman was paid her wages; the agent was paid whatever rent might be due, and took over the keys of the house; and that was the last Mrs Mims saw of Mr James Bolsover.

'Mr Lomax having completed his inquiries so far, and having a spare half-hour before there was a train back to town, bethought himself of ascertaining from the railway people whether on the 17th of March—that is to say, on the Thursday following Mr Bolsover's death—they conveyed a corpse from Medbury to London or elsewhere. It appears that a special book is kept by the Railway Company for the registration of all such transactions. On this book being now referred to, it was found that the last entry in it bore date a fortnight anterior to that of Mr Bolsover's death. It was clear that the dead man's last journey from Medbury had not been by rail; indeed, Mr Lomax hardly expected to find that it had been. Medbury is but a dozen miles from London; and if the coffin and hearse were sent down by road, they would be nearly sure to go back by the same way. But how prove that such was the case? Mr Lomax's suspicions, excited in the first instance by Dr Lindley's strange demeanour at the announcement of his errand, had not yet been thoroughly allayed, and he made up his mind to probe the matter still farther. Accordingly, instead of returning to town by train, he hired a fly at one of the hotels and journeyed back by road. About half-way between Medbury and London he came to a toll-bar, which was precisely what he had hoped to do, although the greater number of them are abolished nowadays. His object was to make the same inquiry at the tollgate as he had made at the railway station. The result was that he was positively assured both by the gatekeeper and his son that no hearse had passed through the gate, going either up or down the road, on or about the date in question. The problem, therefore, that now presented itself was: by what route, or by what mode of conveyance, was the body of Mr Evan Bolsover removed to London? for that it was so removed and interred at the Lowfield Cemetery is proved by the Certificate of Burial forwarded to us among other documents by the brother of the deceased. With this question still unanswered, Mr Lomax concludes his Report No. 1.'

Mr Bysouth, who was a reticent man both by habit and inclination, had simply interjected an occasional 'Just so,' or 'I quite follow you,' but had not interrupted the secretary by as much as a single question. All he now said was: 'You have certainly interested me sufficiently in your first Report to make me desirous of hearing the second.'

Mr Smiley took up Report No. 2. 'I need scarcely tell you, sir,' he resumed, 'that after a careful perusal of Mr Lomax's first Report, I felt far from satisfied with the case as it then stood. Certain features of it seemed to me by no means free from suspicion, and I was far from clear in my mind that an attempt was not being made to victimise the Company by means of a very ingenious system of fraud. As a consequence, I requested Mr Lomax to make certain further inquiries, the results of which are set forth in this document, which I will now proceed to summarise for you as briefly as possible.

'Mr Lomax's next step was to satisfy himself that the certificate sent into the office was a *bond fide* copy of the entry in the Register of Burials at the Lowfield Cemetery. After that, he went in search of the head sexton, from whom, with the aid of a small private register kept by the latter, he obtained the address of the undertakers who had conducted the funeral of the Mr Evan Bolsover. An hour later, a cab put Mr Lomax down at the door of the undertakers in question—Messrs Vibert and Sons of Conduit Walk, Barnsbury. I will now quote from the Report. "Messrs Vibert and Sons had been instructed in the ordinary course of business to arrange for a funeral from No. 38 Persimmon Street, only a little distance away (which, it may be remembered, is the address given us by Mr James Bolsover in his various communications with this office). At the same time they were told that no coffin would be required, the body having been removed from the country to London for burial. The funeral took place in due course. Only two mourners followed the body, one of whom was understood to be a brother of deceased. So far my second investigation had resulted in nothing positive; still, it struck me as singular that a different undertaker should have been called in to conduct the funeral from the one to whom the conveyance of the body from Medbury had been entrusted; and Mr Vibert, with whom I talked the point over, agreed with me, that, if the first undertaker were a London man, such a transaction would constitute a singular deviation from the ordinary practice in such cases. But might he not have been a Medbury man? Therein lay a possibility which had not suggested itself to me before."

'At this juncture, Mr Lomax called in the aid of Strumley, a private inquiry agent, who on more than one occasion has proved himself of value to the Company. Now I come to the Report again. "Strumley, taking Persimmon Street as his central point, and working in a gradually widening circle, was not long in lighting on an undertaker in a small way of business who stated that at ten o'clock on the evening of March 18th his men delivered, at No. 38 Persimmon Street, a polished oak coffin made to order. When the order was given, the undertaker was told that he would not be required to conduct the funeral, the person for whom the coffin was intended having died at a remote country village, where arrangements had been made to bury him, but where it had been found impossible to obtain the handsome brass-handled article he was now requested to supply. He brought both his books and the evidence of his men to prove that it was on the evening of the

18th—not of the 17th, on which date the body was said to have been removed from Medbury—that the coffin was delivered at No. 38 Persimmon Street.”

CRIMPS IN AMERICAN PORTS.

CRIMPS are men who gain a livelihood by preying upon the scanty earnings of merchant seamen with or without the connivance of their superiors. They are not the most pleasant people for an unarmed stranger to meet with, in some sequestered spot, after nightfall. The British Board of Trade has compelled the members of this evil fraternity to seek an asylum under other skies; but they still flourish in all the more frequented seaports of the United States. San Francisco has attained an unenviable notoriety for the aggressiveness and assiduity of these parasites, who fatten upon the vices of our seamen. Crimps minister to the depraved desires of mariners, inflame their passions, rob them of their money, and send them to sea with enfeebled constitutions, and a wardrobe the contents of which may be summed up in a few words as a put-on, a take-off, and a go-naked. These crimps are proprietors of infamous boarding-houses for seamen, which cluster thickly along the city front close to the water's edge, and are specially adapted for nefarious practices. The tender mercies of the crimps are more cruel to the seaman than either howling hurricane or savage sea. Crimps devote their entire energies to ships trading to distant lands, as the coasting crews are deaf to their blandishments and will have none of them.

Forty years ago, the 'Queen of the Pacific' was almost a *terra incognita*, with only a mission of monks and a few rude mud-huts forming an outpost of civilisation; but the star of empire has wended its way westward since the tiny brig *Pilgrim*, with R. H. Dana on board, dropped anchor in San Francisco's beautiful bay. A well-built city, defended by forts, now nestles upon a gentle declivity, and faces the rising town of Oakland, that peeps out between the blue-tinted hills on the opposite side of the bay. Wheat was a scarce commodity there in Dana's day; but at the present time rich argosies laden with golden grain set sail for our markets throughout the season; while white-winged coasting craft, peculiar to the States, are constantly arriving or departing, and trim river-steamers dart hither and thither with their gay pilot-houses glittering in the life-giving rays of the sun. Nature assumes her loveliest aspect; and this port would be a veritable elysium to the weather-worn seafarer if it were not cursed by the preponderance of cruel crimps, who are a power for evil in the State.

There is a great demand for ships when the garnered grain awaits shipment to Europe; and no other port—Calcutta excepted—can show such a splendid fleet of merchant-ships gathered together at one time. British iron ships form the large majority, and always obtain a higher rate of freight than the best built wooden ships of the United States. Now is the opportunity for the crimps to recoup themselves for the period when seamen were a drug in the market. They have lured the seamen from their ships, and hold them in durance vile. Captains are eager to fill up the

vacancies caused by desertion; and the crimps combine among themselves to prevent a single seaman from leaving their infamous dens until they are guaranteed a capitation fee varying from twenty to forty dollars, in addition to two or three months' advance of pay for each seaman supplied. This fee has rightly been termed 'blood-money,' inasmuch as it is a veritable pound of flesh paid by the unsophisticated seaman in discharge of his bond. Very frequently a ship is three-fifths of her way homeward before the crew commence to earn a farthing for themselves. The advance-money is paid directly to the crimps; and Jack seldom, if ever, handles the hard cash. At a late meeting of the Chamber of Shipping, Mr William-son said that the whole of the crew of one of his ships deserted, and he was forced to pay to the crimps blood-money amounting in the aggregate to one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, in order to obtain hands when the ship was ready for sea. Mr Chadwick read a letter from a captain stating that each man shipped in lieu of a deserter had cost him nearly forty dollars. These are not solitary exceptions, but examples of the course of procedure adopted by crimps when the demand for seamen exceeds the supply.

How comes it that this state of disorganisation and demoralisation is suffered to exist? Let us imagine, time and space being annihilated for our purpose, that we are approaching the Golden Gate of San Francisco in a vessel, deeply laden with coal, having made the passage round Cape Horn from England in one hundred and fifty days. A pilot boards us from the welcome pilot schooner; the bar is crossed in safety; and as we proceed up the bay towards an anchorage, boats are seen converging upon the ship from all parts of the shore. Each boat contains crimps, whose lips are warm, but whose hearts are as cold as ice, hastening to board the incoming ship. They may not step over the ship's side until the doctor of the port shall have visited and granted us a clean bill of health. As our good ship forges slowly ahead, the crimps keep up with her by gentle rowing, and exchange a running fire of chaff with the sailors, who are amused by their boisterous wit. Presently the health officer shoves off; the horde of ruffians immediately clamber over the rail, and our deck is thronged with some of the vilest specimens of the human race. It is a startling exemplification of the old fable of the wolf and the lamb, with more interesting *dramatis personæ*. Seamen are but feeble folk in a knowledge of worldly wiles, owing to the state of isolation necessary in their profession, and fall an easy prey to the stealers of men.

Almost all crimps have served some time at sea; but agree in practice with George Herbert's theory, that it is better to 'praise the sea, but stay on land.' Hence it is that these men, who, judging by their gallows complexions, are certainly not born to be drowned, know full well that a glass of grog and a savoury snack of fresh fare are irresistible attractions to men who have had neither during a long five months. They treat our crew to ardent liquors, which are freely imbibed; and more experienced crimps produce dainty dishes from hidden receptacles. Jack fears no longer, but begins to feel as exhilarated as a dog set free from his chain; and by the time the anchor brings us up, he imagines himself every

whit as good as his master in this land of good things.

The crimps profess the most intense interest in the welfare of our men, and point out that they can command double the wages, as men are scarce and desertion is never punished. He who wavers is lost. A crimp thrusts a battered boarding-house card into his hand as a warning to other crimps that this man has been appropriated, and having met with success, the tout is at liberty to press his hospitalities upon the distrustful of our crew, who may have heard harsh tales of the crimps, but are reassured by the old tale of 'Codlin's your friend, not Short.' The plausible crimp admits that some of his confrères are rogues; but he could never stoop so low as to rob a seaman. Sails have to be furled; up aloft go the crimps and lay out on the yards to help the seamen they have inveigled by their specious stories. We are powerless to prevent our crew from desertion; and the chief officer, chafing under a sense of his own impotence in this respect, precipitates matters by speaking somewhat brusquely to the now half-inebriated seamen, and we are in a short time left swinging to our anchor with none but officers and boys on board. Even married men can scarcely avoid the importunities of the crimps, although aware that half-pay to their wives will cease immediately they quit the ship without leave. All our seamen cast in their lot with the boarding-masters, and left the ship with five pounds or more unclaimed. Such scenes happen every day in San Francisco.

How fares it afterwards with such misguided men? Taken with their effects to the boarding-houses of their choice, alcoholic liquors are supplied to them without stint, as every house has a bar of its own; and they may consider themselves fortunate if the awakening next morning is not on board a strange ship bound to Europe. They have been put on board of her at nightfall, stupefied with drugged potatoes. It is vain for them to protest that they did not sign the ship's articles; the shipmaster has had to pay for a certain number of men, and he is one of the number with his forged signature in evidence. As a rule, however, such men are too shamefaced and ignorant of the law to raise an objection to the treatment they have received. They have been 'shanghaied,' as it is termed, and accept the inevitable as gracefully as they can.

We once saw twenty men desert from a British man-of-war anchored in San Francisco Bay. It was broad daylight, and the crimps pounced upon the reckless runaways, who found themselves next morning on board the American ship *Puritan*, that lay at anchor close under the stern of their old home, whereon they could read the legend, 'England expects every man to do his duty.' Not one of them knew how he had been kidnapped, nor for what unkind fate he was reserved. Shades of the Pilgrim Fathers! This ship belied her name, and proved a floating pandemonium. Her second officer was of herculean frame, unable to read or write, and was well known for his brutality to men under him. How the poor fellows suffered, few would believe. The blow was as quick as the word; and many a time they wished themselves back under the cross of St George, notwithstanding the restrictions under which they previously groaned. These were as

nothing in the balance when weighed against the cruel treatment to which they were subject, and against which there was no appeal. The officer referred to was a foreigner. Educated Americans are kind to their men.

Crimps can always muster idle vagabonds to present themselves at the shipping office and sign a ship's articles in the names of men who lie drugged in the boarding-houses ready for transference to the ship waiting off the wharf. The first few hours after leaving San Francisco can never be forgotten. One voyage, the *St Lawrence* was towed to sea with every seaman in the fore-castle unfit for duty. A breeze began to blow briskly, and sail had to be reduced. The chief officer looked into the fore-castle, and found his crew literally floating about inside on their chests. A head-sea, coming in through the open hawsepipes, was filling the place; but not a man was capable of helping himself. Sometimes delirium tremens supervenes, and as a rule it is some days before the traces of drink are effaced.

When opportunity offers, our shipmasters in some cases are as bad as the crimps. Wheat is kept back by the farmers; ships lie idly at their moorings; and the supply of seamen is in excess of the demand. At such a time captains demand, and obtain, a bonus from the crimps, whose boarders are eating their heads off in crowded houses. Our consul, Mr Booker, in 1874 addressed an appeal to the masters in port, imploring them to cease this practice, so contrary to the interests of both owners and seamen, pointing out that the action was illegal, and stating that he would uphold the law for the protection of seamen. We have known cases in which the master of a ship has been paid from ten to fifteen dollars by the crimps for each seaman he has taken off their hands in the slack season—a nice little nest-egg for a badly paid shipmaster, and Poor Jack pays in either case. Hence it will be seen that it is not easy to know the seamen's friends at ports abroad. Masters are able sometimes, as we have shown, to make money on the men when shipped; and it is easy to see that a claim can always be lodged against the money of a deserter, who is not present to deny his indebtedness, so that it is possible for profit to accrue to a shipmaster on both sides of the account. This is one reason why strenuous efforts are not made more often to escape from the thralldom of the crimp.

Curious tales are told of the makeshifts supplied by crimps as able seamen. Greenhorns from mining-camps and log-huts have strayed into the crimp's domains and been shipped on board some outward-bounder, much to the disgust of both greenhorns and sailors, as the latter find the landsmen but an encumbrance. Dead men are said to have been smuggled on board, and received by the mates as drunkards.

Not every seaman who ships in San Francisco is shanghaied even at the busiest times. Those who sign the articles of a British ship must appear before our consul, and the articles are carefully read over to them before they sign their names. The men, however, are in duress. The eye of the crimp is not far off, and the seaman is unable to cope with the forces arrayed against him. We have heard several ships' articles read over to the crews in the consul's office by the present vice-consul, than whom the sailor can have no truer or

more impartial friend; but not a dissentient voice was to be heard; yet one-half of the insubordination of seamen and cruelty of officers may be traced to the fact that men who know they have no money to take at the end of the voyage, grow careless in the performance of their duties; while officers are angered by the ignorance of the lubbers who are shipped as seamen.

Portland, Oregon, is as bad as San Francisco. The master of the *Andora*, lately arrived from that port, was summoned at Hull for wages said to be due to one of his crew. It came out in evidence that it was simply impossible to man a ship without the aid of the crimps. Two hundred and fifty pounds sterling was paid as blood-money for thirteen men, together with eight pounds advanced to be deducted from each seaman's earnings on arrival at Hull. The complainant was a backwoodsman, and the judge decided that two pounds per month was as much as he was worth. One of the Portland crimps murdered a confre in San Francisco, but escaped with six months' hard labour, owing to some quibble of American law. Probably it was thought that it was a pity the crimps did not act in a similar way to the Kilkenny cats, and thus rid the State of the whole gang.

Crimping is rife at the present time; and so long as it pays shipmasters better to get rid of their crews and to ship new men, we see no way out of the difficulty. Some alteration, however, might be effected if pamphlets, setting forth the dark doings of crimps in American ports, with full details of the bodily suffering and pecuniary loss to seamen consequent on desertion, were handed to every sailor, by the officials of the Board of Trade, when signing articles to proceed to America. These pamphlets might be made interesting by containing a description by a resident of the principal places worth visiting in the respective ports. Better and fairer than all would be to pay off the seaman, if he wish it, on arrival at any of these ports, if practicable. Our consul at San Francisco has done his best for the seaman as well as for the owner, and several presentments have been made to our Foreign Office, but no change has resulted.

THE KING OF CONJURERS.

In the year 1843, a French nobleman, the Comte de l'Escapulier, was one day passing through a street leading out of the Place Royale, in which his residence was situated. His attention was attracted by a clock, labelled a *pendule de précision*, which was exposed for sale in the window of a watchmaker's shop. The mechanism of the clock was peculiar; and the Count admired and purchased it. At the same time he entered into conversation with the ingenious inventor, whom he quickly discovered to be gifted with remarkable talent in his art. In this way Robert Houdin, destined to be subsequently the greatest conjurer of his day, made the acquaintance of the patron by whose assistance he was enabled to realise his cherished ambition of appearing before the public as a prestidigitateur.

The unskilful manner in which the professors of

the art of sleight-of-hand had hitherto executed the tricks they exhibited, and the clumsy apparatus they made use of, had led him to believe that it would be in his power to improve considerably upon their performances. In the intervals of leisure which his narrow circle of clientage afforded him, he had occupied himself in constructing various mechanical appliances that would help him in the calling he was desirous of pursuing, should the opportunity present itself of his doing so; but hitherto the want of capital had prevented his putting his project into execution.

The Count, who had some knowledge of the mechanical arts, and took a warm interest in their development, was much pleased with several of the inventions shown him; and later on, when his acquaintance with Houdin had become more intimate, he offered him a loan of ten thousand francs for an indefinite period, in order that he might have the means of embarking in his new enterprise. This generous proposal Houdin felt it to be his duty to decline, since in the event of the experiment proving unsuccessful, he saw no reasonable prospect of his ever being in a position to repay the money. The Count was hurt at the refusal of his proffered assistance, and left the shop in anger. A few days afterwards, however, the Count again visited Houdin, to whom he said: 'My friend, although you are unwilling to place yourself under an obligation to me, I am not too proud to solicit a favour at your hands. The circumstances are these: for months past I have been robbed by some of my servants. I have discharged several whom I suspected, and replaced them by others, in the hope of getting rid of the thief; but to no purpose, for the robberies still continue. I come, therefore, to you to beg that you will afford me your help in discovering the culprit.'

Houdin replied with a smile: 'Why, Monsieur le Comte, this is an affair for Vidoq rather than for me. I cannot pretend to any particular skill in a business of this kind.—In what way do you suggest that my services can be made available?'

'As a mechanician,' was the response. 'For certain reasons, I am desirous of not making the matter public, or, long before this, I should have put it into the hands of the police. Can you not invent some piece of mechanism that, attached to the door of the safe in which I keep my valuables, will lead to the detection of the delinquent?'

This hint sufficed for Houdin. An idea struck him, and he demanded a delay of only twenty-four hours in which to construct an apparatus that should effect the desired end. On the evening of the following day he presented himself at the Count's house, carrying with him the contrivance he had invented. The safe stood in a small room which communicated with the Count's bedchamber. The door of the safe was kept invariably locked; the key of it never left the owner's possession; and it was obvious that the

thief had provided himself with a false key, since there was no appearance of force having been employed in picking the lock. Houdin, having pointed out this fact to the Count, proceeded to attach his apparatus to the inner side of the door of the safe. In doing this, the right hand of Houdin was protected by a stuffed glove, similar to that used by boxers. This circumstance excited the curiosity of the Count, and he demanded why the precaution was taken.

'Let it be assumed,' was the reply, 'that the robber has opened the safe. Well, by means of my contrivance, directly he has turned the key in the lock and pulled the door open, even a single inch, a pistol-shot is fired. At the same time on the back of the hand of the burglar is indelibly stamped the word *voleur*. You perceive, therefore, the necessity of my wearing a glove.'

'Explain the working of the machinery.'

'The pistol-shot is simply to give you warning of what has occurred in whatsoever part of the house you may be at the time. But scarcely will the door have been opened, when a claw mounted on a wire and working with a spring will fly out, and clutch the hand of the individual who has inserted the key in the lock. The claw is a tattooing machine, and the short sharp needles of which it is composed are so arranged as to form the word *voleur*, as already stated. These needles pass through a pad impregnated with nitrate of silver, which injects itself into the wound and leaves for life ineffaceable marks.'

The Count's countenance assumed a serious expression. 'We have no right,' he said gravely, 'to brand a man in this way.* That is the prerogative alone of the law. Besides, even granted that we were permitted to do this, would it be consistent with the dictates of humanity to stamp upon the flesh of a fellow-being a cruel and criminating mutilation, which must of necessity for ever rank him with the enemies of society? The man who has robbed me may not be a hardened offender: he may be young, and his principles not yet so fixed as to enable him to resist the temptations that life in Paris affords.'

Houdin recognised the justice of this reasoning. He also shrewdly guessed the reason why the Count had evinced an insuperable reluctance to invoke the aid of the law in the matter. He had sons who were young men, and possibly he entertained some fears of finding in the culprit a member of his own family.

'I admit,' said Houdin, 'the force of your arguments. It will only require a few hours to effect such alterations in the instrument as will remove your objections to its employment in its present form.'

The apparatus was consequently so modified that the claw, instead of tattooing, gave only a cat-like scratch, which would soon heal and leave behind no branding scar. Under these circumstances, the Count no longer saw any reason why the instrument should not be used; and it was at once attached to the safe.

* At that period the *forçats* at the galleys at Toulon and elsewhere were branded on the shoulder with the letters T. F. (the initials of the words *Travaux Forcés*); but the practice has for many years past been discontinued.

In the course of the next few days the Count instructed his steward to draw from his bankers considerable sums of money in gold, which were deposited in the safe. In this way it was anticipated that the cupidity of the thief might receive an additional stimulus. For upwards of a fortnight, however, no attempt was made upon the strong-box; and the Count began to fear that the precautions he had taken had come to the knowledge of the members of his household. But in this he was mistaken. On the sixteenth day a pistol-shot was fired in the room where the safe stood. The Count, who at the time was in the drawing-room, rushed up-stairs to the apartment; there he found his steward, pale and agitated, endeavouring to conceal his right hand by placing it behind his back.

'What is the matter?' demanded the Count.

'A few moments ago,' was the reply, 'I came in, under the impression that I should find you here, as I wanted to speak with you on business. But I was surprised to see a man attempting to force open the door of the safe. A pistol went off—how fired, I know not—and the burglar, alarmed by my presence, jumped out of the window on to the piazza and descended the steps into the garden, whence he made his escape through the little back gate.'

The Count, without saying a single word, went into the garden, and discovered the gate locked and the key in the inside—a palpable proof of the falsity of the steward's story—then, returning to the room, he insisted upon the man's hand being shown him, which proved to be bleeding freely from the scratches it had received. The case, therefore, was perfectly clear.

'For how long a period have you been robbing me?' asked the Count quietly.

'About eighteen months,' was the cool response of the culprit, who by this time had recovered his presence of mind, and, seeing that the game was up, resolved to make a clean breast of the matter.

'And what is the total amount of the money you have stolen from me during that period?' was the next question.

'A little over fifteen thousand francs.'

'What have you done with this sum?'

'I have invested it in government securities; the bonds representing them I have in my desk at home.'

On condition of the steward's delivering up the bonds and signing a paper admitting his guilt, the Count—out of consideration for the offender's family—contented himself with discharging his dishonest servant. The money that had been recovered, De l'Escalopier forced upon Houdin as a loan, to be repaid only at his convenience.

Possessed of this capital, Houdin took a small hall in the Palais Royal and fitted it with considerable taste. The stage was set so as to represent a drawing-room, in white and gold, of the style of Louis XV. The little auditorium would hold only two hundred persons; but the prices were rather high, the front seats being five francs each, and no place was obtainable for less than forty sous. The entertainment was from the commencement highly popular with the Parisians; and the profits realised by Houdin from his venture were so large that in less than a year

he was enabled to repay his kind patron the whole of his loan.

Houdin acquired a comfortable competence by the exercise of his art; and he built a handsome villa at Saint-Gervais, near Blois. When he had retired from business, he amused himself by introducing various curious inventions into his place and the grounds attached to it. The garden gate was situated some four hundred yards from the house. A visitor had only to raise a diminutive brass knocker, and let it fall upon the forehead of a fantastic face—making but a faint sound—when a large bell was set in motion in the villa. At the same time the gate swung open automatically, the plate, bearing the name 'Robert Houdin,' disappeared, and another took its place, on which was engraved the word 'Entrez.' When the postman delivered the letters he had brought, he was instructed to drop them through a slit in the gate into the receptacle provided for this purpose. The box, directly this was done, started with its own accord on its journey to the front door of the house by means of a miniature elevated railway. Houdin invented, too, an ingenious contrivance by which, while lying in bed, he could feed his horse in a stable fifty yards from the villa; for, on touching a small button, there was put in motion an apparatus that caused the exact portion of oats required for the animal's meal to fall into the manger from the granary above. By another curious piece of mechanism, a little bench, that stood beside a ravine in a remote part of the grounds, was so constructed that immediately any person sat down upon it, the machine automatically traversed a narrow bridge that spanned the gorge, and having deposited its occupant on the other side, the bench returned to its original position.

Since Houdin's time, the feats of legerdemain he performed have in some few instances been surpassed by those of his successors in the art. But, conceding this, it is due to his memory to state that he was the first individual pursuing his calling who recognised and utilised the resources that modern discoveries in science had placed at the disposal of the juggler; and some of the most curious tricks exhibited by Houdin were executed by the aid of electricity. It was therefore not without justice that the countrymen of the ingenious Frenchman bestowed upon him the title of 'King of Conjurers.'

RUB LIGHTLY.

A STORY is told of a dignitary of the Church who somewhat astonished an audience of young clergymen by taking the above words as the text of an address, in which he impressed upon his hearers the importance of tact in dealing with their lay brethren. Speaking generally, it may be said that in every walk of life delicate treatment and gentle handling are often the secret of success in dealing both with persons and things. The great gift of tact, so difficult to define, so easy to appreciate and admire, is nothing more than the art which enables its possessors to 'rub lightly' in all the relations of life. The instinct which helps us to understand characters widely different, which gives us a quick perception of the susceptibilities and peculiarities of others, is essential

to all who aspire to deal successfully with their fellow-men.

Even in the most commonplace duties of everyday life the art of rubbing lightly will often enable us to overcome difficulties and obstacles which have resisted all rougher methods. The servant who possesses a 'light hand' is indeed 'a treasure' in the eyes of her mistress, and will succeed in many little domestic duties where clumsy fingers would utterly fail.

Though of most importance, and seen in its highest form in the world at large, there is ample scope for the exercise of tact in the narrower circle of home-life and social gatherings. And here it may be observed that this natural instinct and insight into character, connected as it is with the finer feelings of our nature, is seen more commonly and in a higher degree among women than among men. Who does not admire the ready tact which enables a popular hostess to make a mixed party 'go off,' or, in other words, to harmonise the somewhat discordant elements of a miscellaneous assemblage. 'What can equal woman's tact,' says Oliver Wendell Holmes; 'her delicacy, her subtlety of apprehension, her quickness to feel the changes of temperature, as the warm and cool currents of talk blow by turns?'

If we consider the importance of tact in the wider relations of life, we shall find that those who can rub lightly achieve a large measure of success in dealing with others.

Perhaps the value of tact will be most readily and most commonly recognised in the region of diplomacy. And while it may be said to attain its highest development in the successful ambassador who carries on negotiations of the most delicate nature, on which the issues of peace or war may depend, it is of almost equal importance to the great party leader, the popular bishop, the eminent physician, the successful head-master. One and all of these in their different spheres carry out more or less unconsciously the principle of rubbing lightly in their intercourse with their fellow-men. If it be too much to say that 'tact is success' in life, it may at any rate be safely asserted that to those whose work consists mainly in managing or influencing others, the art of rubbing lightly is a most important factor in the attainment of popularity.

AFTER THE STORM.

THE storm has passed; yet still a troubled moaning,
A strange impassioned sob, comes fitfully.
Dost thou repent, and is there no atoning
For deeds of darkness, O thou wayward sea?

Too late this show of sorrow and contrition
For happy homes by thee made desolate!
Ask those for absolution and remission
Who look abroad across thy waves, and wait.

Long shall they wait, and, anguish-stricken, wonder
What keeps the steps of those they love so well—
Who lie beneath thy deep incessant thunder,
Cradled for ever 'mid thy surge and swell.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

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APPLE LORE.

THE apple has always been one of the most popular of fruits. Poets have sung its praises and prose-writers have dwelt upon its virtues. Naturally, there has gathered round it a not inconsiderable body of folklore, and in connection with its culture are still preserved and maintained customs and practices directly derived from the pagan festivals and sacrifices of old.

It used to be the custom in Devonshire and the other western fruit-producing counties to perform a sacrifice to the apple-tree on Twelfth Night. In the evening the farmer's family and their friends assembled and partook of wheaten cakes, or of toasted bread, dipped in cider. They then went into the orchard, one of the party carrying hot cake or bread and cider, to be offered to the principal tree. The cake was placed on a forked branch, and the cider was thrown over it. While this was being done, the assembled men fired off their muskets, pistols, or any other firearms which they could muster, and the women and children shouted excitedly some such rhyme as the following :

Health to thee, old Apple-tree !
From every bough, give us apples enow,
Hats full, caps full, bushel bushel bags full.

Hurrah ! hurrah !

In Sussex, in the apple-growing districts, a somewhat similar ceremony, so far as regards the chanted or shouted invocation, used to be and perhaps still is performed. It was known as 'worsling'—that is, wassailing the apple-trees, and was generally performed by boys, to whom the farmers always gave pence, as it was considered unlucky to omit the ceremony. Herrick, in his *Hesperides*, thus refers to the superstition and the object for which the ceremony was performed :

Wassail the trees that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare ;
For more or lesse fruits they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing.

Aubrey the antiquary, writing in 1688, remarks

that he had often seen in Herefordshire, and also in Somerset, on Midsummer Eve, fires burning in the fieldpaths in order to bring a blessing upon the apples and other crops. Grimm says that to this day at a fruit-gathering in Holstein five or six apples are left hanging on each tree, in order that the next year's produce may be plentiful. This is evidently a sacrifice to the god who blessed the crop. All these practices are doubtless remains of the old Roman worship of Ceres.

Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland*, describes a custom then observed similar to the Devonshire ceremony, and says that the men finished the rite by drinking their master's health with good wishes for the success of future harvests, and eating caraway and other seeds soaked in cider as a reward for their toil in seed-time. 'This,' he says, 'seems to resemble a custom of the ancient Danes, who, in their addresses to their rural deities, emptied, on every invocation, a cup in honour of them.' The delectable brew known as 'lamb's-wool,' which used to be drunk on Twelfth Night and on Michaelmas Eve, was made with ale, sugar, nutmeg, cloves, and other spices, and roasted apples. Each person present took an apple with a spoon, ate it, and then drank the health of the company from the bowl. Herrick says :

Next crown the bowl full
With gentle lamb's-wool ;
Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger,
With store of ale, too.

The reader will remember Dr Primrose's visit to neighbour Flamborough's on Michaelmas Eve, when the goose and dumplings were fine, and the lamb's-wool, even in the opinion of Mrs Primrose, who was a connoisseur, was excellent.

Another survival and development of ancient superstition is to be found in the widespread use of the apple in divination. In Scotland and in England the apple is a very popular divining medium in love matters. Part of this popularity is probably due to the common notion that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was an

apple-tree. Horace mentions the use of apple-pips in love affairs. A lover would take a pip between the finger and thumb and shoot it up to the ceiling; and if it struck it, his or her wish would be accomplished. Nowadays a maiden tests the fidelity of her beloved by putting a pip in the fire, at the same time pronouncing his name. If the pip bursts with a report, it is a sign that he loves her; but should it burn silently, she is convinced of his want of true affection for her. This is often performed with nuts instead of pips. Gay's *Hobnelia* experiments with the pips by placing one on each cheek, one for Lubberkin, and the other for Boobyelod:

But Boobyelod soon drops upon the ground,
A certain token that his love's unsound;
While Lubberkin sticks firmly to the last.

Gay also mentions the very common amusement of paring an apple without breaking the peel and then throwing the strip over the left shoulder, in order to see the initial letter of the lover's name formed by the shape the paring takes upon the ground. This is often one of the many divinations duly practised on Halloween or All-Saints' Eve. Another way at the same season is for the curious maiden to stand before a looking-glass combing her hair with one hand and eating an apple held in the other; the face of the future husband will then be seen in the glass looking over her left shoulder. Mrs Latham, in her *Sussex Superstitions*, gives another apple charm. Every person present fastens 'an apple on a string, hung and twirled round before a hot fire. The owner of the apple that first falls off is declared to be upon the point of marriage; and as they fall successively, the order in which the rest of the party will attain to matrimonial honours is clearly indicated; single-blessedness being the lot of the one whose apple is the last to drop.'

The 'christening of the apples' is an event looked for by country-folk; but there seems to be considerable diversity of opinion as to the correct date for the 'christening.' To ensure a good crop, the rain ought to fall upon them on St James's Day, say some; on St Peter's Day, say others; while a third party, regardless of the dreadful consequences of rain on such a day, say that St Swithin's is the proper time. In the west, there is a belief that on St Swithin's Day the apples undergo a change; that having been flavourless, they then become fruity and pleasant to the taste and fit for use. 'Apple-drain' is a very common and expressive name for a wasp among the Devonshire peasantry. Peter Pindar, in his *Royal Visit to Exeter*, speaks of 'bullocks stinged by apple-drains.'

The apple appears occasionally in folk-medicine. In Lincolnshire a very common remedy for weak eyes is a poultice made of rotten apples. In the same part of the world, warts are cured by rubbing them nine times with an apple cut into nine pieces; the sections of the fruit are reunited and buried, and as they decay, so it is thought the warts will disappear. The notion that these excrescences can be cured by being rubbed with apple sections, or with a green elder stick or

a bean-shell, if the substance used is buried or left to rot, is found in many parts of the country. An old *Collection of Receipts in Physick and Surgery*, dated 1759, gives the following 'For a blow, or hurt in the eye:' 'Beat the leaves of eyebright with a rotten apple; lay it on the eye as a poultice: repeat it as it grows dry. I think the juice of the eyebright is best.' The euphrasia, or eyebright, was long considered a powerful medicine for all affections of the eye. Milton makes the Archangel Michael purge 'with euphrasy and rue' Adam's visual nerve. An old writer, Lovell, in his *Herball*, 1665, says that 'the ointment of apples softens and supple the roughness of the skin, and heals the chaps of the lips, hands, face, and other parts; also it whitens and smooths the skin, when sunburnt and rough with the north wind.' Mr W. G. Black, in his work on *Folk-Medicine*, mentions a New England charm for ague that had been sent to him by an American correspondent. The patient was to take a string made of woollen yarn, of three colours, and to go by himself to an apple-tree; there he was to tie his left hand loosely with the right to the tree by the string, then to slip his hand out of the knot and run into the house without looking behind him. This is an instance of the very old and general belief that disease can be cured by its transference either to an animal of a lower order or to some stationary object such as a tree.

There used to be a curious custom observed on Easter Sunday at Northmore, near Witney, in Oxfordshire. After evening service, men and women threw quantities of apples into the church-yard; and those persons who had been married during the year had to throw three times as many as any of the rest. After this was done, they all adjourned to the minister's house to eat bread and cheese and drink ale. The minister, it may be noted, was always expected to have the best cheese he could get. Dr Bliss, in his edition of the *Reliquie Hearnianæ*, wherein the custom is mentioned, says that it was still kept up in 1822. What it meant, or whether it be now practised, we know not.

The importance in the fruit-growing counties of a good crop has naturally given rise to many proverbial sayings connected with the apple-tree. In Devonshire the people say:

If good apples you would have,
The leaves must be in the grave.

That is, the trees should be planted after the fall of the leaf. This appears in a slightly different form in Ray's *Proverbs*. A common notion is that if the sun shines through the apple-trees on Christmas Day, there will be a plentiful crop in the ensuing year. Blossom in March is a bad sign.

If the apple-tree blossoms in March,
For barrels of cider you need not sarch.

But if the tree blossom in May, 'you can eat apple dumplings every day.' Or, as another version has it, 'you may eat 'em night and day.' It is considered a very bad omen to see both blossom and fruit at the same time on an apple-tree, this being regarded as a sure sign of death to one of the family before the following spring. Sometimes, however, the prognostication appears

in the form of the following saying, which is so very vague that it need not cause alarm to any one :

A bloom upon the apple-tree when the apples are ripe,
Is a sure termination to somebody's life.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER XLVII.—FORTUNE OF WAR.

AT Monte Carlo, on the other hand, day dawned serene and calm and cloudless. Hugh Massinger rose, unmindful of his far-away Suffolk sandhills, and gazed with a pleasant dreamy feeling out of the window of his luxurious first-floor bedroom. It was a strange outlook. On one side, the ornate and overloaded Parisian architecture of that palace of Circe, plumped down so grotesquely, with its meretricious town-bred airs and graces, among the rugged scenery of the Maritime Alps: on the other side, the inaccessible crags and pinnacles of the Tête-de-Chien, gray and lonely as any mountain side in Scotland or Savoy—the actual terminus of the main range of snow-clad Alps, whose bald peaks topple over sheer three thousand feet into the blue expanse of the Mediterranean, that washes the base of their precipitous bluffs. The contrast was almost ludicrous in its quaint extremes.

He did not wholly approve the desecration. Hugh Massinger's tastes were not all distorted. Dissipation to him was but a small part and fraction of existence. He took it only as the mustard of life—an agreeable condiment to be sparingly partaken of.—The poet's instinct within him had kept alive and fresh his healthy interest in simpler things, in hill and dale, in calm and peaceful country pleasures. After that feverish day of gambling at Monte Carlo, he would dearly have loved to rise early and saunter out alone for a morning walk; to scale before breakfast the ramping cliffs of the Tête-de-Chien, and to reach the mouldering Roman tower of Turbia, that long mounted guard on the narrow path where Gaul and Italy marched together. But that hateful pile of gold and notes between the pillow and the mattress restrained his desire. It would be dangerous to wander among the lonely mountains with so large a sum as that concealed about his person; dangerous to leave it unguarded at the hotel, or to entrust it to the keeping of any casual stranger. 'Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator,' he murmured to himself half aloud with a sigh of regret, as he turned away his eyes from that glorious semicircle of jagged peaks that bounded his horizon. He must stop at home and take care of his money-bags, like any vulgar cheesemongering millionaire of them all. Down, poet's heart, with your unreasonable aspirations for the lonely mountain heights! Amaryllis and asphodel are not for you. Shoulder your muckrake with a manful smile, and betake you to the Casino where Circe calls, as soon as the great gate swings once more on its grating hinges. You cannot serve two masters. You have chosen Mammon to-day, and him you must worship. No mountain air for your lungs this morning; but the close and crowded atmosphere of the roulette tables. Keep true to your creed for a little while longer: it is all for Elsie's sake! —For Elsie! For Elsie!—He withdrew his head

from the window with a faint flush of shame. Ah, heaven, to think he should think of Elsie in such a connection and at such a moment!

He dressed himself slowly and went down to breakfast. Attentive waiters, expectant of a duly commensurate tip, sniffing *pour-boire* from afar, crowded round for the honour of his distinguished orders. Raffalevsky joined him in the *salle-à-manger* shortly. The Russian was haggard and pale from sleeplessness: dark rings surrounded his glassy black eyes: his face was the face of a boiled codfish. No waiter hurried to receive his commands: all Monte Carlo knew him well already for a heavy loser. Your loser seldom overflows into generous tipping. Hugh beckoned him over to his own table: he would extend to the Russian the easy favour of his profuse hospitality. Raffalevsky seated himself in a sulky humour by the winner's side. He meant to play it out still, he said, to the bitter end. He couldn't afford to lose and leave off; that game was for capitalists. For himself, he speculated—well—on borrowed funds. He must win all back or lose all utterly. In the latter case—a significant gesture completed the sentence. He put up his hand playfully to his right ear and clicked with his tongue, like the click of a revolver barrel. Hugh smiled responsive his most meaning smile. 'Espérons toujours,' he murmured philosophically in his musical voice and perfect accent. No man on earth could ever bear with more philosophical composure than Hugh Massinger the misfortunes of others.

Before he left the breakfast-table that morning, a waiter presented the bill, all deferential politeness. 'I sleep here to-night again,' Hugh observed with a yawn, as he noted attentively the lordly conception of its various items. The waiter bowed a profound bow.—'At Monte Carlo, Monsieur,' he said significantly, 'one pays daily.'—Hugh drew out a handful of gold from his pocket with a laugh and paid at once. But the omen disquieted him. Who wins to-day may lose to-morrow. Clearly the hotel at least had thoroughly learnt that simple lesson.

They filed in among the first at the doors of the Casino. Once started, Hugh played, with scarcely an intermission for food, till the tables closed again. He kept himself up with champagne and sandwiches. That was indeed a glorious day! A wild success attended his hazards. He staked and won; staked and lost; staked and won; staked and lost again. But the winnings by far outbalanced the losses. It went the round of the tables, in frequent whispers, that a young Englishman, a poet by feature, was breaking the bank with his audacious plunging. He plunged again, and again successfully. People crowded up from their own game at neighbouring boards to watch and imitate the too lucky Englishman. 'Give him his head! He's in the vein!' they said. 'A man in the vein should always keep playing.' The young lady with the fine Pennsylvanian twang remarked with accidental plainness of speech that she 'wouldn't object to running a partnership.' Hugh laughed and demurred.—'You might dilute the luck, you know,' he answered good-humouredly. 'But if you'll hand me over a hundred louis, I don't mind putting them on 31 for you.' He did, and they won. The crowd of gamblers

applauded, all hushed, with their usual superstitious awe and veneration. 'He has the run of the numbers,' they said in concert. To gamblers generally, fate is a goddess, a living reality, with capricious likes and dislikes of her own. They are ever ready to back her favourite for the time being; they look upon play as a predestined certainty.

Raffalevsky meanwhile lost and lost with equal persistence. He drank as much champagne as Hugh; but the wine inspired no lucky guesses. When they came to count up their gains and losses at the end of the day, they found it was still a neck-and-neck race, in opposite ways, between them. Hugh had won altogether close on nine thousand pounds. Raffalevsky had lost rather more than eight thousand five hundred.

'Never mind,' Hugh remarked with his inexhaustible buoyancy. 'We're still to the good against his Monegasque Highness. There's a balance of something like five hundred pounds in our joint favour.'

'In other words,' Raffalevsky answered with a grim smile, 'you've won all my money and some other fellow's too. You're the sponge that sucks up all my lifeblood. I've got barely three thousand five hundred left. When that goes'—And he repeated once more the same expressive suicidal pantomime.

That night, Hugh slept at Monte Carlo once more. He had lost all sense of shame and decency now. He sent off a note for two thousand francs to the people at the *pension*, just as a guarantee of good faith—as the newspapers say—and to let them know he was really returning. But he had formed a shadowy plan of his own by this time. He would wait another day at the Casino and go home to San Remo with Warren Relf by the train that reached there at 6.39—the train by which Elsie had said in her note he would be returning.

Why he wished to do so, he hardly with distinctness knew himself. Certainly he did not mean to pick a quarrel; he only knew in a vague sort of way he was going by that train; and until it started, he would keep on playing.

And lose every penny he'd won, perhaps! Why not leave off at once, secure of his eight thousand? Bah! what was eight thousand now to him? He'd win a round twenty before he left off—for Elsie.

So he played next day from morning till night; played, and drank champagne feverishly. Such luck had never been known at the tables. Old players stood by with observant faces and admired his vein. Was ever a system seen like his? Such judgment, they said; such restraint; such coolness!

But inwardly, Hugh was consumed all day by a devouring fire. His excitement at last knew no bounds. He drank champagne by the glassful to keep his nerve up. He had won before nightfall, all told, no less a sum than eleven thousand pounds sterling. What was the miserable remnant of Whitestrand, now, to him! Let Whitestrand sink in the sea for all he cared for it! He had here a veritable mine of wealth. He would go back to San Remo to bury Winifred—and return to heap up a gigantic fortune.

Eleven thousand pounds! A mere bagatelle. At five per cent. five hundred and fifty a year only!

His train was due to start at five. About four o'clock, Raffalevsky came up to him from another table. The Russian's face was white as death. 'I've lost all,' he murmured hoarsely, drawing Hugh aside. 'The whole, the whole, my three hundred thousand francs of borrowed capital!—And what's worse still, I borrowed it from the chest—government money—the treasury of the squadron!—If I go back alive, I shall be court-martialed.—For heaven's sake, my friend, lend me at least a few hundred francs to retrieve my luck with!'

Hugh put his hand to his pile and drew out three notes of a thousand francs each—a hundred and twenty pounds sterling in all. It was nothing, nothing. 'Good luck go with them,' he cried good-humouredly. 'When those are gone, my dear fellow, come back for more. I'm not the man, I hope and trust, to turn my back upon a comrade in misfortune.'

The Russian snapped at them with a grateful gesture, but without hesitation or spoken thanks, and returned in hot haste to his own table. Gamblers have little time for needless talking.

At a quarter to five, after a last hasty draught of champagne at the buffet, Hugh turned to go out, with his cash in his pocket. In front of him, he saw just an apparition of Raffalevsky rushing wildly away with one hand upon his forehead. The man's face was awful to behold. Hugh felt sure the Russian had lost all once more, and been too much ashamed even to renew his application.

The great door swung slow upon its hinges, and Raffalevsky burst into the outer corridor, bowed from the room with great dignity, in spite of his frantic haste, by a well-liveried attendant. There is plenty of obsequiousness at Monte Carlo for every player, even if he has lost his last louis.

They emerged once more upon the beautiful terrace, the glorious view, the pencilled palm-trees. All around, the sinking Italian sun lit up that fairy coast with pink and purple. Bay and rock and mountain-side showed all the more exquisite after the fetid air of those crowded gaming saloons. High up on the shoulders of the inaccessible Alps the great square Roman keep of Turbia gazed down majestically with mute contempt on the feverish throng of miserable idlers who poured in and out through the gaudy portals of the garish Casino. A serene delight pervaded Hugh Massinger's placid soul; he felt himself vastly superior to these human butterflies; he knew his own worth as he turned entranced from the marble steps to the beautiful prospect that spread everywhere unrolled like a picture around him. Poet as he was, he despised mere gamblers; and he carried eleven thousand pounds odd of winnings in notes in his pocket.

R'r'r! A sharp report! A cry! A concourse! Something uncanny had surely happened. People were running up where the pistol went off. Hugh Massinger turned with a shudder of disgust. How discomposing! The usual ugly Monte Carlo incident! Raffalevsky had shot himself behind the shade of the palm-trees.

The man was lying, a hideous mass, in a crimson pool of his own blood, prone on the ground—hit through the temple with a well-directed bullet. It was a horrid sight, and Hugh's nerves were

sensitive. If it hadn't been for the champagne, he would really have fainted. Besides, the train was nearly due. If you hover about where men have killed themselves, you're liable to be let in for whatever may happen to be the Monegasque equivalent for that time-honoured institution, our own beloved British coroner's inquest. He might be hailed as a witness. Is that law? Ay, marry, is it? Crowner's quest law! Better give it all a wide berth at once. The bell was ringing for the train below. With a sudden shudder, Hugh hurried away from the ghastly object. After all, he had done his best to save him—lent him or given him three thousand francs to retrieve his losses. It was none of his fault. If one man wins, another man loses. Luck, luck, the mere incalculable chances of the table! If their places had been reversed, would that morose, unsociable, ill-tempered Russian have volunteered to give him three thousand francs to throw away, he wondered? Never, never: 'twas all for the best. The Russian had lost, and he had won—eleven thousand pounds odd, for Elsie.

He rushed away and dashed headlong into the station. His own revolver was safe in his pocket. He carried eleven thousand pounds odd about him. No man should rob him without a fight between here and San Remo.

CHAPTER XLVIII.—AT BAY.

Honest folk give lucky winners a wide berth at the Casino railway station, lest they should be suspected of possible evil designs upon their newly got money. Hugh found, therefore, he could pick his own seat quite at will, for nobody seemed anxious to claim the dubious honour of riding alone with him. So he strolled along the train, humming a gay tune, and inspecting the carriages with an attentive eye, till he reached a certain first-class compartment not far from the front, where a single passenger was quietly seated. The single passenger made his heart throb; for it was Warren Relf—alone and unprotected.

He hardly knew why, but, flushed with wine and continued good fortune, he meant to ride back in that very carriage, face to face with the baffled and defeated serpent; for Hugh had already discounted his prospective victory. Warren was looking the opposite way, and did not perceive him. Hugh waited, therefore, till the train was just about to start from the station, and then he jumped in—too late for Warren, if he would, to change his carriage.

In a second, the painter turned round and recognised his companion. He gave a sudden start. At last the two men had met in earnest. A baleful light burned in Hugh's dark eye. His blood was up. He had run too fast through the whole diapason of passion. Roulette and champagne, love and jealousy, hatred and vindictiveness, had joined together to fire and inflame his heart. He was at white-heat of exultation and excitement now. He could hardly contain his savage joy. 'Have I found thee, O my enemy?' he cried out, half aloud. Another time, it was just the opposite way. 'Hast thou found me, O my enemy?' he had cried to Warren with an agonised cry at their last meeting in the club in London.

Warren Relf, gazing up in surprise, answered

him back never a word; he only thought to himself silently that he was not and had never been Hugh Massinger's enemy. From the bottom of his heart, the painter pitied him: he pitied him ten thousand times more than he despised him.

They stood at gaze for a few seconds. Then, 'Where have you been?' Hugh asked at last insolently. The champagne had put him almost beside himself. Drunk with wine, drunk with good fortune, he allowed his true nature to peep forth for once a little too obviously. He would make this fellow Relf know his proper place before gentlemen at last—a mere ignorant upstart, half way between a painter and a common sailor.

'To Paris,' Warren answered with curt decision. He was in no humour for a hasty quarrel to-day with this half-drunken madman.

'What for?' Hugh continued, as rudely as before. Then he added with a loud and ugly laugh: 'You need tell me no lies. I know already. I've found you out.—To see my cousin Elsie across to England.'

At the word, Warren's face fell somewhat ominously. He leaned back, half irresolute, in the corner of the carriage and played with twitching fingers at the leather window-strop. 'You are right,' he answered low, in a short sharp voice. 'I never lie. I went to escort Miss Challoner from you and San Remo.'

Hugh flung himself into an attitude of careless ease. This colloquy delighted him. He had the fellow at bay. He began to talk, as if to himself, in a low monologue. 'Heine says somewhere,' he observed with a sardonic smile, directing his observation into blank space, as if to some invisible third person, 'that he would wish to spend the evening of his days in a cottage by the sea, within sound of the waves, with his wife and children seated around him—and a large tree growing just outside his grounds, from whose branches might dangle the body of his enemy.'

Warren Relf sat still in constrained silence. For Elsie's sake, he would allow no quarrel to arise with this madman, flown with insolence and wine. He saw at once what had happened: Massinger was drunk with luck and champagne. But he would avoid the consequences. He would change carriages when they stopped on the frontier at Ventimiglia.

The bid for an angry repartee had failed. So Hugh tried again; for he *would* quarrel. 'A great many murders take place on this line,' he remarked casually, once more in the air. 'It's a dangerous thing, they tell me, for a winner at Monte Carlo to go home alone in a carriage by himself with one other passenger.'

Still Warren Relf held his peace, undrawn.

Hugh tried a third time. He went on to himself in a musing monologue. 'Any man who travels anywhere by train with a large sum of money about his person is naturally exposed to very great peril,' he said slowly. 'I've been to Monte Carlo, playing, to-day, and I've won eleven thousand pounds; eleven—thousand—pounds—sterling. I've got the money now about me. There it is, you see, in French bank-notes. A very large sum. Eleven—thousand—pounds—sterling.'

Still Warren said nothing, biting his lip hard, but with an abstracted air looked out of the

window. Hugh was working himself up into a state of frantic excitement now, though well suppressed. Fate had delivered his enemy plump into his hands, and he meant to make the very best use of his splendid opportunity.

'A fool in Paris once called in a barber,' he went on quietly, with a studious outer air of calm determination, 'and ordered him, for a joke, to shave him at once, with a pistol lying before him on the dressing-table. "If your hand slips and you cut my skin," the fool said, "I'll blow your brains out." To his surprise, the barber began without a word of reply, and shaved him clean with the utmost coolness. When he'd finished, the patient paid down ten pounds, and asked the fellow how he'd managed to keep his hand from trembling. "Oh," said the barber, "easy enough: it didn't matter the least in the world to me. I thought you were mad. If my hand had slipped, I knew what to do: I'd have cut your throat without one moment's hesitation, before you had time to reach out for your pistol. I'd say it was an accident; and any jury in all Paris would without a doubt at once have acquitted me."—The story's illustrative. I hope, Mr Relf, you see its applicability?'

'I do not,' Warren answered, surprised at last into answering back, and with an uneasy feeling that Massinger was developing dangerous lunacy. 'But I must beg you will have the goodness not to address your conversation to me any further.'

'The application of my remark,' Hugh went on to himself, groping with his hand in his pocket for his revolver, and withdrawing it again as soon as he felt quite reassured that the deadly weapon was safely there—'ought at once to be obvious to the meanest understanding. There are some occasions where homicide is so natural that everybody jumps at once to a particular conclusion.—Observe my argument. It concerns you closely.—Many murders have taken place on this line—murders of heavy winners at Monte Carlo. Many travellers have committed murderous assaults on the persons of winners with large sums of money about them.—Now follow me closely. I give you fair warning.—If a winner with eleven thousand pounds in his pocket were to get by accident into a carriage with one other person, and a quarrel were by chance to arise between them, and the winner in self-defence were to fire at and kill that other person—do you think any jury in all the world would convict him for protecting his life from the aggressor? No, indeed, my good sir! In such a case, the other person's life would be wholly at the offended winner's mercy.—Do you follow my thought? Do you understand me now?—Aha, I expected so! Warren Relf, I've got you in my power. I can shoot you like a dog; I can do as I like with you.'

With a sudden start, Warren Relf woke up all at once to a consciousness of the real and near danger that thus unexpectedly and closely confronted him. It was all true; and all possible! Hugh was mad—or maddened at least with play and drink: he deliberately meant to take his enemy's life, and trust to the authorities accepting his plausible story that he was forced to do so in self-defence or in defence of his money.

'You blackguard!' the painter cried as the truth came home to him in all its naked ugliness, facing Hugh in his righteous indignation like an

angry lion. 'How dare you venture on such a cowardly scheme? How dare you concoct such a vile plot? How dare you confess to me you mean to put it into execution?'

'I'm a gentleman,' Hugh answered, smiling across at him still with a hideous smile of drunkenness, and fingering once more the revolver in his pocket. 'I'll shoot no man without due explanation and reason given. I'll tell you why. You've tried to keep Elsie out of my way all these long years for your own vile and designing purposes—to beguile and entrap that innocent girl into marrying *you*—such a creature as *you* are; and by your base machinations you've succeeded at last in gaining her consent to your wretched advances. How she was so lost to all sense of shame and self-respect—she, a Massinger on her mother's side—as to give her consent to such a degrading engagement, I can't imagine. But you extorted it somehow—by alternate threats and cringing, I suppose—by scolding her and cajoling her—by lies and by slanders—by frightening *her* and libelling *me*—till the poor terrified girl, tortured out of her wits, decided to accept you, at last, out of pure weariness. A Man would be ashamed, I say, to act as you have done; but a Thing like *you*—pah—there—it revolts me even to talk to you!'

Warren Relf's face was livid crimson with fiery indignation; but he would not do this drunken madman the honour of contradicting or arguing with him. Elsie to him was far too sacred and holy a subject to brawl over with a half-tipsy fool in a public conveyance. He clutched his hands hard and kept his temper; he preferred to sit still and take no outer notice.

Hugh mistook his enforced calm for cowardice and panic. 'Aha!' he cried again, 'so you see, my fine friend, you've been found out! You've been exposed and discredited. You've got no defence for your mean secretiveness. Going and hiding away a poor terrified friendless homeless girl from her only relations and natural protectors—working upon her feelings by your base vile tricks—setting your own wretched womankind to bully and badger her by day and by night, till she gives her consent at last—out of pure disgust and weariness, no doubt—to your miserable proposals. The sin and the shame of it! But you forgot you had a Man to deal with as well! You're brought to book now. I've found you out in the nick of time, and I mean to take the natural and proper advantage of my fortunate discovery. Listen here to me, now: before I shoot you, I propose to make you know my plans. I shall have my legitimate triumph out of you first. I shall tell you all; and then, you coward, I'll shoot you like a dog, and nobody on earth will ever be one penny the wiser.'

Warren saw the man had fairly reached the final stage of dangerous lunacy. He was simply raving with success and excitement. His blood was up, and he meant murder. But the painter fortunately kept his head cool. He didn't attempt to disarm or disable him as yet; he waited to see whether Hugh had or had not a pistol in his pocket. Perhaps Hugh, with still deeper cunning, was only trying to egg him on into a vain quarrel, that he might disgrace him in the end by a horribly plausible and vindictive charge of attempted robbery.

'I've won eleven thousand pounds,' Hugh went on distinctly, with marked emphasis, in short sharp sentences. 'My wife's dead, and I've inherited Whitestrand. I mean to marry Elsie Challoner. I can keep her now as she ought to be kept; I can make her the wife of a man of property. You alone stand in my way. And I mean to shoot you, just to get rid of you offhand.—Sit still there and listen: don't budge an inch, or, by heaven, I'll fire at once and blow your brains out. Lift hand or foot and you're a dead man.—Warren Relf, I mean to shoot you. No good praying and cringing for your life, like the coward that you are, for I won't listen. Even if you were to renounce your miserable claim to my Elsie this moment, I wouldn't spare you; I'd shoot you still. You shall be punished for your presumption—a creature like you; and when you're dead and buried, I shall marry Elsie.—Think of me, you cringing miserable cur—when you're dead and gone, enjoying myself for ever with Elsie.—Yes, I mean to make you drink it, down to the very dregs. Hear me out. You shall die like a dog; and I shall marry Elsie.'

Warren Relf's eye was fixed upon him hard, watching him close, as a cat watches, ready to spring, by an open mouse-hole. This dangerous madman must be disarmed at all hazards, the moment he showed his deadly weapon. For Elsie's sake, he would gladly have spared him that final exposure. But the man, in his insolent drunken bravado, made parley useless and mercy impossible. It was a life-and-death struggle between them now. Warren must disarm him; nothing else was feasible.

As he watched and waited, Hugh dived with his hand into his pocket for his revolver, and drew it forth, exultant, with maniac eagerness. For a single second, he brandished it, loaded, in Warren's face, laughing aloud in his drunken joy; then he pointed it straight with deadly resolve at the painter's forehead.

MERCANTILE AGENCIES.

A CHAPTER ON TRADE INQUIRIES.

THE purpose for which these Agencies exist is to collect information regarding firms and trading companies for the guidance of banks or firms which have dealings with them. The information obtained consists of a general history of the firm from its commencement, the credit which may be safely given to it, and probably the capital at its command. Most Agencies produce annually several volumes of information, divided into towns and districts, and they contrive to give a general idea of a firm's position by ratings in a compressed form. The purchasers of these volumes—which are of course costly—are entitled to make inquiries of a closer nature regarding firms in which they are interested, and the Agencies make inquiries free of charge regarding firms not in their books. But besides the purchasers of these volumes, there are subscribers to the Agencies, who, in consideration of an annual fee, receive information regarding firms indebted to them.

The result is that in all quarters of the globe there are huge chronicles of mercantile successes and failures for the guidance of traders anxious to increase their business, but equally anxious to

avoid bad debts. Thus, if a firm of ship-builders on the Clyde receives an order from a firm in Chicago of whose standing they know nothing, they may, by telegraphing to London through a bank, ascertain in a few hours whether their new customers are safe and reliable.

In obtaining their information, various methods are employed by these Agencies. Sometimes the business community is divided into trades, and one member of the staff will have one trade which it is his duty to look after. He goes to the markets of that trade and becomes acquainted with the people connected with it. He knows in what estimation each firm is held and how far it is trusted. He records the losses of one and the tendency to speculation of another. But business men frequently go to the Agencies and make statements regarding their position, knowing that they will be inquired about; and their doing so may be of great service to them. For instance, if a trader takes up a new branch of the business in which he is engaged, he will be inquired about by all the new firms with whom he deals, and this may give rise to the remark, 'He is very much inquired about;' which suggests that he must be showing signs of weakness. But if the reason of the inquiries is known to the Mercantile Agency no harm is done. Another method of obtaining information is to call upon the firms and ask for it. This is done thoroughly in America, and statements embracing the assets, liabilities, surplus, and stock of traders are regularly recorded. The Agencies in that country seem to be fully alive to the national tendencies, for their Reports frequently contain a sentence something like: 'Claims to have a surplus of one hundred thousand dollars; has probably seventy thousand.'

But by whatever means the information is obtained, it is generally reliable and far-reaching; and if people are unfavourably spoken of, they are usually themselves to blame. An inquiry was recently made regarding a person whose address was in a street off a certain square in London; the question was, whether he was safe to trust for a thousand pounds. The reply at an Agency was: 'The address you give is a lodging-house. About a year ago a gentleman of this name took a room there. He left about three months ago, asking that letters for him might be taken in. He has not been back since. You should have references.'

A person who keeps himself in the dark in this manner and asks credit for such figures, should not be surprised if he finds it difficult to get any one to deal with him at all.

The fact that Mercantile Agencies exist and prosper is evidence that they are useful; and an important question for business men is, how far they can be useful to them. Of course, it is desirable, if not necessary, to have some information about their customers, and the usual practice is to ask their bankers, who go to the bankers of the customer. But bankers as a rule wish to speak well of their own clients, and the value of the opinion is largely measured by the temperament of the man who gives it. If he is sanguine, he will say 'Quite good.' But the Mercantile Agency may say that you should not go beyond one hundred pounds; and in this information the banker's opinion has been received and considered. In asking for information, it is

always wise to mention a sum, and that sum should not be far above the amount the person gives his bills for; otherwise, the information obtained may be misleading. There are firms who always make their inquiries for fancy amounts, because they say they only wish to do business with first-class people. This is very unjust, because the firm may have no occasion for, and may never ask credit for anything like the amount; and the fact that they are inquired about for such a sum may lead to the belief that they are trading beyond what their capital warrants. Most bankers, when their customers are inquired about for sums which they know to be fancy, refuse to give any answer whatever until the transaction is explained to them.

Properly used, there is no reason why Mercantile Agencies should not be a valuable guide to traders, and in many cases save them from long-firm and other swindles, which are supported almost solely by the credulity and indiscretion of merchants. The answers, 'A swindle' and 'Avoid' are the danger-signals; 'Perfectly safe' and 'Quite good' are the green lights. But even when a warning is given, the disposition to do business is so strong that it is often disregarded or disbelieved. A provincial firm recently inquired through their bankers regarding the standing of A, B, & Co., London, and whether they were good for one thousand pounds. The answer was: 'They only started a year ago; there is no A and no B in the firm, and caution is advised.' The provincial firm wrote again through their bankers that there must be some mistake; that the partners were G and F; that G told them he had rich friends, and that the amount mentioned was not too large.—Further inquiries being made, it was found that A, B, & Co. could give no satisfactory reason for trading under an assumed name; that both partners had been bankrupt a few years before—one of them under suspicious circumstances—and that bills had been seen drawn by the firm on one of the partners. The warning was more than justified, but probably it would not be regarded.

Another very important point for traders is the light in which they are viewed by the Mercantile Agencies. This also may be useful to them, particularly if they are young firms with their credit still to be established and developed. It is folly for them to ignore these institutions, or to maintain a prejudice against them because they rake up bygone misfortunes. This is not done needlessly; but it is clear that if a firm has stopped payment a few years before, it is not likely to be strong; and a fair opinion of its trustworthiness cannot be formed without taking the fact into consideration. Besides, the cause of the failure is usually stated, and if no discredit attaches to it, its importance is greatly minimised. When new firms or individuals endeavour to establish themselves, therefore, they are usually dependent upon credit for the means required to conduct their business. That credit which is readily accorded to an old established house with a good record is not given to them in a day. They have to show that they deserve it, and the Mercantile Agencies have immense influence in determining to what extent they are worthy of it. These facts should make young firms very careful of anything which might have a prejudicial effect. The first thing to

be thought of is character, which means honour and uprightness in every transaction the name has ever been connected with. Promptitude in meeting every bill as it becomes due is also essential. If this is not done, it is evident that a promising young firm may soon become, by simple carelessness, one of those hand-to-mouth concerns which employ the energy of the partners in staving off from day to day the inevitable crash. Further, every transaction which is not strictly in the way of business, or which a business man would have a difficulty in understanding, should be avoided, because it is sure to give rise to suspicion and have the worst possible construction put upon it. A firm should not get mixed up with any other concern outside their own line of business. 'Too many irons in the fire' is, as a rule, neither desirable, profitable, nor safe.

Most large firms have begun small, and the smallest firms aim at being large. Let them observe the ordinary rules of prudence, which even the largest firms cannot afford to dispense with, and their progress will be more rapid and sure. The knowledge that Mercantile Agency lights are shining upon them should have a salutary influence upon them and upon trade universally.

BOLSOVER BROTHERS.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

THE secretary laid down the Report, took off his spectacles, and looked across the table at Mr Bysouth.

'And that is as far as you have gone?' queried the latter.

'That is our present limit; and I am really at a loss to know what further steps it behoves us to take in this very strange affair. Mr Bolsover is urgently pressing us for an immediate settlement of his claim, on the plea that business of importance will entail his lengthened absence from England in the course of a week or two. We have put the fellow off twice already; but I hardly know what excuse to make for further delay—more especially as the "Heron" has always prided itself on its promptitude in settlement. All the documents required by us have been duly supplied, and all are undoubtedly genuine; and yet in the face of these two Reports it seems impossible to doubt that there is fraud at work somewhere, the question, however, being in what direction we are to look for it, and what further efforts it is possible to make in order to unmask it. I never felt so baffled over a case before.' He lay back in his chair and nibbled the end of his quill and stared at Mr Bysouth.

'I hardly see myself what we can do further,' answered the latter, 'unless we put on a private detective to ferret into the antecedents of this Mr Bolsover, and thereby strive to find out something to his prejudice which would give us a handle for disputing, or delaying, almost indefinitely, the settlement of his claim.'

'Pardon me; but I fail to see how our doing so would help us in the way you seem to think it would,' responded the secretary. 'Even if the present Mr Bolsover should turn out to be one

of the biggest rogues unchanged, what then? He is his brother's legally constituted heir—on that point the sworn copy of the will in our possession is perfectly clear and explicit (a will, it is true, dated only three days before the testator's demise, one of the witnesses to it being Septimus Gazebrooke, and the other Emma Goodson, the nurse; but not disputable on that ground alone), so that if we pay the money, he and he alone is the man to whom we are bound to hand it over.' He nibbled at his quill for a few moments again, and then he said: 'I will take the papers home once more and sleep on them, or try to do so. Possibly a happy thought of some kind may come to me before morning.'

At this juncture there came a knock at the door and then a clerk entered from the outer office. 'There's a man in the waiting-room,' he said, addressing the secretary, 'who states that he is from Medbury Royal, and that he wants to see the Mr Lomax who was there about a week ago making inquiries about a Mr Bolsover. As Mr Lomax happens to be out, sir, what shall I say to the man?'

'Show him in here.' The secretary and Mr Bysouth exchanged glances.

Next minute there entered a thick-set, plain-featured, but by no means unintelligent-looking man—a working-man evidently, but at present dressed in his Sunday suit, in which he seemed by no means at his ease. He made an awkward little bow as he came in, and then stood holding his hat in front of him with both hands.

'Take a chair, Mr —. By the way, I have not the pleasure of knowing your name,' said Mr Smiley pleasantly.

'My name is William Bonsor, master-carpenter of Medbury Royal,' answered the man as he sat down gingerly on one of the leather-covered office chairs.

'And I am Mr Smiley, the secretary of the Heron Company. It was at my request that Mr Lomax went down to Medbury the other day to make certain inquiries with regard to the late Mr Evan Bolsover. Probably you were acquainted with Mr Bolsover?'

'No, sir; I was not. I never spoke to the gent in my life, though I've seen him many a time. But my wife's mother, Mrs Mims, knew him well, having been his housekeeper up to the time that he died.'

Mr Smiley drew a deep silent breath.

'Mrs Mims was one amongst others whom Mr Lomax saw when at Medbury. She appears to have answered all his questions very satisfactorily.'

'Yes, sir; I've no doubt she did that, when once the gent had hammered the nail of his questions well into her head. But she never thought of going beyond what he asked her, or of telling him something that was known to her and to nobody else. She's a curious body in her way, but by no means so chumpheaded as many folk make her out to be.'

'Mr Lomax seems to have had a sort of feeling that there was something in the background which he had not succeeded in getting at; but of course he was unable even to guess whether it was anything of consequence or not.'

'There was something in the background, sir; not kept there wilfully, as I've said already,

or out of any wish to hide things up, and it's that something I've come here to-day to tell you, because I think you ought to know it.' Mr Bonsor coughed behind his hand and then he said: 'Mr Bolsover—the dead one, I mean—was insured in your office for rather a heavy amount, wasn't he, sir?'

'The policy he effected with us was for the sum of five thousand pounds.'

Mr Bonsor gave vent to a low whistle.

'And he had only paid one half-year's premium when he died,' added Mr Smiley.

'And that made you a bit suspicious-like, and no wonder. Well, sir, I don't know whether what I've come to tell you will be found to have any bearing on the case, but, anyhow, I think it only right you should know of it. It was only yesterday it came to my ears. My wife told me, her mother having told her a few hours afore, which was the first either of us had heard of it. It seems that after Mr Lomax's visit, Grannie, as the young uns call her, got chewing things over a bit in her mind, and at last she began to fancy that, maybe, she had done wrong in not telling him all she knew, although, mind you, she had answered all his questions fair and above-board. The more she thought it over, the more worried and uneasy she grew, till at last she felt as if she must tell somebody, and get the opinion of a second party as to whether she had done right or wrong; so the end of it was she told her own daughter. Polly, like the sensible woman she is, insisted on telling me; so now you will understand, sir, how it comes about that I am here this afternoon.'

Mr Bonsor paused for a moment to blow his nose. Mr Smiley, metaphorically, was on tenter-hooks, but he was far too diplomatic to betray anything of what he felt. His visitor must be allowed to tell his story his own way.

'And now, sir, I'll come to what Grannie had to tell my Polly. It seems that she had a strong hankering to see her master after the poor man was dead (one never can account for the queer fancies some women have); but the door of the room where he lay was locked, and the second Mr Bolsover had the key, and she was too nervous to tell him what she wanted. So, taking the opportunity when he was out of the way, she opened the door with a key belonging to another room which happened to fit the lock, and went in. Well might she say to my Polly that she felt sure her eyes must be playing her some fool's trick. When she stared round, Mr Smiley, sir, the room was empty—no dead man was there! Grannie was not satisfied till she had peered under the bed, and even into the wardrobe; but no Mr Bolsover was to be found. Then she went out, locking the door again and taking away the key, but not whispering a word to anybody.' Mr Bonsor paused and looked at Mr Smiley.

'The news you bring is very strange news indeed, Mr Bonsor,' said the secretary after a few moments, 'and it may not impossibly prove of the utmost value to us in the inquiry we are at present instituting.—Mr Bolsover was stated to have died on the afternoon or evening of Tuesday the 15th. Do you happen to know on which day it was that Mrs Mims visited the locked-up room?'

'It was on the Thursday morning early, before the other Mr Bolsover arrived at the Cottage.'

'It was on the evening of that day, Thursday, that the undertakers are said to have fetched away the body for conveyance to London.'

'I have something yet to tell you, sir, bearing on that part of the business,' said Mr Bonsor in his quiet phlegmatic way.

'Indeed! I shall be most pleased to listen to you.'

Thereupon Mr Bonsor proceeded to narrate a certain little circumstance with which the reader is already acquainted—namely, the fixing by Mrs Mims of two pins and a piece of cotton on the inner side of the door of Laburnum Cottage, and how, on going there at an early hour next morning, she found her simple trap exactly as she had left it. But while the housekeeper had only done as she did with the object of satisfying her own somewhat morbid curiosity, she had unconsciously been acting as an invaluable agent for the Heron Insurance Company, and had unwittingly been the means of unmasking one of the most barefaced frauds that was ever attempted to be perpetrated.

Presently Mr Bonsor was dismissed with many thanks, and a promise that the service he had rendered should before long meet with some more substantial recognition than mere barren expressions of good-will.

'The arch scoundrel!' exclaimed Mr Smiley as soon as he and Mr Bysouth were left alone.

'After all, then, it would seem that the funeral was a sham one,' remarked the chairman.

'There can be little doubt on that score now.'

'And the two Mr Bolsovers?'

'Will be found to have been one and the same person.'

'Mr Gazebrooke?'

'A confederate, without a doubt. These things are rarely carried through single-handed.'

'Both the nurse and the doctor must have been in the plot.'

'Undoubtedly. The young doctor's strange disposition when Lomax introduced himself is now accounted for. It seems a thousand pities that a man in his position should have lent himself to so nefarious a scheme.'

When, between six and seven o'clock the following evening, two officers of police proceeded to No. 38 Persimmon Street, they found the nest empty and the birds flown. Those they were in search of could not have been long gone, seeing that in one of the rooms a partly burnt envelope was found bearing a postmark of the day before. By what means, or through what agency, they had been warned in time to enable them to make good their escape, was never discovered.

Further inquiry in the course of the following day brought to light another fact—that Dr Lindley also had disappeared. In his case it was afterwards made clear whence his warning had come. It seems that, a little time before, he had attended one of Bonsor's children through a bad attack of fever, and had so impressed the master-carpenter's wife with his skill and kindness on that occasion, that while her husband was away in London, she went to the young doctor without saying a word to any one, and hinted to him on what errand her husband

had left home. She, of course, knew that Dr Lindley had attended Mr Bolsover; but how far he might be implicated in the matter which had taken her husband to London, she could only vaguely surmise. In any case, as she said to herself, it could do him no harm to put him on his guard, and it might chance to do him a lot of good.

No effort was made to trace or follow Lindley, who by-and-by found employment as an assistant in Canada. In the course of time his uncle, to whom he had made a clean breast of everything, forgave him, and, later on, bought a practice for him in one of the largest cities of the Dominion, where, in lack of any news to the contrary, it may be assumed that he still lives and flourishes, a wiser and, it may reasonably be hoped, a better man.

As to the mode by which the acceptance for the eighty pounds came into Gazebrooke's possession, Lindley was never enlightened, and it was a mystery which, for obvious reasons, he thought it as well to allow to remain unsolved.

Some three years later than the events herein narrated, Messrs Bolsover and Gazebrooke—under different aliases—made a compulsory appearance before an aggrieved public, they having been brought to book in consequence of some long-firm frauds of a more than ordinarily audacious kind in which they were found to be the leading spirits. Thus were two enterprising careers brought to a premature close for a long period to come. Both of them were men who had been well brought up, and who had started in life with many advantages; but temptation had come in their way; they had not had strength of mind to resist it, but had fallen, as fall so many others. The so-called Nurse Goodson proved to be the wife of Bolsover and the sister of Gazebrooke.

THE AUSTRALIAN DINGO AT HOME.

AMONG the strange animals produced by Australia—its kangaroos, varying in size from six feet in height when fully erect to that of a diminutive mouse; its pigmy geese, which perch upon the tops of high trees; its gigantic kingfishers; its mewing cat-fishes, and its egg-laying platypus and ant-eater—the country brings forth another animal which has puzzled naturalists almost as much as any of the foregoing, by reason of its singular association with its marsupial companions—the Dingo, or native Australian wolf. The only four-footed creature on that vast continent which does not either carry its immature young in a pouch or rear them from eggs, it seems totally out of place among the strange forms by which it is surrounded. It is as truly a wolf as any that ranges the Black Forest or hunts the wapiti in North America; a fleet and powerful animal, which makes an easy prey of the defenceless kangaroos, but never in any circumstances attacks man.

How did this 'dog' manage to obtain a footing in Australia? Is it the descendant of domestic dogs accidentally left on shore by early European navigators? Was it brought into the island by the present aborigines; or is it a truly indigenous animal, a genuine member of the fauna from which it differs so essentially? These are the

questions naturalists have been asking themselves ever since the animal became known; and there is no immediate prospect that a direct answer will be found, although we can approach very near to the truth by inferences from all the circumstances. The theory of the dingo's possible descent from any domestic variety introduced by early discoverers may easily be disposed of. No captain of a ship would be likely to leave his dog, the pet of the ship, on an island which he had just discovered. The first settlers of course took their dogs with them; but they found, to their cost, as soon as they turned out sheep on the Australian pastures, that the dingoes were already numerous, and to be met with everywhere—from Port Jackson to Port Phillip, a distance of some four hundred miles; and when the coast was further explored at various points, extending over at least seven thousand miles, there was the ubiquitous dingo.

The country has been known only about a hundred years. It is incredible, then, that any dog introduced by white men could within that period have spread far and wide over a territory some two-thirds the extent of Europe, and have penetrated to the remote interior. In whatever direction the sheep-farmer advances, and however far back into the bush he takes his flocks—even to six hundred miles from the coast—he is certain to find this enemy ready to attack the fleecy strangers at all times of the day or night.

From all the circumstances, we are driven to the most probable conclusion that this dog was either imported at a very remote period by the aborigines, possibly from New Guinea, where it is also found, or that it is a remnant of a still more remote era when Australia and Asia were part of one continuous land surface.

The dingo is a distinctly handsome animal, of sable colour, the tail, which is frequently full and bushy, being always tipped for about three inches with white; while the chest has a white patch about the size of a man's hand. The weight of a fine dog will reach sixty pounds. The head is rounder and broader than that of the ordinary wolf, and the muzzle relatively shorter. Black specimens are occasionally met with; but these are merely instances of *melanism*, of the same character as the black rabbits sometimes seen in an English wood, and do not constitute a different species. Visitors to the London Zoological Gardens during the past seven years will perhaps have noticed a pair in the cage adjoining that of the Asiatic wolves. These were genuine wild dingoes, caught in Australia, though not very fine specimens to the eye of one accustomed to those to be found on the wooded broken country about the Maranoa and Warrego rivers in Queensland. All the wild dogs of the world breed more or less frequently in captivity, and the dingo is no exception. The writer remembers a litter of pups in the Zoological Gardens about four years ago, one of which, curiously enough, was black and white, a mixture quite unknown in the wild state. While these pups allowed themselves to be handled freely by strangers, and behaved very much in the manner we are accustomed to expect in the young of our domestic dogs, the mother retired shyly into a corner. It would seem, then, that as soon as they became acquainted with human beings they showed that disposition to make

themselves familiar which has rendered the dog the friend of man in every part of the world.

Dingoes have often been exhibited at English dog-shows. We were invited on one occasion to inspect the kennels of an exhibitor, Mr W. K. Taunton, well known for his interest in foreign breeds, who, somewhat to our temporary consternation, suddenly opened a door, whence an animal, easily recognised at the first glance as a dingo, dashed into the yard and bounded towards us. After a critical examination of our trousers with his nose, that no doubt assured him in some mysterious manner of the respectability of his visitors, he paid us the compliment of mumbling our hands in his mouth rather roughly but playfully, and in various canine ways showed his satisfaction with his new acquaintances; though he had not many months previously been running wild in the Australian bush and regarding man as his deadliest enemy. This was one of the very finest specimens we ever saw, and as a matter of course 'Captain Burton' carried off all the prizes in his class wherever he went.

The female dingo takes much pains to bring up her family in a safe retreat. This is sometimes selected among broken masses of rock upon the side of a hill; but in the vast stretches of heavily timbered country, where no such shelter can be obtained, she must put up with a hollow log. Many of the fallen trees have been blown down by hurricanes, or have died of old age as they stand, when colonies of white ants attack the roots; and the trunks having no longer any hold on the earth, necessarily fall. In process of time the white ants gradually destroy the whole of the inner wood, which crumbles to a powder easily scraped out by an animal. In the pipe thus formed the dingo finds a suitable nesting-place. When out on the run one day with our flock, the sheep-dog attracted attention to a hollow log by his energetic demonstrations; and on the following morning we cut a hole some ten or twelve feet from the open end, and cautiously inserted our arm up to the shoulder; when a good deal of snarling and snapping and the feel of a furry coat betrayed the presence of a litter of four dingo pups, who were abstracted, and promptly despatched in the interests of the sheep. The young are singularly unlike their parents, of a sooty brown colour, and entirely devoid of the white tip to the tail and white chest-mark which come after the change of the juvenile coat. In the far 'back bush' young dingoes may often be seen in the camps of the blacks. It is a remarkable fact that these perfectly wild dogs take to their human masters and join in their hunting expeditions, and never, if the assertions of the blacks are to be trusted, show any disposition to return to the wild condition—so great is the influence of man over the inferior creation, even when he is represented by such poor specimens of humanity as these Australian savages.

The natural food of the dingo is, of course, any animal he can catch, the smaller kangaroos and bandicoots especially; but he prefers lamb to any other food, as the squatters know only too well, though mutton in any shape is always welcome. Wherever dingoes abound, as they do in all forest country, the utmost watchfulness of the shepherd is needed. In the daytime he must be constantly on the alert to see that the enemy does not

suddenly rush in among the flock and cut off a 'point,' that is to say, a party of a dozen or a score, and send the remainder off helter-skelter for a mile before they will stop. The reader will bear in mind that the country is totally different from that on which sheep graze in this part of the world, or any other except Australia. Generally speaking, the shepherd has under his charge a flock of more than a thousand active sheep, feeding in a forest of heavy timber, the ground covered with grass and undergrowth, where, at times, he can keep but a small proportion of his charges under view. The dingo has thus many opportunities for sneaking up and making a rush at the defenceless sheep, even when a good dog is on the watch. If the enemy succeeds in his attack, a number of sheep will probably be lost, driven from their companions and scattered in all directions, to become the easy prey of the dingoes for miles round about; while the remainder of the flock are nervous, suspicious, and difficult to manage for some days afterwards. One instance will suffice to show the destructive propensities of these animals. A shepherd came in to the head station one afternoon from his hut, distant some four miles, to report the loss of about a hundred sheep, which had been cut off from his flock by two or three dingoes. Men and dogs immediately started in pursuit, and the missing ones were found towards evening in a sad plight. The dingoes with their invariable cunning had rushed the stupid creatures up to the bank of a creek, or small deep stream, and had amused themselves by racing round them, biting through their hind-legs, and literally in some instances tearing the flesh off their hind-quarters. Many were quite dead, many fatally injured, and at least half of the number had been snapped here and there by the cruel jaws of their assailants. Patches of bloody wool lay about in every direction; and so utterly stupefied with fear were the miserable wretches, that they remained jammed in a compact mass until dragged away one by one and committed to the care of the dogs. All this havoc had been wrought in a short time by two or certainly not more than three of the savage marauders.

At night, the shepherd's anxiety may be even greater than in the daytime. His hut is close to the sheep-yard—a circular enclosure of stakes driven into the earth, and strongly bound together with rails and interlaced saplings. Suddenly he may be awakened by an ominous sound like distant thunder—the sheep rushing round inside the yard. Outside for certain there is a dingo, or perhaps two, galloping round, in the hope of so frightening the sheep that they may break out of the yard, when nothing would prevent them from dispersing in all directions. For some reason, the dingoes seem reluctant to jump into the enclosure, which they could do with the greatest ease. There is little doubt that, but for the prompt interference of the shepherd, these constant rushes of the sheep—the weight of hundreds pressing against a weak part of the fence—would have the desired effect. A breach once made, the sheep would pour through it into the jaws of their expectant foes.

In every shepherd's possession will be found a small bottle of strychnine. When a sheep dies anywhere, in the yard or out on the run, it is his duty to skin it, hang up the pelt on the fence, or

carry it home with him, make several shallow cuts in the body, and with the point of his knife drop into each a grain or so of the deadly poison, for the benefit of the dingoes. The sheep-dogs are taught never to touch these carcases; but occasionally they do fall victims to the bait intended for their wild relations. Advantage is taken of a habit of the dingo to compass his destruction thus: he seems very fond of following a man, especially on foot, and still more so the ration-carrier when taking round a packhorse laden with salt beef and groceries for the shepherds. He keeps at a respectful distance, perhaps on the chance of picking up anything that may be dropped. Much to his satisfaction, he finds a nice piece of fresh beef or mutton just enough to be swallowed at one gulp. In the middle of that *bonne bouche* is a grain of strychnine, and within half an hour he is the best of all dingoes—a dead dingo. The ration-carrier has a canvas bag full of such tempting morsels, which it is hoped will settle accounts with some old offender against the peace of the flock.

In its native state the dingo never barks, but utters a prolonged mournful howl, exactly like that of a domestic dog when he 'bays the moon.' The howl is the vocal expression all over the world of the wolf's feelings, barking being an acquirement developed only in human society. The keeper at the Zoological Gardens told us, however, that both the dingoes there, brought from widely distant parts of Australia, learned to bark in a very short time after their arrival—he thought from a pair of half-bred Eskimo and Newfoundland dogs in the adjoining kennel.

Fortunately, the dingoes, even where numerous, do not hunt in any considerable packs, four or five being rarely seen in company; otherwise, they would have made the rapid pastoral occupation of Australia impossible. On dark, sultry nights they prowl close to station buildings, on the lookout for anything that may be snapped up. A party of us, sitting on the veranda to catch whatever air might be stirring one of these oppressive nights, heard at intervals the howls and snarlings of two or three dingoes about the open space in front of the house. Domestic dogs are always inimical to their wild brethren; and our little black-and-tan terrier felt himself capable of doughty deeds on this particular occasion, if his haughty spirit may be measured by his furious excursions into the darkness and his challenges to the enemy at the top of his high-pitched voice. 'Jock' had returned several times to the veranda well satisfied with the results of his prowess, for had he not struck terror into the breasts of the enemy! That occasional growl as he lay between us betokened his perception of stealthy footsteps wholly inaudible to us, and with a shrill yell he once more dashed out into the darkness. Suddenly the sharp barking ended in a stifled cry, and silence reigned supreme for the rest of the evening. We turned into our blankets with sad hearts, for there could be no doubt that the gallant little fellow had been snapped up and eaten by the dingoes.

Whatever the reason may be, some dingoes will not take poisoned baits. It seems impossible that they can detect the strychnine by smell—at least it has no odour for us—but should ever so small a portion be on the outside of the meat, its intensely

bitter taste would be likely to make the animal drop it instantly. Once it is swallowed, its effect is certain; for this poison, unlike many others, never causes even the sensitive stomach of the dog to reject it by vomiting. In some districts where there is no natural permanent water-supply, the sheep are watered at small ponds filled from wells sunk in the earth. In the hot season, one of these ponds is poisoned, all the others being watched day and night to prevent the dingoes from visiting them. No one goes near the poisoned pond, so that at last the animals, impelled by thirst, are driven to drink the fatal water. Like all wild dogs, they are exceedingly difficult to trap or snare. It is an axiom with them that everything which has been touched by the hand of man should be regarded with suspicion.

Although they make most havoc among the young lambs, lying in wait to snap up the unsuspecting friskers from the very sides of their mothers, newly-born calves sometimes fall victims to the rapacity of the dingoes. They never venture to make any attack while the cow is present; but when she goes off to slake her burning thirst at the nearest water, leaving her helpless offspring for a few minutes, they pounce upon the weakly calf, and, tearing out its entrails, snatch a hasty meal before she returns to find the object of her affection past all maternal solicitude.

Recent accounts from the Darling river district show that the dingoes, finding such an abundance of easily procured food in the rabbits, have again begun to increase in numbers. One unfortunate sheep-farmer has had all the lambs but one from two hundred stud ewes destroyed by the pests; and many others have suffered in proportion.

We will conclude this paper by giving an instance of the sagacity displayed by dingoes in hunting their natural prey. The writer, accompanied by one of the stockmen on a large cattle-run in the Warrego district, went to hunt up some stray horses among the broken ranges; and in order to be on the safe side, two days' rations of salt-beef and 'damper' with the inevitable tea and sugar were provided. We had just rolled up our blankets, after camping out, preparatory to making up the fire and putting the billies on to boil, when we heard the heavy thud of a kangaroo leaping rapidly in a neighbouring scrub. 'It was the work of a moment,' as the old-fashioned novelists used to say, to get out our revolvers on the chance of a shot; but we paused to watch an interesting sight. A dingo was stealing swiftly along the edge of the scrub, parallel to the course of the kangaroo, and in ordinary circumstances a leaden messenger would have been promptly sent after him, with all the more probability of stopping him, as he paused occasionally to listen; but possible kangaroo steak was just then uppermost in our minds. In a minute or two the kangaroo suddenly broke for the open country, and the dingo, for whom he was evidently unprepared, made a splendid dash and pinned the marsupial by the shoulder. Almost instantly afterwards, a second dingo, who had no doubt been driving the game towards his companion, rushed out of the scrub and took the kangaroo on the opposite side. In spite of the poor beast's violent bounds hither

and thither, he soon rolled over, and in an astonishingly short time the dingoes had put an end to his struggles. 'A fresh feed for certain now,' whispered the stockman, and we began crawling on our hands and knees towards the spot, about a hundred yards away, for a shot at the dingoes, who had been too much occupied in the excitement of the chase to notice us. The slightest noise, the chance breaking of a dead twig, or perhaps the motion of a tall blade of grass, sufficed to alarm them, and though the revolver bullets cut up the earth close to them, both went away unscathed. The kangaroo was quite dead. How they had mauled him in those two or three minutes! His chest was torn open under the foreleg, and his neck bitten through and through. These wild dogs seem to know instinctively where the great arteries are situated, and, unlike our domestic hounds, understand perfectly well how to kill a kangaroo without incurring the risk of a fatal stroke from its powerful hindlegs, armed with those formidable chisel-like nails. Some fresh-cut steaks off the loin put us in good trim for the day's work.

'MIXED' QUOTATIONS.

NOTWITHSTANDING that many writers of repute have strongly condemned the use of quotations, it may confidently be asserted that a good quotation hardly ever comes amiss; and in many cases, as a gentleman who had a penchant for a little Greek observed, 'it wonderfully livens up a composition.' 'It is a pleasing break in the thread of a speech or writing,' says Mr W. F. H. King, in *Classical and Foreign Quotations*, 'allowing the speaker or writer to retire for an instant while another and a greater makes himself heard. A well-chosen quotation lightens up the page like a fine engraving, and, in the phrase of Addison, adds a supernumerary beauty to a paper, the reader often finding his imagination entertained by a hint that awakens in his memory some beautiful passage of a classic author.'

But the great objection to the use of other men's thoughts is that integrity of quotation—which is the least return that can be made—is rarely observed, more especially in public speaking, when the excitement of the moment frequently causes quotations to become mixed. The real cause, however, of most common forms of misquotation is the fact that man's memory is imperfect, and is often apt to prove treacherous at the last emergency. However often a striking passage may have been repeated, one can never feel certain that on some occasion two or more words will not be confounded, and consequently that the whole of the quotation will not be spoiled.

Man's weakness in mixing up quotations, allusions, and 'parts of speech,' has been frequently used in literature as a device for raising laughter. Costard, the clown in *Love's Labour's Lost*, apes the court-wit of Queen Elizabeth's time, and misapplies and miscalls like Mrs Partington or Master Dogberry; and everybody knows how important a factor the blunders of Mrs Mala-

prop are in the humour of Sheridan's delightful comedy. Thackeray, too, frequently resorted to this device. Take two examples from the *Yellow-plush Papers*: 'O fie! don't lay that flattering function to your sole, as Milton observes.'—'I think it's Playto, or els Harrystottle, who observes that what we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' Of more modern authors, Miss Braddon has perhaps the greatest weakness for putting misquotations into the mouths of her characters, her sporting baronets being almost invariably 'great at' quoting from 'that fellow Shakespeare.'

Dickens, as everybody must have noticed, had a decided leaning in this direction. Not to mention Captain Cuttle, Dick Swiveller ('who was in the habit of running on with scraps of verse as if they were only prose in a hurry'), and others, we find Mr Pecksniff frequently mixing up quotations and allusions. Said that gentleman: 'Unlike the young man in the Eastern tale who is described as a one-eyed almanack, if I am not mistaken, Mr Pinch?'—'A one-eyed calendar, I think, sir,' said Tom.—'They are pretty nearly the same thing, I believe,' said Mr Pecksniff, smiling compassionately. Nearly all the principal characters in *Martin Chuzzlewit* are made to commit blunders something after this style; and, indeed, no inconsiderable portion of the fun in Dickens's writings depends upon the characters either 'dropping into poetry' or 'mixing' quotations.

On the score of 'realism,' objection might perhaps be taken to the proposition that footmen and nurses are in the habit of quoting and alluding to the classics; but as we are all disposed to allow a good deal of license to the novelist, it may be admitted that the habit of relying largely on mixed quotations for producing amusement is legitimate. In novels dealing with the higher grades of life, indeed, such a course, if not carried to excess, would be true to nature, since almost everybody is fond of showing his or her 'book-learned skill,' and consequently of occasionally misquoting, though rarely to such an extent as that worthy baronet who, according to the perfectly trustworthy testimony of Thomas Ingholdsby, gave an entirely new reading to a famous passage:

Who steals my purse steals stuff!—
'Twas mine—'tisn't his—nor anybody else's!
But he who runs away with my good name,
Robs me of what does not do him any good,
And makes me deuced poor!

Burlesque apart, however, this 'familiar quotation,' in common with the 'Tis true, 'tis pity,' &c., and Byron's lines commencing, 'Freedom's battle once begun,' is frequently murdered.

The well-known verse in Matthew about 'Not one jot or tittle' is a great stumbling-block to preachers. It is stated of a well-known preacher who tried to quote it that he rendered it not one 'tot or jittle.' Then he saw that he had erred, and tried again. 'Not one jitt or tottle,' said he, and again stopped. But he would not give up, and began, 'Not one tit or jottle,' and, then with a red face he abandoned the attempt and went on with his sermon.

The majority of mixed quotations rarely fall short of being absurd. Many, again, are hashed

owing to the confusion of two or more words, as a leader-writer completely murdered Shakespeare's well-known line, 'An honest tale speeds best being plainly told,' by transposing the words 'honest' and 'plainly.' Another common blunder consists in attributing quotations to the wrong authors; and in this connection, by-the-by, everybody must occasionally wonder how many good things have been fathered on Shakespeare! Quotations from all sorts of poets and of all ages, from Spenser to Tennyson (both inclusive), are 'put down to the Bard,' as a theatrical 'catchword,' once very popular, phrased it, without the slightest compunction. But if sense-memory were cultivated instead of syllabic memory, which almost always requires one to begin at the beginning, and quotations, in case of doubt, ascribed to 'the poet,' there would be fewer blunders of this kind.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE FLOODED THEISS.

OUR 'oldest inhabitant' in this part of Hungary has seen some unpleasant weather in his time: summer droughts that withered every green thing, autumn waterspouts that washed the townsfolk out of their beds; but for a winter of snow, he remembers nothing like this year of 1888. The snow was everywhere, blocking railway trains, obliterating roads, burying hamlets in one night, so that the dwellers therein had to get out of their houses by the chimneys. The vast Hungarian plain was hidden for weeks under a white shroud; and in the Carpathians, the snow was so deep that valleys were levelled up, and forests were unseen beneath their covering of ice crystals.

All through the spring even, till the Ides of March were come and gone, the frost never relaxed its grip upon mountain and plain; thus the storage of accumulated snow was in no way reduced; and we knew there would be mischief when the warm winds came, more especially if the thaw were sudden.

My home is about twelve miles from the Theiss, on a spur of the Tokay Hills. I am very glad to be at a respectful distance from the river, particularly since the engineers in their wisdom have seen fit to interfere with nature in a way she will not stand. The Theiss in its natural course describes a perpetual letter S after descending from the mountains; but the engineers, in what they call regulating the river, have shortened its meanderings by cutting straight canals across the turnings and twistings. The result is that the melted snows come down from the Carpathians in as many days now as formerly in weeks, and in consequence the floods are much more destructive than they used to be. This spring, as we feared, the change of temperature was very sudden, and then every day came fresh tales of disaster. The Theiss was reported to be in places thirty-five feet above its summer level. I was anxious to see how things really were, and so I started off one morning with my servant in a light cart, intending

to go firstly to Tokay. We drove along all right for an hour; but on approaching the village of Kerester, on the Bodrog, we found the principal street already three feet in water, and the river was reported to be rising. The people were busy moving out their goods and chattels in boats; and there was much tribulation and wringing of hands, for the houses, of sun-dried bricks, were many of them melting away in the brown waters. We pushed on by the main road, but found ourselves stopped by something like six feet of water. I determined to send my servant on with the trap by a rough disused road over the hill, while I struck across the vineyards by a bee-line to the town. It was just hereabouts that Klapka the Hungarian defeated the Austrian General Sellick in 1849—a memorable day in the War of Independence.

After a toilsome trudge over the uneven ground, I soon came upon an extensive view to the eastward, and saw for myself the ravages the floods had already made. The aspect of the country was quite changed, for there was an extensive lake where fertile fields had been, and many familiar landmarks were submerged. Reaching Tokay, I learnt that sixty houses had fallen, and many others showed ominous cracks and settlements. After an early dinner at the inn, which fortunately was above high-water mark, I hurried off to an embankment where they were making every effort to keep back the invading waters: if they failed, a fresh tract of country would be flooded. It was a scene of great activity—carts drawn by white oxen with enormous horns were perpetually bringing up sack-loads of earth to build up the defence; numbers of soldiers were at work, so that it had something the aspect of a place besieged. Near by, the government have a large salt-store: the water was rushing through like a millrace—three thousand tons had been already washed away. Leaving my own conveyance at Tokay, I procured a lighter but rougher cart to drive to the village of Tardos, as I wished to see how things were going on farther down the Theiss. The village is situated on a natural ridge, so that we had a stiff pull at the last bit of the road. On attaining the summit, we realised at once how extensive the floods were here. With my field-glass I could see a few houses of Tisza-Eszlar standing out of the water. This was the place made so notorious three or four years ago by the alleged murder of a Christian girl by the Jews.

At Tardos I procured a boat to take me across to Tisza-Lök, as it was my intention to stay a day or two at Baron V——'s place in the immediate neighbourhood of this small town. My boatman, an intelligent old man, enlarged upon the engineering mistakes that had been made in regulating the Theiss. 'You can't stack up water like a rick of hay,' said he, 'and you can't make straight what God ordained should be crooked. The floods are far worse than they used to be. What is wanted is a free outlet for the rivers of Hungary at the Iron Gates of the Danube; but politics get mixed up with things as ought to be done down there.' He was a shrewd old fellow, and had hit the right nail on the head.

We were some time getting across the river, for it was nearly two miles wide, and the current was strong; besides, we had to take care of submerged

trees, snags, and such-like. There was a magnificent sunset, which dyed the waters crimson, so that earth and sky were mingled in a glowing canopy of roseate flame very wonderful to behold, but passing all too quickly. Landing while it was yet light on the top of the dam which is supposed to protect the little town or village, we beheld a terrible scene of disaster. At least two-thirds of the village of four thousand inhabitants was in ruins. The scene of confusion was indescribable. Soldiers were going about in pontoons, taking the people off from mounds, walls, or vanishing ridges of earth, to some ark of refuge on higher ground. Pieces of furniture and the bodies of dead animals were floating about in the muddy waters, that had invaded the town from the other side of the embankment. The telegraph poles had given way and were lying with their entangled wires across a mass of floating timber. It was heart-rending to see the poor people, hundreds of them, encamped out on every available bit of higher ground. Some had set up a temporary shelter of boards and matting, against which were piled such remnants of their household goods as they had saved. Here and there a cow was tethered, with a bare bundle or two of fodder, the sight of which must have filled the poor beast with dismay, if she could have thought of the morrow. The people were marvellously patient in their trouble; but it was sad indeed to see the sick and old folk turned out without a roof to cover them. The children were mostly gay and frolicsome, thinking it all good fun, poor little souls; they had had their suppers probably, and the doubtful breakfast was the other side of a jolly picnic night under the bright stars.

Baron V——'s place is happily well out of the reach of the flood. Of course he was occupied with directing such measures of relief as were possible in the face of this widespread disaster. A gentleman who arrived shortly after I did at the Baron's, told us he had passed a terrible time at the village of Tisza-Kénéz the night before. It seems that in the middle of the night, in profound darkness, they were roused from sleep by the dread sound of the tocsin and the shrill call of the bugle. Every soul knew at once that this meant the waters were breaking over the dike that hitherto had safeguarded them from the flood. The whole village turned out together with a detachment of a hundred soldiers. There was a hurrying to the spot where danger threatened, amidst call to arms, cries, orders, and counter-orders. 'The whole scene,' said our informant, 'was lit up by the flare of petroleum torches, darting to and fro like fireflies in the blackness, while the agitated mass of angry waters was visible under the glow of a dozen bonfires burning on the edge of the embankment.' The poor people, men, women, and children, it seems, worked with desperate energy all through the night; and happily, when the sun rose, they were rewarded with the certain knowledge that the ruin and desolation of their homes and fields were averted, at least for the present.

The morning after my arrival at Baron V——'s I found that a relief party were to assist in conducting a raft of six hundred boards, wanted for the repairs of the dike at Tisza-Dada, a large village some miles farther down the river. As

they were rather short of hands, I offered to go with the corporal and four men who were to accompany the raft in a pontoon. We left Tisza-Lök at one o'clock: the weather was very fine; and for about two hours we drifted slowly but surely down the stream, our pontoon being tied to the raft. But we now approached a part of the river where the banks were higher and the strength of the current much stronger, so that the navigation of the raft became extremely difficult. At length at a sudden turn of the river we encountered a regular whirlpool. Here we came in sight of a steamer that was aground. Impelled by the force of the current, the raft with our pontoon in tow bore down straight for the steamer. I thought a collision was inevitable; but by great exertion and good luck, the raftsmen kept clear of the vessel. It was the nearest shave. No sooner had we escaped this danger than we sighted an enormous snag with its roots upwards, well out of the water and right in our course. Here we were not so fortunate; spite of every effort, the raft bore straight upon the snag. We were prepared, each with an oar in his hand; but we were brought up very suddenly and sharply. The difficulty now was to disentangle the floating mass of timber from the roots of the snag. I thought the whole fabric would have broken up; but literally by hook and by crook we got our raft free, and once more we were in the full swim of the stream. We were going at a great rate, and it was all very well as long as our course was straight; but the constant bends of the river were awkward. Seeing a row of partially submerged trees in front of us, we took the precaution to disconnect the pontoon; and it was well we had done so, for, carried round by the current, the raft went crashing into the trees. We saw at once that the raft was breaking up. Some of the outer logs were torn away by the swirl of the water, and drifted off in mid-stream. The men called loudly for help, which we quickly rendered them, and succeeded in rescuing two of the poor fellows who were half immersed in the water. To our dismay, we saw the other two, who were quite out of our reach, floating away on a portion of the wreck which had become detached. The logs turned round and round in the whirlpool, then headed into the very centre of the current, and were off at a pace swifter than any ordinary boat could follow them.

In our frantic efforts to give chase, our pontoon got jammed in between the trees. We were terribly afraid of a broken branch or snag knocking a hole in the iron, when our own fate might have been doubtful; so we were forced to be careful. At length we got free of this entanglement, and rowed with a will after the two luckless men, who were careering madly on their unwilling race. Fortunately they had a rope with them, and we were rejoiced to see that they threw this, lasso fashion, over some partly submerged trees. This brought them up sharp, and we thought all was well. We rowed for our lives; but our pontoon was heavy, and clumsy in the water, and did not make so much way as we could wish. We were now within fifty yards of them; another minute and we could have boarded them with the boathook,

which was held ready at the bow, when the rope that held the raftsmen snapped, and away they went on their half-dozen boards, caught as before in the strong current.

It was a terrible moment. We heard the shriek the poor fellows gave when the rope broke, and when they saw themselves whirled off again with nothing but a frail plank between them and the devouring flood. When all seemed dead against their chance of rescue, the portion of the wrecked raft was brought up by a hidden snag, that probably caught some hanging piece of chain. Now was our time. We stuck to our oars manfully; our boathook gripped their chains: we were alongside in another moment, and, thank heaven, the poor fellows were saved. I never saw men more thoroughly frightened; yet the Hungarian peasant is no coward.

We had now to make the best of our way to Dada, to render an official report of our mishap in losing the raft. It was well we had not to report the loss of life.

We found that the waters had not reached, and were not likely to reach, the large village of Dada, for it is on fairly high ground; but their farms were flooded. It is calculated that the Theiss has spread thirty miles inland; and it will probably be two years before the land is freed from the plague of waters.

IN SIGHT O' LAND.

Above the restful summer sea

The skies are clear, the winds are bland;

And the ship rides on full merrily,

In sight o' land.

Glad songs of home float on the air

From those upon the deck who stand;

And eyes grow dim and wistful there—

In sight o' land.

An hour—and friend with friend will meet,

Lip cling to lip, and hand clasp hand.

O how the heart throbs sorely sweet

In sight o' land!

But lo! athwart the radiant heaven—

(Alas for hopes by mortals planned)

The thick clouds of the storm are driven,

In sight o' land.

Cursed by confusion dark, as though

God had awhile resigned command,

The furious waves crash to and fro,

In sight o' land.

And that proud ship, which oft has crossed

The changeful sea from strand to strand,

With every soul on board, is lost

In sight o' land.

The morning comes, with joyant breath—

But cold and silent on the sand

Lie some who saw the face of death

In sight o' land.

W. F. E. I.

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'UNDER THE CHANGEFUL SKY.'

WITHOUT relying on any of the characteristics and qualifications of 'The Vagabond,' as depicted in the effective song of that name, it is nevertheless desirable that in summer and autumn we should spend as much time as can be commanded 'under the changeful sky.' There is no need to be 'ragged;' but it is very healthful to get 'tanned.' It becomes almost imperative, after an unduly prolonged winter and a winter-like spring and summer, with the compulsory imprisonment within doors which such hostility on the part of the climate entails upon many people, especially delicate women, that we lose no opportunity of inhaling all the fresh air we can when the weather is propitious.

That our skies are changeful, ought to be sufficiently understood to make it quite unnecessary for us to regard them or quote them as an excuse for not facing the elements on all and every occasion at this season. As a writer lately put it: 'Happily, in the case of the calendar we need not, as Hamlet says of the compass, "speak by the card, lest equivocation should undo us;" for it is not needful to dwell very long in this climate to discover that months are mere sounds designed to illustrate the progress of the year, and to serve as approximate guides to human expectation concerning green peas and divers other goodly fruits of the earth, but wholly fallacious as references to the ardency of the sun or to the bleakness of the blast.' Such being the case, it is curious to observe how little the English people appear ready to accept the fact. Although, with the dogged determination of their race, they seldom allow weather to interfere with their business or their set plans of pleasure, and are generally prepared to brave the inevitable reverses which temperature brings about in these latitudes, they nevertheless invariably express profound astonishment, dislike, or vain regret at the sudden alternations of the quicksilver. They entirely refuse, it would seem, to grow accustomed to its eccentricities, and speak and conduct them-

selves as if the most unlooked-for emergency had arisen, when the 'clerk of the weather' displays the least irregularity in his accounts, or fails punctually to post up the entries in his 'daybook' or his 'year's ledger.' It is just as if they were expecting him to conduct himself as a well-ordered methodical book-keeper would, and not in that happy-go-lucky manner of his, to which it might be supposed they would have become accustomed by long use.

However, provided we are allowed to grumble and express our petulant surprise, we, as a rule, are fonder of fresh air than most peoples. Through what vast experience it was of foreign lands—save those of Europe—that our 'Merrie Monarch' found himself in a position to declare that more time could be spent pleasantly in the open air in England than in any other country in the world, history fails to show! By some means, he, nevertheless, had a great truth borne in upon him, for there is a certain quality in our atmosphere, especially in summer, which for its enjoyability is not to be matched. Even according to the far wider experience which the modern ease of locomotion has put at the disposal of mankind, the dictum of the dissolute king has been found to be perfectly sound, and may be quoted as another proof of his never having said a foolish thing—if he never did a wise one.

Most fair weather in England is pleasant out of doors according as the temperature may suit our constitution; but a thoroughly fine summer day in the British Isles is simply unmatchable. The changeful sky constitutes the essence of the charm. The gentle western wind with just sufficient touch of south in it to deprive it of its sting, blowing up across the ardent sun a succession of soft fleecy clouds, casting ever and anon deliciously cool shadows over the landscape, varying its colour, and seeming to alter its form with every breath, bringing out and then concealing a thousand unlooked-for beauties and contrasts, whilst the gleams of light dazzle and rejoice the eye, soul, and body of man—where, or in what country in the world, is weather to be found

excelling this? Surely the monotony of the entirely 'blue unclouded'—lasting from earliest morn to latest eve, one day succeeding another, its actual counterpart, for weeks and weeks together, such as southern and eastern climes afford—cannot compare either for health or comfort with the changeful sky of a temperate climate. The weariness, the exhaustion of vigour and spirits produced, is destructive alike of character and constitution; whilst the three or four months of uninterrupted rain which often make the reverse of the medal in tropical lands, must beget equal lassitude, with a dreary indolence well-nigh compulsory.

No; the daily, hourly interchange of cloud and sunshine, despite all the temporary inconvenience of its incidental uncertainty, is preferable to the 'too much of a good thing'—whether of rain or drought, heat or frost—which many nationalities have to endure. No 'globetrotter' of experience doubts this; and albeit we have to put up with short summers in our own land, we may regard it as an argument in favour of making the most of them when they are here. Now cool, now warm, we must take them as they come; and with common precaution, body and mind will be the better for the variety. The sun-worshipper grumbles, of course, that his basking melting moments are so brief, yet he would grumble more if he were condemned to forego all the pleasures which the cooling winds and restful shadows largely help to multiply.

Then, too, let us not forget, as hinted above, the beauty-creating expression which the varying aspect of heaven's canopy gives to the face of nature. In it we see a reflex of the human countenance, serving to show that intimate relationship existing between the Great Mother and her sons and daughters. Apropos of this kinship, few poets have dealt with it more exquisitely than Wordsworth. It has been well said of him that 'he has given deeper and fuller expression to man's sense of his essential unity with eternal nature than even Shelley himself. There are moments when his verse is indeed instinct with

A presence and a spirit interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.'

Truly, we cannot watch the changeful sky and its effect upon ourselves, no less than upon the landscape, without feeling the gentle pressure of the bonds which bind us with, and make us part and parcel of, nature. It teaches lessons and raises emotions in all thoughtful minds which few outdoor meditative occupations can exceed. According to the weather, our moods and fancies alter, our very will appears almost to be under the control of the elements, and every sensation that lies between gladness and sadness is revealed to us by them. The soft sunlit zephyrs brought across the fertile plains from below that blue

nothing of hill or line of sea on the distant horizon, partially veiling and breaking up the azure arch above with tender flecks of silver cloudlets; or the bold wild western gale driving before it the ponderous and ragged masses of gray vapour, carry definite and distinct influences on their wings, which seem to penetrate our souls whether we will or not. Only let us give ourselves up thoroughly to the contemplation of the outlook, and the most subtle distinctions can be traced in the thrills experienced by our nervous systems. Were it not so, we should be affected no more by the storm or hurricane than by the mild gray light of a still autumn day. If we were not linked inseparably with nature, and did not feel with her each turn on the compass, north-easters would be as pleasant as south-westerners. We should neither know nor care how high or how low the thermometer ranged—life, in fact, would be independent of atmosphere, instead of being, as it is, entirely dependent on it.

We wonder sometimes that the weather should form such a popular subject for comment; but when we think how all sentient things draw their breath from the 'living air,' it would be surprising, surely, if the quality of this essential food were not discussed with equal interest to that displayed about the more definite viands by which we appease our appetites. Doubtless, to the sensitiveness of our constitutions or of our nervous systems is due our consciousness of the degrees of change. Some people's digestions are so strong and their appetites so keen that they care little and note but little what they eat or drink; whilst others, more appreciative—that is, more sensitive and delicately constituted—instinctively, if not from compulsion, attend closely to the quality of their sustenance. So in the same way do these two orders of beings observe, and are influenced by, the quality of the air they inhale. With vegetation, again, the hardy plants increase and fructify in the face of weather that will not allow the tender growths to put forth a shoot; the latter have to stay indoors, as it were, until the changeful sky brings round their time and season for holding up their heads. The great system of natural selection and adaptation is thus seen to be based on a natural law as inscrutable as it is inexorable.

Finally, then, this much-abused English climate of ours produces this open-air food in the shape of oxygen and ozone of a more wholesome quality than any other country in the world. The changeful sky it is which affords opportunities for all persons to enjoy repasts of fresh air after their own hearts, and far oftener than under other conditions. All tastes can be gratified in succession; but, like the grass of the field, we must wait, of course, until the turn comes which suits our constitutions; and if many of us unhappily are relegated to long terms of imprisonment within-doors, on the whole they will be shorter from year's end to year's end than elsewhere, thus making good the 'Merrie Monarch's' dictum. His vagabondising nature, too, properly associates

him with the title of these rambling comments, and has entangled him in them much as his lamented father's head got mixed up with Mr Dick's 'Memorial'!

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAP. XLIX.—THE UNFORESEEN.

QUICK as lightning, Relf leaped upon his frantic assailant, and with one powerful arm, stiffened like an iron bar, dashed down the upraised hand, and the revolver in its grasp, with all his might, toward the floor of the carriage. A desperate struggle ensued in that narrow compartment. The two men, indeed, were just evenly matched. Warren Relf, strong from his yachting experience, with sinewy limbs much exercised by constant outdoor occupation, fought hard in sheer force of thew and muscle, with the consciousness that therein lay his one chance of saving Elsie from still further misery. Hugh Massinger, on the other hand, well knit and wiry, now mad with mingled excitement and drink, grappled wildly with his adversary in the fierce strength of pure adventitious nervous energy. The man's whole being seemed to pour itself forth with a rush in one frantic outburst of insane vigour. He gripped the revolver with all his utmost force, and endeavoured to wrench it, in spite of Warren's strong hand, from his enemy's grasp, and to turn it by sheer power of wrist and arm once more upon Elsie's new lover. 'Black-guard!' he cried, through his clenched teeth, as he fought tooth and nail with frenzied struggles against his powerful opponent. 'You shan't get off. You shall never have her. If I hang for you now, I'll kill you where you stand. I've always hated you. And in the end I mean to do for you.'

With a terrible effort, Warren wrested the loaded revolver at last from his trembling hands. Hugh battled for it savagely like a wild beast in a life-and-death struggle. Every chamber had a cartridge jammed home in its recess. To fight for the deadly weapon would be downright madness. If it went off by accident, somebody would be wounded; the ball might even go through the woodwork into the adjoining compartments. Without one moment's hesitation Warren raised the fatal thing aloft in his hand high above his head. The window on the seaward side was luckily open. As he swung it, Hugh leaped up once more and tried to snatch the loaded pistol afresh from his opponent's fingers; but the painter was too quick for him: before he could drag down that uplifted arm with his whole weight flung upon the iron biceps, Warren Relf had whirled the disputed prize round his head and flung it in an arch far out to sea through the open window. The railway runs on a ledge of rock overhanging the bay. It fell with a splash into the deep blue water. Hugh Massinger, thus helplessly balked for the moment of his expected revenge, sprang madly on his foe in a wild assault, with teeth and nails and throttling fingers, as a wounded tiger springs in its vindictive death-throes on the broad flanks of an infuriated elephant.

Next instant, they were plunged in the deep arch of a tunnel, and continued their horrible

hand-to-hand battle for several minutes in utter darkness. Rolling and grappling in the gloom together, they rose and fell, now one man on top and now the other, round after round, like a couple of angry wrestlers. The train rushed out into the light once more and plunged a second time into a still blacker tunnel. But still they fought and tore one another fiercely. All the way from Monte Carlo to the frontier, indeed, the line alternates between bold ledges that just overhang the deep blue bays and tunnels that pierce with their dark archways the intervening headlands. When they emerged a second time upon the light of day, Hugh Massinger had his hands tight pressed in a convulsive grasp upon Warren Relf's throat; and Warren Relf, purple and black in the face, was tearing them away with horrible contortions of arms and legs, and striving to defend himself by brute force from the would-be murderer's close-gripped clutches.

'Aha!' Hugh cried, as he held his enemy down on the seat with a gurgling in his throat, 'I have you now! I've got you; I've done for you. You shall choke for your insolence! You shall choke—you shall choke for it.'

With an awful rally for dear life, Warren Relf leaped up and turned the tables once more upon his overspent opponent. Seizing Hugh round the waist in his powerful arms, in an access of despair, he flung him from him as one might fling a child, with all his store of gathered energy. If only he could hold the man at bay till they reached Mentone, help would come—the porters would see and would try to secure him. He had no time to think in the hurry of the moment that even so all the world would believe he himself was the aggressor, and Hugh Massinger, with that great roll of notes stowed away in his pocket, was the injured innocent. Fighting instinctively for life alone, he flung his mad assailant right across the carriage with his utmost force. Hugh staggered and fell against the door of the compartment; his head struck sharp against the inner brass handle. With a loud cry, the would-be murderer dropped helpless on the floor. Warren saw his temple was bleeding profusely. He seemed quite stunned—stunned or dead? His face, which but a moment before had glowed livid red, grew pale as death with a horrible suddenness. Warren leaned over him, flushed with excitement, and hot with that terrible wild-beast-like struggle. Was the man feigning, or was he really killed?—O heavens, would they say he, Warren, had murdered him?

In a moment the full horror of the situation came over him.

He felt Hugh's pulse: it was scarcely beating. He peered into his eyes: they were glazed and senseless. He couldn't tell if the man were dead or alive; but he stood aghast now with equal awe at either horrible and unspeakable predicament. Only four minutes or so more till Mentone! What time to decide how to act in the interval? O dear heaven, those accusing, tell-tale bank-notes! Those lying bank-notes, with their mute false witness against his real intentions! If Hugh was dead, who would ever believe he had not tried to rob and murder him? Whatever came of it, he must try to recover

Hugh from his dead-faint at all hazards. Water, water! Oh, what would he not give for one glass of water! He essayed to bind up the wound on the head with his own handkerchief. It was all of no avail: the wound went bleeding steadily on. It went bleeding on; that looked as though Hugh were still alive. For if Hugh was dead, they would take him for a murderer!

Four minutes only till they reached Mentone; but oh, what an eternity of doubt and terror! In one single vivid panoramic picture, the whole awfulness of his situation burst full upon him. He saw it all—all, just as it would happen. What other interpretation could the outside world by any possibility set upon the circumstances? A winner at Monte Carlo, returning home to San Remo with a vast sum in bank-notes concealed about his person, gets into a carriage alone with a fellow-countryman of his acquaintance, to whom he would naturally at once confide the fact of his luck and his large winnings. He is found dead or dying in the train at the next station, his coat torn after a frantic struggle, and the carriage bearing every possible sign of a desperate fight for life between aggressor and defender. His revolver gone, his head broken, his arms black with numerous bruises, who could doubt that he had fought hard for his life and his money, and succumbed at last by slow degrees to the most brutal violence? Who would ever believe the cock-and-bull story which alone Warren Relf could set up in self-justification? How absurd to pretend that the man with the money was the real aggressor, and that the man with none acted only in pure self-defence, without the slightest intention of seriously injuring his wild assailant! An accident, indeed! No jury on earth would accept such an incredible line of defence. It was palpably past all reasonable belief—to any one but himself and Hugh Massinger—on the very face of it.

And then, a still more ghastly scene rose clear before his eyes, with the vividness and rapidity of a great crisis. At such supreme moments, indeed, we do not think in words or logical phrases at all; we see things unrolled in vast perspective as a living tableau of events before us; we feel and realise past, present, and future in incredible lightning-like flashes and whirls of some internal sense: our consciousness ceases to be bound and cabined by the narrow limits of space and time: a single second suffices for us to know and recognise at a glance what in other phases it would take us a whole hour deliberately to represent by analytic stages to our mental vision. Warren Relf, alone in that cramped compartment with Hugh Massinger, or Hugh Massinger's corpse—he knew not which—beheld in his mind's eye in a graphic picture a court of justice, installed and inaugurated: advocates pleading his case in vain: a *juge d'instruction* cross-questioning him mercilessly with French persistence on every detail of the supposed assault: a jury of stolid *bourgeois* listening with saturnine incredulity in every line of their faces to his improbable explanations—a delay—a verdict—a sentence of death: and behind all—Elsie, Elsie, Elsie.

Therein lay the bitterest sting of the whole tragedy. That Elsie should ever come to know he had been forced by circumstances, however

imperious, into laying violent hands on Hugh Massinger, was in itself more than his native equanimity could possibly endure. What would Elsie say? That was his one distinct personal thought. How could he ever bring himself even to explain the simple truth to her? He shrank from the idea with a deadly loathing. She must never know Hugh had tried to murder him—and for her as the prize. She must never know he had been compelled in self-defence to fling Hugh from his throat, and unwillingly to inflict that awful wound—for death or otherwise—upon his bleeding forehead.

Three minutes, perhaps, to Mentone still. On those three minutes hung all his future—and Elsie's happiness.

In the midst of the confused sea of images that surged up in endless waves upon his mind, one definite thought alone now plainly shaped itself in clear-cut mental outline before him. He must save Elsie—he must save Elsie: at all hazards, no matter how great—let him live or die—he must save Elsie. Through the mist of horror and agony and despair that dimmed his sight, that thought alone loomed clear and certain. Save Elsie the anguish of that awful discovery: save Elsie the inexpressible pain of knowing that the man she now loved and the man who once pretended to love her, had closed together in deadly conflict, and that Warren had only preserved Hugh from a murderer's guilt by himself becoming, in a moment of despair, perhaps Hugh's unwilling and unwitting executioner.

He glanced once more at the senseless mass that lay huddled in blood upon the floor of the carriage. Alive or dead? What hope of recovery? What chance of restitution? What room for repentance? If Hugh lived, would he clear Warren? or would he die in some hospital with a lie on his lips, condemning his enemy for the very assault he had himself so madly yet deliberately committed? What matter to Warren? Whichever way things happened to turn, the pain would be almost the same for Elsie. Concealment was now the only possible plan. He must conceal it all—all, all, from Elsie.

The train was slowing round a dangerous curve—a curve where the line makes a sharp angle round a projecting point—a triumph of engineering, experts consider it—with the sheer rock rising straight above, and the blue sea dimpling itself into ripples below. He moved to the door, and gazed anxiously out. No room to jump just there; the rock and sea hemmed him in too closely. But beyond, by the torrent, a loose bank of earth on the further side might break his fall, if he chose to risk it. Madness, no doubt, ay, almost suicide; but with only two minutes more to Mentone, he had no time to think if it were madness or wisdom: time only to act, to act for the best, on the spur of the moment, while action of some sort still was possible. At such times, indeed, men do not reason: they follow only the strongest and deepest impulse. Warren Relf did not wait to argue out the results of his conduct with himself. If he leaped from the train, he must almost certainly be stunned or maimed, perhaps even killed outright by the concussion. At best, he must soon be taken by the myrmidons of justice and accused of the murder. To get away unperceived, along that single track of open

coast, backed up in the rear by high mountains, was simply impossible. Had he stopped to reason, he might have remained where he was—and lost all. But he did not stop to reason; he only felt, and felt profoundly. His instincts urged him to leap while there was still time. He opened the door, as he reached the torrent, and looking out upon the bank with cautious deliberation, prepared to jump for it at the proper moment.

The train was slowing much more distinctly now. He thought the brake must be put on hard. He could surely jump as he reached the corner without serious danger. He stepped with one foot on to the open footboard. It wasn't much to risk for Elsie. A single plunge, and all would be settled.

(To be concluded next month.)

HOARDED SPEECH.

TEN years ago the world was astonished with a new mechanical marvel which in point of novelty and curiosity puts both the telephone and microphone into the shade. This was the phonograph or sound-recorder of Edison, a machine by which the words of our mouths or the music of our instruments could be hoarded up until a future time. That original phonograph was very imperfect, nevertheless it contained the germ of a great invention. Its broken punchinello utterance was at best only a clever mockery of speech, a travesty of music, but it was the forerunner of a more perfect apparatus. Any one acquainted with the mechanical arts might have foreseen that it would some day be followed by a practical instrument, and those who knew Edison believed that he himself would furnish it. The development of the electric light has diverted the attention of that inventor from the phonograph; but of late he has been engaged again in perfecting his favourite invention, and now at last he may be said to have redeemed his promises and fulfilled his anticipations with regard to it. The new or 'perfected' phonograph is now in England, under the charge of Colonel G. E. Gouraud, of Little Menlo, Beulah Hill, an old friend of Edison, and there, through his kindness, we have had the pleasure of seeing and hearing the wonderful machine speak for itself.

The original phonograph, which may be seen in the South Kensington Museum, consisted of a vibrating diaphragm or tympanum, which caught the sound of the voice or musical instrument, and was thereby set into vibration. Behind it was a fine metal point or style, which vibrated to and fro with the diaphragm; and under the style was a sheet of tinfoil, smoothed over a revolving barrel, so that as the style vibrated it indented the tinfoil along a spiral line. This line of indentations was a print of the vibrations of the diaphragm, and consequently of the voice or tune. But it was, from the very nature of the foil, a very imperfect record of the vibrations, and hence, when it was used to set another diaphragm in motion, by a reversal of the process, the sounds

emitted by the diaphragm were a mere parody of the original sounds which made the record.

In the 'perfected phonograph,' Edison employs a cylinder of wax to receive the indentations of the style. Beeswax, specially prepared, is capable of taking an accurate print of the vibrations, so that when the style traverses it again, the print, reacting on the style, sets the diaphragm to which it is attached into corresponding vibration, and hence the air in front of the diaphragm is made to vibrate with a reproduction of the original sounds. By the aid of a wide-mouthed funnel, the reproduced sounds can be rendered audible to a roomful of people; but for private purposes the sound is conveyed to the ear by a flexible rubber tube with two ear-pieces.

On applying these tubes to the ear we are at once struck with the remarkable loudness and fidelity of the reproduction. A wax cylinder containing the record of a piece of music played on the piano in America at Edison's laboratory is put into the phonograph. We hear the music as though it were being played close at hand. Nevertheless, the actual music was played two thousand miles away and several weeks ago. A cornet solo, a concert of violin, piano, and cornet, are put into the instrument, and we enjoy the music with a curious feeling that it is magical and supernatural. Another cylinder containing the wailing of a baby, which a workman held over the phonograph in Edison's laboratory, is put in operation, and we listen to the infant's protest against things in general. Then we hear a dialogue between Colonel Gouraud and Mr Edison, spoken in the laboratory of the latter three weeks before. Edison wishes his friend to correspond with him in future by phonograph. The Colonel replies that he shall be happy to be spared the trouble of writing, and Edison rejoins that he will also be happy to be spared the trouble of reading the Colonel's letters. At which they laugh, and we can hear them now. Every hesitation or stutter, or cough or accentuation of the speech, is given; and if the phonograph is ever used for diplomatic correspondence, it will behave the diplomatists to be very careful of their expression, if they do not wish it to belie their actual thoughts and words.

In matters of less moment, correspondence by phonograph will teach people to improve their articulation and to cultivate elocution. The use of the telephone has shown that many persons are not only bad hearers but bad speakers, without knowing it. The use of the phonograph will tend to show it still more, and Mr Edison seems to think it will have a moral influence in making people careful what they say, not merely how they say it. Certainly, if phonographs are to be admitted as evidence in law-courts, it may be so. But will it add a new terror to life, like the electric bell and telephone or the detective camera? Shall a visitor have to be careful what he says in a friend's house, in case there is a phonograph concealed about the room? It is hardly likely, for, as it is constructed at present, a fair amount of

impulse in the voice is required to produce the indentations in the wax, and hence it is necessary to be near the apparatus in speaking. What may yet be effected in this direction it is, of course, impossible to say, for obviously such an instrument is capable of almost infinite improvement. Even now Edison is engaged in perfecting it still further. Nevertheless, it is now a practical apparatus, capable of doing good service.

It can be used for dictating letters or instructions, so that a clerk or secretary can copy them out at his leisure either in longhand or by a typewriter. It can be used for direct correspondence by phonograph, the wax record being put into a small wooden box, devised by Edison for the purpose, and posted to any part of the world, where, on the record being put into another phonograph, it gives out the original words as spoken. It can be used by an editor or journalist in dictating his 'copy' for the printer, who, with the ear-tubes of the reproducing diaphragm fixed to his head, can set up the article as it is spoken to him and at his own pace. Mechanical devices are attached to the apparatus by which he can take one word at a time, or go back and have a word repeated if he fails to catch it. Everything is being done by its inventor to make the phonograph as useful and handy as possible.

As to music, the phonograph can be utilised by musicsellers in their shops. If a customer wishes to hear a new piece of music before he buys it, the seller need not play it over. It can be impressed on one of the wax tablets and put in a phonograph, where the customer can listen to it at his leisure without disturbing the other business of the shop. A great variety of such pieces can be kept on hand ready for use; and the same tablet can be used over again a great number of times without the record being worn. Moreover, Edison makes copies of the wax record in metal by an electrotyping process, and thus provides metallic tablets which are proportionately enduring. Probably the day is not far distant when such metallic tablets will be placed in the foundation stones of buildings along with coins and other monuments of the age, to tell in spoken words to future generations the story of the building. The ancient Assyrians impressed their cuneiform characters on cylinders and tablets of baked clay; we have now reached a period when the vocal form of thought itself can be impressed on cylinders of wax, and the living speech be as it were resuscitated. The Egyptians kept their mummies with them in their homes, and painted the likeness of the dead upon the mummy case, as though to banish the idea of death and separation. We are now able, through the phonograph, to preserve the sounds of voices that are still—the very accents of our friends, as we preserve their likenesses.

The uses of the phonograph are in fact endless. Mr Edison proposes, for example, to issue phonographic books which can be *spoken* to a listener with all the arts of elocution and without the strain of reading. For invalids this will be a special boon. Sermons, lectures, dramas, and orations can in this way be sent by post and delivered in out-of-the-way homes. Musical recreation can be indulged in by lonely bachelors who cannot play. Composers can seize their improvisations without trouble, and cabinet coun-

cillors record their secret meetings. Moreover, the phonograph gives us the 'giftie' of hearing ourselves speak as others hear us, though we are still unable to see ourselves as 'ithers see us.'

THE BURNING OF ALLINGSFORD HOUSE.

ALLINGSFORD HOUSE was not very old, nor was it particularly beautiful; at least the late Allingsford House, which is the one I am speaking of, was not. But, on the other hand, the Park was one of the noblest in England, and contained some splendid shooting. The kennels, also, at no great distance from the House, were renowned both near and far. The enormous trout caught in the Alling, which ran through the Park, were often mentioned in the *Field*, and had furnished many a day's work to the local taxidermist. Add to this that the House was built of red brick and fully insured; and perhaps you will not feel so very much horrified when I ask you to come with me and burn it, for that is what I mean to do.

Remember, what a godsend it will be to conversation at local dinner-parties for the next six months. What a story for mine host at the *Eagle* in the village to tell for the rest of his life. Then think of the new quarry at Cutstone, which has just started working; and of young Mr Smith, the scientific architect, who has scarcely had a single job since he designed the Town Hall so successfully two years ago. I admit that, as a rule, burning down family mansions is not a nice thing to do, and least of all at Christmas-time; but I think that you will agree with me that in this case the circumstances render the act justifiable.

It was Christmas Eve, and most of the guests had gone to bed, for, indeed, it was long past twelve o'clock. But Sir John and his brother Colonel Allingsford still remained in the smoking-room, chatting over a last pipe and tumbler of toddy.

'Well, it's his own fault,' said Sir John. 'He's had as good a chance as a man could wish for, after dinner, alone with her in the conservatory for nearly a quarter of an hour, the thermometer standing at eighty-five. If he couldn't pull himself together to propose then, all I can say is that he never will. The boy ought to be ashamed of himself.'

'Yet the youngster is worth a dozen of the puppies one meets nowadays,' replied the Colonel. 'I shall never forget the day he got his V.C. at Ashallan Gasha. I fancy I can see him now, falling back on our zereba with scarcely twenty men, and those two Krupps they had taken out of the Arab fort. Most fellows would have left the guns when that ambush attacked, and small blame either. Not so Harry; he knew that if the rebels got them back, they could have given us the very deuce of a time of it till reinforcements came up; so he stuck to them like a man; and brought them in safely too!'

'Why doesn't he ask our niece to marry him? Any fool can see that he wants to; and I know that Nina wants to, and we all want them to. Now, if I were dead against the match, it would have been over and finished long ago. Then the girl won't help pull him on either; she ought to flirt with young Jervis.'

'Well, well, Jack; these things have a wonderful knack of coming right when we least expect. Anyhow, I can't see how our talking half the night will improve matters. It's a quarter past one; I'm off to bed.'

So, after the master of the House had satisfied himself that all the fastenings were secure for the night, the two fine old brothers strode up-stairs together, candlestick in hand.

'Jack, I believe that window on the stairs is open; I feel just like sneezing;' and the gallant Colonel pulled out his handkerchief and with it his pipe, which merrily gambolled down two flights of stairs, and then, to judge by the sound, shattered itself on the hall stove.

'My old meerschau gone at last!—Never mind. I hope no one trips up over the stem to-morrow morning.—Good-night, Jack.'

'Good-night.'

Their bedrooms were both on the first floor; and in half an hour's time, as befits healthy old gentlemen with clear consciences, they were both fast asleep.

More than was Captain Henry Melville, who had been feverishly pacing his room for the last hour, hardly knowing what he thought of or what he did. Promoted out of his turn for distinguished service, he was the youngest captain in Her Majesty's army, and with his slight figure, clear skin, and the very smallest attempt at a moustache, looked a mere boy. Though no relation of the Allingsfords, he had been known to both brothers from his childhood, and was now in the last week of a long visit to their house. Two months before, he had found that he was looking forward to this visit with especial impatience, though not for one minute would he have admitted it. Now that it was nearly over, there was no concealing from himself that he was head over ears in love with Nina Darlington, the Baronet's niece. But however brave he was in the field of battle, Master Harry in this affair showed a lamentable want of courage.

Nina was an heiress, while Harry's fortune was all in Chancery; that is to say, there was no telling whether it was his fortune or somebody else's. He thought that to push his suit would be to betray Sir John's kindness. Who was he, a penniless captain in a regiment of foot, to marry Nina Darlington, heiress to one of the finest estates in England? It had always been a joke in the regiment that though Melville was the 'best fellow that ever stepped,' he could never be brought to think himself anything but a fool. Even when he got his V.C. it did not seem to him that he had done anything particularly brave: he had done his duty, and so would any of the other fellows. Hence, to such a modest temperament, it seemed the height of presumption to hope that Nina would ever come to reciprocate his affection; while that she did so already never occurred to him.

Poor fellow, he was really to be pitied; the last few days he had looked quite ill, taking long

walks by himself, and seeming in society, as one of his friends expressed it, 'as nervous as a cat.' And yet, such is human blindness, he never suspected that his indisposition was noticed or the cause guessed by his host or any one else. So he paced his room up and down, up and down. He would cut his visit still shorter and leave early in the morning the day after Christmas Day. He would volunteer for the Egyptian army and get killed in the Soudan. Or he would offer to carry despatches to Emin and be caught by dervishes and put to death by torture, which would be very nice and very agreeable; but neither Nina nor her guardian should ever hear of his hopeless passion.

Let's leave this young man, who is very bad company and making a great ass of himself, and come up-stairs. Up, up, up, past the second story, along this little passage, up the old corkscrew stair to the little turret room. Hush! tread gently, for the occupant of this room has had the sense to go to sleep, like a prudent girl who wants to look her best in the morning. Light the candle and we will see how Miss Nina has been amusing herself before she went to bed. Her sketch-book and pencils are scattered about on the dressing-table, so she must have been drawing; and, to judge by the litter in the fender, she seems to have torn her drawing up into very little pieces and burnt most of it. Luckily, I was looking over her shoulder all the time, so I can tell you what she drew. First, she drew a young man on horseback; then she turned the paper over, and drew another young man in knickerbockers and a Norfolk jacket, with a gun on his shoulder. Then, taking a fresh piece of paper, she drew a third, in a patrol jacket and regulation boots, with a drawn sword in his right hand, while with his left he seemed to be frantically calling to some one behind him to come on. Oh! of course, we can see it all now. They are all meant for the same person, and that person is Harry Melville; but he's not nearly so tall or so well proportioned as you have drawn him, Miss Darlington; he's not, really.

Just now, she is dreaming, dreaming that she is looking at Millais' famous picture 'Yes.' She wonders why she never before appreciated it so much, and sits down in front of it. Soon she wonders what makes the place so terribly hot. Then she fancies that every one who passes is looking at her, and is even certain that people at the end of the room are pointing at her. Then she saw some one point her out to an attendant, who forthwith accosted her: 'Beg pardon, miss, but you're sitting on the stove. It's made just like a bench; but it's a stove; and my horders is positive that no one sits on the stove.'

Nina thought that this was really too bad, and fairly lost her temper. 'It's not right,' she said, 'to make the stoves so like the seats, if you don't want people to sit on them; but I knew what it was, and came here because I was cold.'—'Oh!—' 'And I'm going to stay here as long as I choose.' And disdaining further argument, she took out her catalogue and pretended to be engrossed in its perusal.

Very soon she could feel the heat under her beyond a doubt, and most unpleasantly. But so obstinate are young ladies in Dreamland (in practical life they are 'firm'), that she determined

to stay where she was for a full five minutes by the clock. Three minutes; the actual heat was not so great, but the fire underneath her was beginning to smoke. Then she thought that all the bystanders, and among them all the people she disliked, were saying that she would never stay there another two minutes. Four minutes; it was worse. Four minutes and a half—four minutes fifty seconds; it was stifling—at last! and she woke up with a start.

What a terrible smell of smoke; her dream had been founded on fact. The house must be on fire. Lighting a candle, she ran to the door and looked down the winding stair, when suddenly some one threw open the door at the bottom of it, and a great curling cloud of terrible blue smoke, but showing lurid behind, rushed up through it, causing Nina to drop her candle and run coughing and trembling back to her room.

The Colonel's meerschaum was a big pipe, and he had forgotten to knock out the ashes, so that, though it had been in his pocket for nearly five minutes, it was still just alight when he dropped it. When it hit the stove it snapped in two. The stem fell into the grate, but the bowl, after rolling along the oilcloth, ultimately 'fetched up' behind the umbrella stand. Here, I am sorry to say, Mary, the under-housemaid, was in the habit of keeping a little bundle of woollen and chamois cloths, greatly besmeared with beeswax and turpentine, together with a lump of the former and a bottle of the latter—materials which she used for cleaning the front staircase and the polished woodwork in the hall. Some lighted ash fell on these cloths and soon begat a slow and smouldering fire. However, as there was very little draught in the hall, and the umbrella stand stood on a slab of polished granite, all might yet have been well; but it was fated otherwise.

When the rags had been smouldering quietly for about half an hour, and seemed in a fair way to burn themselves out, a big rat, taking a constitutional in the vicinity, attracted by the smell of burning beeswax, came to see what was the matter. Naturally burning his nose, he whisked away in great wrath, and so upset the turpentine bottle, to which there was no cork. In an instant the floor for a yard round was covered with burning spirit. There was nothing to stop the flames, which caught first the umbrellas, then the hall table and the woodwork of the stairs, and then the wainscoting, and anything and everything that there was to catch.

Harry Melville was the first to give the alarm, but too late for the slightest hope of extinguishing the flames. In fact, when once a large house, dry and airy, and largely fitted with woodwork, has fairly caught fire, a dozen engines cannot put it out before it is thoroughly gutted from basement to attic. The front staircase would soon be impassable, so that when the guests were roused the only thing to do was to lose no time in saving the women and themselves. When Harry saw this, his first thought was for Nina, and he tore up-stairs with the flames literally at his heels. It was he who opened the door at the bottom of the corkscrew stair, admitting the volumes of hot smoke as they rolled fiercely upwards. He saw her, candle in hand, when she fell back

blinded and coughing; the next moment he had her in his arms. He thought that there was still time to make a dash for it down the fiery stairs; it was the only chance to save her life. One moment to wrap a blanket round his darling as a protection against the hungry flames, and then for the rush. Whether he lived or died afterwards did not matter, if he could only struggle on to the bottom, where other hands would be ready to take charge of his precious burden. That moment's delay saved both their lives; for just as he snatched the blanket from the bed, when, if they had started at first, they would have been half-way down the first flight, came a bang! crash! as with a deafening noise a portion of the outer wall of the room and the whole of the corkscrew staircase fell, while the whole building shook. In the gunroom, on the second floor, were kept the stores for refilling empty cartridge cases, which included two large flasks of meal-powder which had come from London only the day before. These, as well as several hundred full cases, had exploded and caused the damage. Retreat by the staircase was now impossible. Under the window was a sheer drop all the way to the ground; a monkey could not have saved himself there.

The explosion had had one good effect, for, in blowing out all the windows, and even part of the outer wall on that side, it allowed the wind, which was blowing fresh, to take most of the smoke and heat over to the other part of the house, otherwise they must soon have been suffocated. They were standing together in the corner by the door. Though her feet were on the ground, Nina was still in his arms, with the blanket round her, as when they were going to start for the dash down-stairs.

'God help us, my darling!' said Harry. This was the first time that either of them had spoken.

For all reply she pressed his hand and turned her face calmly and trustfully up to his.

Had it been Harry's last second on this earth, and he conscious of it, he could not have helped kissing her then.

'Forgive me, my darling,' he said hoarsely; 'but I love you with all my heart.'

'And I love you with all mine,' said Nina simply. Then suddenly she cried: 'Quick! There is a trapdoor in that corner; you can reach it by standing on the drawers.'

Needing no second bidding, he leaped up on to the drawers, and having felt for the trapdoor, struggled with all his might to open it. It was fastened on the inside with a bolt, which from long disuse had become completely rusted into its socket. Twice he put forth all the strength he could get to bear on the little knob, only to lacerate his hands without being able to stir the fastening. As he gathered himself together for a third try, Nina thrust a garden hammer into his hand. It was a small but fairly heavy one, which she used for nailing up the creepers. A few blows with this, another pull, the bolt yielded, and Harry threw back the trap. Sitting in the opening, he pulled Nina up to his own level, and they were both on the roof.

Except for a little gable in the middle, the roof was flat. On one side and under the turret was the blazing house; but on the other, some

twenty feet lower, was the roof of the laundry, which, being to windward, had so far entirely escaped the conflagration. A waterpipe, standing out about two inches from the wall, took the drainings from the gutter round the turret to a small rain-water cistern fixed against the wall just above the laundry. It was down this that they must go.

To climb down twenty feet by a small waterpipe, with only one hand and your legs to hold on by, and to support a lady with the other hand, is no easy feat, even for a strong man and an athlete, and Harry was neither. But love and desperation gave him both strength and skill to perform the descent safely. Only when, about half-way down, first his legs and then his hand came into contact with an iron support to the pipe, did he feel a momentary pain. And no wonder, for passing through the wall and being clinched on the inside, it was nearly red-hot. A great tongue of flame shooting out from one of the side windows enabled those below to see what was happening. A ladder was placed against the laundry wall, and amidst lusty cheers they were quickly half helped half carried in safety to the ground.

Thanks to the blanket, Nina had escaped nearly scot free; but Harry Melville was badly though perhaps not dangerously hurt. His left hand in particular was terribly burned. The doctor was amongst the lookers-on, and ordered him to bed at the *Eagle* at once, while he himself hurried off for the lotion and other necessaries to dress his wounds.

The ladies were accommodated with beds or 'shakedown' at the vicarage; the gentlemen had plenty to do in helping their host and his servants. Of course next to nothing could be saved from the house; it was enough to be thankful for that no lives had been lost. The horses were blindfolded and led away; the carriages and harness were also saved. Then it was decided to destroy a great straw stack, lest the wind should shift and the fire be communicated to that and thence to the lodge. By this time all the village was afoot, so that there was no lack of hands. A groom had been despatched for the fire-engine at the first alarm; and meanwhile a couple of garden hose were played on the fire, but without any appreciable result. About dawn, the engine arrived, and commenced operations on the slowly subsiding conflagration. Though it was kept only four miles from Allingsford, the 'man who understood it' slept nearly six farther on, whereby, as the obstructionist town-councillor observed at the next meeting, 'considerable time was lost.' It was broad day ere Sir John, his brother, and guests, having done all that men could do, and thanked the villagers for their willing help, both verbally and practically—this last by having a cask of treble X broached in the yard—drove off to Lord Grandworth's, who had placed his house at their disposal.

So it came about that the Baronet spent his Christmas morning in bed. In the afternoon, he rode over to see Harry, calling at the vicarage on his way. Here, clad mostly in dressing-gowns, the ladies from Allingsford House received him in remarkably high spirits, notwithstanding that they had lost all their possessions. Only Nina, in one of the vicar's daughter's dresses, accom-

panied him to the ruins, which were still smoking sulkily. It was not an inspiring sight, and they soon turned their steps in the direction of the village. Dr Brown met them at the door of the inn with a grave face, and said, in reply to Sir John's inquiry after his patient: 'Not so well as I could wish, by any means; the burns were bad enough, and now a fever has come to complicate matters. He seems to have a splendid constitution, though, and that's half the battle. I shall telegraph to London for a nurse, and we ought to pull him through in a fortnight.'

'But what shall you do till the nurse comes?' asked Nina.

'That,' he replied, 'is just what I was coming to. Can you spare me Mrs Hickley?' (Mrs Hickley was the housekeeper). 'She can be depended upon, and will be able to carry out my intentions better than the people at the inn.'

'Take her and one of the maids too, doctor, if you like,' said Sir John.—'Nina, you go and see about it.'

'Shan't we send a message, uncle?' said Nina. 'Then you and I will wait in the *Eagle* till they come; and if anything is wanted, I can do it.'

'Perhaps that would be best,' said the doctor. 'I am going to the vicarage, and will be the messenger myself. But first come up and see him.'

They entered the inn, and went up-stairs to the sick-room, the doctor leading the way. As he opened the door he held his finger to his lips, as a sign for them to be silent. Captain Melville was sleeping soundly.

'Splendid!' said the doctor, as soon as they were outside again. 'But I take no credit to myself. A good constitution, that's what's done it. If he only sleeps on for a couple of hours now, he is as good as cured. Now I must be off. There is some soup being made for him down-stairs. He ought to have it the moment he wakes.—In fact, Miss Darlington, I think that the best plan would be to keep it in the room, on the hob.'

'Uncle,' said Nina, as soon as he had gone and the landlady had been despatched for the soup.

'Yes, my dear.'

'Captain Melville has asked me to marry him.' It was lucky that they were not in the sick-room, for Sir John's long-drawn 'Whew!' would have most assuredly waked the invalid.

'And pray, when was this arranged?'

'Last night.'

'In the conservatory?'

'No.'

'During the fire?'

'Yes.'

'And you said?'

'Yes.'

'And suppose I say no?'

'But, uncle, you won't say no.'

'Oh, well, since you seem to be of that mind, I suppose I had better not. Give me a kiss, you solemn little rogue, if they are not all bespoken. Ha, ha, ha! I think that I must leave you in charge here, and go and tell George. He said last night that these things had a wonderful knack of coming right. This is the best piece of news I've had for many a long day.' And as

the Baronet walked back to the rectory, all who met him remarked how well he carried his misfortunes.

Nina was very happy, sitting at the fireside, musing and watching her lover's sleep, now sound and healthy, a sure sign that the fever had gone. There was something very strange about it all, and she could scarcely believe that she was the same girl who had gone to bed in the turret room the night before. Presently, Mrs Hickley arrived, and told her that her uncles were coming to fetch her in the rector's pony-cart.

Still Harry slept, though now his sleep seemed lighter. At length he turned lazily on his back, opened his eyes and said 'Nina.'

'Not a word till you've had your soup: here it is, all ready. Give it to me, Mrs Hickley.—And now you must have another pillow under you; so!—Now, I'll hold the basin, and if you're strong enough, you shall feed yourself.'

'But Nina'—

'Silence, sir! Obey orders.—Why, here come both my uncles; I'm sure it's their voices we hear. Oh, Harry!'

'Yes, darling?'

'I've told them.'

Captain Melville's illness did not last very long. He was moved to Hill's farm on the third day; and could get up in about a fortnight. Soon after that he rejoined his regiment. I may mention, by the way, that while he was in bed he got a long letter from his solicitor stating that some missing papers had just been found in the lining of a safe which established his claim to the property in Chancery beyond a doubt; and promising that in two or three months at the most he would enter into legal possession.

The banns were put up on the first of May, Sir John having an old-fashioned dislike to licenses.

Living with two good-tempered old gentlemen, of course Nina escaped the lectures and endless advice with which maiden aunts and married friends so love to load a girl who is going to embrace the fetters of wedlock. True, the Colonel did try his hand one evening, beginning by recounting some of his experiences as a mess caterer, and ending by saying: 'I hope also, my dear, that you will let the unfortunate accident which occurred at Christmas be a warning to you never to allow your maids to lie awake reading after they have gone to bed. Of course, Mrs Hickley assures us that such a thing was never done at Allingsford House; but there is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that that was how it came about.'

'It might have been one of the men smoking.'

'Tut, tut! my dear; that is perfectly impossible. You cannot communicate fire to anything from the tobacco in a pipe. No, no; you may depend upon it, it was one of the maids reading in bed.'

The marriage was celebrated in due course amidst general rejoicings. Many were the blessings fervently bestowed on the young couple by the honest rustics at the church door; and many a horny hand did Harry shake on that eventful morning; for his bravery at the fire, and his genial frank disposition, had completely won the villagers' hearts. Nina they had always loved.

Old Sir John's voice trembled a little as he wished them good-bye; and the Colonel's eye-glass was very misty as the brothers stood together on the steps watching the carriage disappear down the drive.

'She couldn't have done better,' said the Baronet.

'No, Jack; she couldn't.'

THE DACCA TORNADO.

A SEVERE tornado, or whirlwind, burst upon the ancient city of Dacca in Eastern Bengal on the 7th April 1888, causing great destruction of life and property. The diameter of the vortex of the whirlwind was not more than two hundred yards, as it violently rushed along in an almost semi-circular course. Dacca stands on the east bank of a river about half a mile in breadth, and the city extends for more than three miles along the river-bank. The tornado struck the city at the north-west end; it then went westward across the river, destroying many boats. Suddenly it turned, and came back eastward over the river about a mile below the point at which it had first crossed; and after wreaking its fury on the palatial residence of the Nawabs of Dacca, it made away to the east and was lost in the open country.

Those who have seen a tornado know how it marches onward irresistibly, with an internal rotary motion, just as a top when spun advances over the floor, whilst all the time it is rapidly revolving on its own centre. Whatever objects are caught at the bottom of the vortex are violently twisted and torn. The walls of houses are crushed, the thatched roofs are broken into fragments, and, with branches of trees and all other movable things, are whirled upwards, and ejected from the top of the moving vortex with extreme violence. Human beings and cattle are crushed and suffocated; but sometimes the light body of a child or of a dog may be carried upwards in the pillar of wind and projected from the top of it. A tornado is not unlike a waterspout in appearance; but whilst the former is a moving column of wind and dust rising from the earth, the latter is a circling pillar of water descending from a cloud and destroying everything by the violence of its deluge.

The tornado at Dacca seems to have come on almost without warning. There was the ordinary evening appearance of a bank of clouds in the west, which usually bring on a 'nor'-wester,' as it is called, at that period of the year, with thunder, lightning and rain, such storms being heartily welcomed, as cooling the air and purifying the atmosphere. When the tornado developed itself, its dimensions were so limited and its course was so erratic that many people knew nothing of the fearful havoc and ruin which had occurred within a short distance from their own houses. All along the track of the storm, the native huts, built chiefly of bamboos and thatching-grass, were wrecked and unroofed. Where the tornado en-

countered any brick buildings it made short work of them. The ruinous old houses crumbled before it. The greatest fury of the storm seemed to have fallen upon the palatial residence of the Nawabs of Dacca, which stood conspicuously on the bank of the river. The tornado got hold of it and into it, and in the course of two minutes the greater part of the building was reduced to a mass of ruin.

Several curious cases are reported, chiefly on native authority, which serve to show how narrow were the limits within which the tornado revolved in its headlong course. For instance, at the old Mohammedan palace called the Lal Bagh, which was the first point attacked by the storm, a native police inspector was knocked down and killed on the high ramparts which face the river; whilst an old man who was fishing in the reservoir in the palace courtyard, not a hundred yards distant, sat quietly over his rod and line, unconscious of the havoc that was going on, though he said that he thought he heard the rumbling of a railway train of many carriages. A few years ago a barbarous Englishman vested with official power pulled down the ruined battlements of the beautiful old palace, which had been the residence of the native governors of Dacca two or three hundred years ago, and he built up some ugly police barracks on the ramparts, because the site was cool and airy. Perhaps the unfortunate policeman killed by the tornado may be regarded as a victim to Nemesis, for the desecration of the picturesque ruins of the old palace. Another story tells how a poor woman had left her two-year-old child in her hut whilst she went to the neighbouring street to buy some rice. The tornado levelled every shop in the street, and the unfortunate woman was knocked down and severely injured. When she recovered her senses, she struggled to get home, and great were her astonishment and delight to find that her hut had been outside the vortex of the tornado and that her child and all her little worldly goods were safe. Unhappily, there were too many cases in which the reverse of this occurred. Men and women who had gone out to buy provisions for their evening meal found themselves safe and sheltered in some street which the storm spared; but when they got back to their homes they came upon a scene of desolation—their huts blown to pieces, and their children maimed or half-buried in the ruins. One English gentleman, a Professor in the College, was seated in his study when he heard the roar and rush of the storm, and on looking out he saw his thatched stables at the end of his garden whirling away into mid-air, whilst his terrified horses galloped wildly in the distance. The stable was little more than fifty yards from the house, but the house was luckily beyond the reach of the tornado.

The city of Dacca, like other Indian towns of similar antiquity, contains many old ruinous brick-built mansions, which were once occupied by wealthy natives. But almost each new generation, instead of repairing the old family house, sets to work to build a new mansion for itself, the old dwelling being left to fall into decay. This gives a melancholy and broken-down effect to an old town, and the tornado may have been useful in demolishing a few of these dismal old ruins that came in its path. But so violent was the

fury of the wind that it destroyed new buildings as well as old ones. The police barracks at the Lal Bagh, which have been already mentioned, were substantial brick-built houses of one story with tiled roofs. There were six of them in a row along the ramparts: three of them were left untouched; the other three were destroyed. The wind got in through the doors and windows; it tore off the roof and knocked down the walls, which fell outwards; whilst the arms and accoutrements of the men, with the scanty barrack furniture, were whirled aloft into the funnel or vortex of the tornado. In another part of the town the storm attacked the Lunatic Asylum, a large square of one-storied buildings, surrounded by a brick wall twelve feet high. One side of this wall for the length of a hundred feet was laid flat in an instant. Fortunately, the lunatics, many of whom are imbeciles, were locked up in their wards for the night, and the doors and windows being closed, the wind could not get inside the buildings, and no serious damage was done to them.

Far different was the fate of the palace of the Dacca Nawabs. These worthy gentlemen, father and son, have recently received their titles from the English government. They are exceedingly wealthy, and are famous for their charity and liberality. They had almost entirely rebuilt their family mansion, converting it from an ordinary dwelling-house into a palatial residence. A broad veranda two hundred feet long, with arches on the lower story and a row of massive pillars in the upper story, faced the river towards the west. A handsome marble flight of stairs led from the garden to the upper floor. The house was in the form of a quadrangle enclosing a courtyard. The tornado in its return across the river came right upon the western veranda. Most of the doors and windows of the palace were open, to admit the cool air of the evening; thus the whirlwind seems to have got inside the house and to have upset and destroyed everything. The massive pillars of the veranda were blown down as if they had been reeds; the roofs of many of the most exposed rooms were burst through as if they had been made of paper. The Nawabs themselves were sitting in a room in the north-west corner of the house; the doors were burst open by the tornado and the roof was rent in twain. An old servant who was with them was killed by a falling beam, but they fortunately escaped unhurt. Several other domestics were killed and wounded in other parts of the house; and one of the horses in the stables was so much injured that it had to be destroyed.

In the official reports of the police, the loss of human life was calculated from the one hundred and eighteen bodies which were dug out of ruins or otherwise discovered on land. But there is reason to fear that many more persons perished, as a number of large and small boats, with their crews and passengers on board, were wrecked and sunk at their moorings, when the tornado twice crossed the river. Dacca has been called by some oriental travellers the Venice of Bengal; whilst its broad river and the channels that intersect the town are almost always crowded with boats, some of which come from remote parts of India, so that nothing is known about their crews or passengers when they are lost.

The police returns showed that twelve hundred

persons had been found who had been wounded during the storm. Of this number two hundred and twenty persons were so seriously injured that they were at once taken to the Mitford Hospital, a noble charitable institution, founded and endowed about thirty years ago by Mr Mitford of the Bengal Civil Service. Two hundred and forty-eight wounded persons were treated at their own houses by the Civil surgeon and his assistants for the injuries they had received during the storm. The rest of the sufferers had their wants attended to by the native doctors of the town.

The damage done to property was estimated by the magistrate of Dacca at seventy thousand pounds sterling. Nine large brick-built houses were completely demolished, and one hundred and forty-eight were severely damaged. Of the mud and bamboo huts and shops occupied by the natives, three thousand five hundred and eighteen were completely destroyed, and many more were much damaged. One hundred and twenty-one large boats, a much greater number of small boats, and a small river steamer belonging to the Nawabs, were wrecked and sunk.

A subscription for the relief of the poor sufferers was at once set on foot, and the Nawabs of Dacca headed the list with the sum of one thousand pounds sterling, notwithstanding their own serious losses from the storm. The English officials and the other English residents were not wanting on the occasion; and with their purses, as well as by their untiring personal exertions, they did all that was possible for the relief of their unfortunate native brethren.

AN HOUR AT THE STATION.

WE have missed our train, and learn with dismay that there will not be another to our destination for an hour; and as it is pouring rain, we must make the best of the time under cover of the grimy glass roof of the station. Our compliments to the enterprising proprietors of the Automatic Weighing and Toffee Supply Machines; their engines have converted this Palace of the Winds into quite an interesting field of study, exhibiting, as they so often do, the personal character of their patrons.

A train is to leave in a quarter of an hour, and intending passengers are dropping in, and look round for means to kill time until they can take their seats. Here comes a portly old gentleman, marching pompously down the platform, laden with the usual paraphernalia of rug, bag, umbrella, and newspaper. The staring face of the weighing-machine catches his eye, and he pauses. Surely that staid dignified Briton—an opulent banker he must be, at least—is not going to ‘try his weight;’ one would think such a matter had lost importance at his time of life. He is, though, but is shy about doing it so publicly, for he glances furtively round before drawing nearer the machine, and then strolls up to read the instructions through his gold-rimmed *pince-nez*. Another look, to see nobody is watching, and he lays his rug on a convenient seat and steps on to the little iron stand, searching pocket after pocket eagerly for the required penny. He is fumbling through a handful of change, when the doors of the refreshment room swing open and

four or five travellers issue therefrom. Our old gentleman starts guiltily, and reddens with annoyance as they take up a suitable position to watch the hand of the dial. Where on earth is that penny? He can’t find it, and stands there head and shoulders above the gradually forming group of idlers, clearly more than half inclined to give it up and seek the seclusion of the waiting-room. He must feel painfully conspicuous, for the bystanders are interchanging remarks on his probable stones *avoidupois* with an outspoken candour that is obviously embarrassing to him. Ah, here’s the penny at last, and—

‘Shall I ‘old yer bag, sir?’ says an officious young porter with a smile of sympathy.

The unhappy old gentleman turns sharply, and misses the slit with his coin, which jangles down the platform pursued by the officious porter aforesaid.

‘Ere y’ are, sir; lemme putt it in, sir.—*There we are.* Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen (wait a bit, sir). My heyes! eighteen stun six pun’, sir,’ says the self-appointed Clerk of the Scales to the exasperated patient in a congratulatory tone, whilst he casts a measuring eye over the form leaving the stand. The lookers-on repeat the weight in reflective under-tones, as the abashed old traveller recovers his property from the seat, and strides through the crowd with an assumption of non-chalant dignity comically out of keeping with his heated countenance. He won’t weigh again at the station, I suspect.

A jovial old farmer comes next, laughing uproariously with a friend at the humour of the thing. The penny is fished up from the depths of a leathern purse, and the farmer takes up his position facing the dial, hands upon knees, with a face suddenly grave; whilst his collic, seated before the machine, watches the rapidly travelling hand as intelligently as though appointed by his master to take a note of the weight.

‘Haw, haw, haw!’ chuckles the old fellow, rising to the perpendicular and facing the crowd. ‘Ah’m na sae light as when I wur a lad. Hee, hee!’

The gratified spectators smile pleasantly, thinking, perhaps, that if he *had* scaled close on sixteen stone when a boy, he must have been a remarkably fine one.

‘Haw, haw! ah’m a deal heavier, a deal heavier,’ he repeats pensively, and with this sage reflection he disappears into the refreshment room to recruit.

A middle-aged country-woman, planned on a generous scale, with a good-humoured red face, a blue shawl, and particularly obtrusive laced boots, stops near the machine with a young woman, who, like herself, is laden with parcels. A short whispered conference, and the elder lady transfers about nine many-shaped packages to the arms of the younger, then grasping her skirts, she sweeps boldly on to the weighing-stand, wreathed in fat smiles of cheerful anticipation. The lookers-on stare in respectful silence, but dodge and duck and try in half-a-dozen uncomfortable attitudes to read the weight. But the good lady’s ample form is its own protection, and the tell-tale pointer’s secret is seen by none save the young woman, who peeps below her aunt’s elbow, and after some calculation and counting, arrives at the correct

sum, which she communicates in an awe-struck whisper to her expectant relative.

So they come and go: the young man who 'tries his weight' with a business-like decision that shows he does it every day on principle; the sociable man of twelve stone seven, who knows his weight and isn't ashamed of it, and exchanges jocular remarks with the lookers-on; the bashful man, who won't weigh if he thinks any one is looking; the doubtful sceptic, who stands and tries to jerk the pointer into making him out a pound or two more or less, and goes away grumbling; the two small boys, who get on together to save a penny, and tumble off the scale in shame and confusion of face at the distant apparition of a porter. The pennies rattle all day into the insatiable slit to gladden the hearts of shareholders. Ladies don't weigh often; but they attract such a degree of attention when they do that we are not surprised at it.

Why do all the children who patronise the chocolate and toffee engine suck their pennies with such emphatic earnestness before they drop them through the slit? Is it anticipation or doubt? Impossible to say, but it is their invariable practice. See that chubby urchin with the roving eye and a mouth made for the mastication of sweetmeats; he is not quite sure about the nature of the contrivance before him, and is by no means certain that it may not play him a trick. Awful prospect for the small boy who has treasured up that copper ever since yesterday to spend in this way. Suppose the machine should be out of order! Suppose the drawer marked 'Pull' should stick! With a troubled frown on his infant brow he spells through the directions, takes the coin out of his mouth, stares at it, to assure himself that it is a penny, and not the 'two halfpennies' that will produce no result; and at last lets it go.—That's right, youngster; grab the toffee and run. We think he has a vague idea that retribution in some mysterious form will overtake the adventurous boy who compels the machine to disgorge its treasures.

The sturdy little boy who is the next customer is much bolder in his dealings with it. The flicker of a smile that crosses his features as he approaches is nothing more than the greeting of an old friend. He is on terms of intimacy with the engine, and makes his purchase without the least hesitation, as soon as he has made up his mind (by sucking his penny) which sweet he will have.

A clean-looking little girl with a handbag is evidently a stranger, for she looks the whole machine over shyly, and reads the directions through twice before she attempts to find the slit. No; she never did such a thing before; she takes her purchase out of the drawer, and recloses it, murmuring 'Thank you,' by sheer force of habit. A well-mannered little girl, but a trifle absent-minded.

Materfamilias with four small boys, who range themselves in a circle round the machine. The parent takes up her stand beside it, and having collected four coppers from various receptacles, asks each child in turn what it will have with a degree of asperity that seems quite gratuitous and uncalled for. They have lots of time to make up their minds, but the importance of

the occasion—buying sweets by the family, as it were—is weighing upon their spirits. One youngster, indeed, who has selected chocolate, and says, when too late, 'Na, na; ah'll hae tawfie,' is reduced to tears, on learning that he must take his first selection, and displays an inclination to assault the machine.

Yes, give me an armchair in a secluded corner of the busy railway station, whence I can watch the automatic machines and their customers; and if you will throw in the morning paper and a good cigar, I will ask for nothing else to amuse my old age.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

DR DEFONTAINE, chief physician at the well-known Creuzot Steel Works, has brought before the Paris Surgical Society a communication dealing with what is termed, for want of a better name, Electric Sunstroke. At these works the electric furnace has long been employed. This consists in reality of an enormous arc-light, between the carbon poles of which the hardest metals are instantly made as soft as butter. The intensity of the light given off by this furnace is estimated at one hundred thousand candle-power, and the workpeople, although protected by dark glasses, seem after a short acquaintance with it to suffer from all the symptoms of sunstroke. The retina of the eye is painfully affected, disturbing the sight very considerably, the discharge of tears is copious, headache and sleeplessness are engendered, and finally the skin of the face peels off. There seems to be such a great future before the electric furnace in dealing with the more refractory substances, that it is to be hoped that some means may be found of protecting those who work with it from such serious injuries.

It would seem that the operation of extracting bullets from the wounded will not in the future form a necessary part of the army surgeon's work, for, according to certain experiments which have been made in France, the new rifle projectiles are so swift in their flight that even at a range of considerably more than a mile they will pierce through the human frame, bones and all. This has been ascertained from the results of some rather ghastly experiments on the unclaimed bodies from public mortuaries and hospitals, which, with a strange want of reverence, have been used as targets.

Mr William Burgess, of the Midland Counties Fish Culture establishment, makes a handsome offer to those public bodies who are desirous of stocking depleted waters with fish. He will undertake to receive and hatch-out, free of charge, any quantity of ova which may be sent to him, returning the fry when hatched to their respective owners. Mr Burgess makes this offer for the public good, believing as he does that much benefit would accrue from stocking the various pieces of barren water that are to be found throughout the country. Such expanses of water would then fetch good rentals, for there are always anglers glad to pay for the privilege of sport. Further than this, he pleads that fresh-water fish, if obtainable in abundance, would form an important addition to our food supplies, especially in districts far

removed from railway connection. Mr Burgess will no doubt find many to accept his generous offer, for, under ordinary conditions, when the initial expense of stocking a fishery is once provided for, there is little further outlay.

We recently commented upon the sale in London of an egg of the Great Auk, which, as a curiosity, commanded an extravagant price. A party of men from the United States Fish Commission schooner recently visited Funk Island, an exposed rock thirty-two miles north-east of Nova Scotia, where this bird, now extinct owing to the greed of man, once made its home. The island was found strewn with the bones of the Auk, and more than one hundred complete sets were gathered. It will be remembered that these birds could not fly by reason of their small wings, nor could they fight. It was the custom to slaughter them with clubs before despoiling them of their coveted feathers.

A correspondent of the *Times* fears that the beautiful white moss rose, now a rare species, may be becoming extinct. For the past thirty years he has had a tree in his garden which, season after season, has borne him a supply of white roses. Last spring, this tree was treated to a plentiful supply of old manure at its roots, with the result that it has put out ten times the number of flowers; but, alas, they are all red ones! The only other cause which he thinks may have effected the change is the planting for the first time near the tree of a gaudy dahlia. He is anxious to receive some explanation of the problem.

Mr R. E. Keen, of St Leonards-on-Sea, has patented a ventilating cover which can be adapted to all kinds of receptacles in which food is either cooked or kept. The arrangement consists of a guard-plate supported on uprights, which are constructed of the material of which the vessel is made, whether it be of metal, glass, or earthenware. Milk or cream stored in such a utensil is said to keep good in hot weather for at least twelve hours longer than it would otherwise do, and the same may be said for several other perishable commodities. But it is perhaps as an adjunct to cooking-vessels that the invention is more valuable. Vegetables and fish especially keep their colour and retain their flavour, when prepared in cooking-utensils provided with ventilating covers, in a manner which at once proves the utility of the contrivance.

Of late years, and more especially since the invention of the Morse Sounder, the Telephone, and the Phonograph, much attention has been concentrated upon the phenomena of speech; and we now have means of communicating with one another at a distance which would have been thought impossible by our forefathers. But there is one method of conversing which, although probably practised for a long period, has only recently been described. The method referred to appears to be peculiar to Gomera Island, one of the Canary group, and was lately brought to the notice of the Berlin Anthropological Society by a German officer, who for some time has lived on that island, and has had every opportunity of studying the matter. He says that this island is traversed by numerous gullies and deep ravines, which are not bridged over, and across which the inhabitants are often desirous of communicating with one

another. In these circumstances they have adopted a kind of whistling language, each syllable being represented by its own appropriate tone. As the notes of the diatonic or even the chromatic scale are very limited in number, it is to be presumed that this whistling must be worked in conjunction with some kind of code; but upon this point we have no information.

Both savage and semi-barbarous peoples have always exhibited a great repugnance to any surgical operation, however necessary, which involves amputation. The *North China Herald*, in commenting upon this circumstance, points out that the Chinese have always shown this repugnance, not on account of fear or pain, for they are patient under all kinds of physical suffering, but because they look upon it as a duty to keep the body intact. If they submit to the amputation of a limb, they invariably ask for the severed member, and keep it in a box, to be buried, in due time, with the owner. Sometimes they will actually eat it, thinking it only right that that which has been taken from the body should be returned to it. On the same principle, an extracted tooth will be carefully preserved, or ground to powder and swallowed in water. Another curious phase of the same idea is seen in the belief that a sick parent can be cured by broth made from flesh cut from a living child, and it is looked upon as a sign of filial piety for the child to submit himself to an operation for that purpose. The child is supposed to be of the vital essence of the parent, and if a portion of this essence is returned to the fountain-head, the parent will be greatly strengthened. The peace-loving nature of the Chinese is said to be largely due to this respect for the human body.

We have more than once referred to experiments which have been made in the use of a bright light as an attraction for fishes. Some more trials in this direction have recently been made under the auspices of the Liverpool Marine Biology Committee with some very decided results. A subaqueous electric light was placed at one side of the ship from which these experiments were made, and a net was lowered close to it, at the same time that a similar net was submerged on the dark side of the vessel. At the end of half an hour, these nets were hauled on board, when it was found that the one which had been immersed in darkness was comparatively empty, while that which had been on the illuminated side of the vessel contained an abundance of living creatures. This experiment was repeated; and the same results were obtained again and again.

A process for giving a metallic surface to wood has lately been adopted in Germany. The wood is first of all treated in a bath of caustic alkali, after which it is submitted to a bath of hyposulphite of calcium to which sulphur has been added. Finally, it is immersed in another bath of acetate of lead. The process takes some time for its development, for the wood remains in each of these baths for several hours. After it is dry, it is capable of receiving a very high polish, and has all the appearance of a brilliant metal.

A new method of purifying alcohol has been patented by Mr T. G. Bowick, and it is said that by this means a crude spirit can be freed of its fusel oil and other deleterious ingredients. The

raw spirit to be treated is rapidly shaken up with some hydrocarbon, the exact nature of which is not stated, with the result that the fusel oil is taken up by it, leaving the spirit perfectly pure. The system has been favourably reported upon by an eminent chemist, and the patent has been purchased by a Company called the Pure Spirit Company, Limited.

We some time ago alluded to an investigation which has been going on for some months as to the effect of light upon water-colours. The first portion of the Report of the experts who were commissioned to inquire into the subject has recently been published as a blue-book. These experts find that light *per se* has very little effect on the colours now generally employed by artists; and although they denounce certain pigments as being the reverse of permanent, they have not thrown any very fresh light on the matter. Vegetable colours generally have long been known to be untrustworthy, and this fact is now corroborated. But the present inquiry has brought out the information that damp is the great enemy to the permanence of colours, and that all colours, with very few exceptions, are permanent if kept from the air. We may therefore suppose that in the future water-colour artists will devote more attention than they have hitherto done to the framing of their pictures, which should be rendered as airtight as possible. Mr J. C. Robinson, who was the prime mover in causing this useful inquiry to be made, in commenting upon this Report suggests that pictures should be framed under pressure between two sheets of glass, so that practically the air could not get to the colours. But he does not seem to be aware that glass itself yellows under the influence of light. So much is this the case, that it has been found necessary more than once to entirely reglaze a photographic studio, the darkened glass stopping the rays that are most active in causing chemical change.

Visitors to Henley and Marlow regattas this season were interested in noticing a strange-looking vessel which bore the inscription 'Electric Charging Station.' This vessel is owned by Messrs Imisch & Co., and it is said that they intend to fit up three or four more charging stations of the same kind on the Thames for the purpose of serving the electric launches which they are introducing. Each charging station will contain a compound steam-engine and a couple of dynamo-machines. The launches will contain secondary batteries, which, as our readers know, require to be charged at certain intervals. The same firm is also building a large electric pleasure-boat which will accommodate seventy persons, and which will be worked by twin propellers, each of which will be independent of the other, so that they will assist in steering the vessel in sharp bends of the river. The substitution of noiseless electric launches for the steam pleasure-boats which are growing so numerous on the Thames, is an innovation which will be welcomed alike by boatmen and by those who dwell on the banks of the river.

A deputation lately waited upon the President of the Board of Trade with reference to the great quantity of immature fish which is brought to the London market, and which is often sold by the basketful for a few pence. Sir E. Birkbeck, M.P., who introduced the deputation, said that the

matter was really an international one, and that if a select Committee of the House of Commons were to report in favour of proceedings being taken against the capture of such fish and its sale in the United Kingdom, the fishing industry would undoubtedly ask the government to take steps with a view to induce the European powers to call a conference upon the subject. The question is a most important one, and we trust that the government will see their way to deal with it effectually.

Londoners have for some years had the advantage of procuring sea-water, which is delivered at their houses by an enterprising Railway Company at a very cheap rate. So long ago as 1881, works were authorised for laying down pipes through the county of Sussex for the purpose of supplying large quantities of the same invigorating agent direct from the coast. The London Sea-water Bill has now passed both Houses of Parliament, and an extension of time has been granted for the completion of the works in question. It is intended to establish large reservoirs close to London, and probably the water will be used not only for bathing purposes, but also for watering the roads, for which it has already been proved advantageous at many towns on our coasts.

Farmers and others should take warning that the recent heavy rains have had the effect in many places of favouring the growth of certain noxious weeds which are poisonous to both horses and cattle. In two districts, animals have died with all the symptoms—as was shown by post-mortem examination—of vegetable poisoning. Inquiry led to the identification of the poisonous plant as the lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), a variety of crowfoot. It is not a common plant in ordinary seasons, but has lately flourished plentifully in the boggy parts of meadow-land.

It is said that in France a new employment has been found for Celluloid—which is a compound of collodion and camphor—in the sheathing of ships. Celluloid is much the same in appearance and qualities as horn, but can be made of different colours. Experiment has shown that it answers as well for ships as the usual copper sheathing, and that it keeps quite free from marine growths, even after several months' constant immersion in water. A Company has been formed to work this new application of the material, and the price fixed for plates one millimetre in thickness is at the rate of nine francs per square metre. In our own country the use of celluloid seems to have been confined to the manufacture of combs, billiard balls, and articles of a fancy description.

The wonderful 'Race to Edinburgh' by our enterprising Railway Companies has of late called a great deal of attention to railway travelling generally, and has led to some comparison of the comforts possessed by the modern traveller with the inconveniences experienced by those of fifty years ago. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* gives some interesting particulars of the railway customs in the year 1840. The tickets were of paper, and were collected before the train started. The signal for departure was *I'd be a Butterfly* played on a bugle. The carriages were made to resemble stagecoaches as much as possible, and in the case of the Stockton and Darlington line the

first made carriage was actually the body of such a coach fixed to a railway truck. The luggage was carried on the roof, where the guards also took their places, exposed not only to the wind and rain, but also to the cinders from 'Puffing Billy.' The good old times have certainly been improved on, so far as railway travelling is concerned.

An aggrieved Amateur Photographer recently wrote to the *Times* complaining that an over-zealous Custom House officer had insisted on opening and exposing to light a number of sensitive, undeveloped negatives, which represented a large amount of work with the camera in Norway. This experience is fortunately not a common one, for the Customs officers are used to dealing with such things, owing to the numbers who carry cameras abroad, and in many ports photographic dark rooms are established for such examinations when requisite. Tourists should, if possible, develop their negatives before bringing them home, and then of course they are no longer liable to such accidents.

According to the last Trade Report of the British consul at Naples, the Neapolitan coral fisheries are in a bad way. The reefs or banks have become exhausted, and now only a very inferior quality is commonly obtained, where formerly the best coral was to be found. The boat-owners are so disheartened by their recent experience, that they talk of giving up the industry. Great numbers of the fishermen have already left the country or have found employment in agriculture or other forms of labour. From four thousand, the number of workers is reduced to one thousand; and while at one time it was customary to build fifty boats a year to replace worn-out craft, not a single new vessel was made in 1887. Calcutta is now the best market for coral, the demand in both Europe and America having much declined of late years.

Once more the cry is raised that certain of our wild-flowers and ferns are becoming extinct through the greed of those who gather them wholesale in order to send them to market. The beautiful *Osmunda regalis*, once so plentiful in Cornwall and other counties, is now rarely met with. The plant-robbers have no respect for either private or public property, and although hampers full of stolen plants have been seized and confiscated, the nefarious industry still flourishes. Round about London for miles, no primroses can be seen in the spring-time, for they have been all destroyed, the loving memory of a certain statesman being perhaps responsible for their scarcity. The remedy is in the hands of the public, who should refuse to buy such ill-gotten plants.

SUMMER WOODS.

Sing on, sweet birds !

My heart is weary of the endless strife,
The tumult and the whirl of human life.
Low on the grass, beneath the spreading shade
Of cool green boughs, my aching head is laid ;
Tired and outspent, I hear each sad sweet note
From the surrounding woodlands softly float.
Sing on, sing on !

Sing low, sweet birds !

For I am sick of all the noise and din,
The strife and tumult of this world of sin.

Loud notes would strike upon my ear in pain,
Fresh torture bringing to the throbbing brain ;
But your soft chant is soothing in its flow,
As songs my mother sang me long ago.
Sing on, sing on !

Sing tenderly !

Wounded and weak from many a conflict sore,
I love to hear those soothing strains once more,
Telling me nought of earth, but all of heaven,
Where chains that bind us here shall soon be riven.
Soft woodland voices ! grant the sweet relief
Of sympathetic tones to calm my grief.
Sing on, sing on !

Sing me to sleep !

Each sound of human life is far away ;
Under green branches western sunbeams play,
And through the stillness of the woods I hear
Only the plashing waters of the mere,
Sighing among the sedges at my feet,
And in the tall tree tops those wood-notes sweet.
Sing on, sing on !

Sing in my dreams !

Still let me feel that gentle melody
Steal through my sleeping spirit peacefully,
Blending its sweetness with the visions bright,
Heaven-sent to soothe me with their strange delight ;
Though half unconscious wrapt in dreamy peace,
I should awake were that low song to cease.
Sing on, sing on !

Sing when I wake !

Fill the dim woods with melody divine,
Fill with its echoes this sad heart of mine,
Unstrung and tuneless as a broken lute,
So long to every chord of music mute ;
Oh bid it answer to the sweet appeal
Of haunting strains which round its pulses steal !
Sing on, sing on !

Sing on, sweet birds !

Unknown to me the language that ye sing,
Unknown the tender harmonies that ring
In blended concert through the forest dim,
Where breeze and bough and streamlet join the
hymn ;
I only know that on my heart the while
Peace falleth, e'en as from an angel's smile.
Sing on, sing on !

E.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.

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MEN AND PLACES.

Nor the least interesting of the many phases of the law of the association of ideas is the curious result produced in the human mind by the connection of ideas which are, as Locke says, 'in themselves not at all of kin,' but which are united wholly owing to chance or custom. Such ideas, he adds, 'come to be so united in some men's minds that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, than its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves together.' To enter fully into even this one branch of association would be too great a task, since it is evident that there are many ideas which are suggested to all men alike by other ideas that are 'not at all of kin,' and that, moreover, everybody has certain private ideas which inevitably suggest others. In reference to places, Charles Lamb, for example, once raised an indignant howl by asserting that the little pie-shop in a certain murky London thoroughfare was dearer to him than a mountain. And so it is with all of us: every man has some place which is dear to him owing to happy associations. But the connection that exists in the minds of the great reading public between men and places is only one phase of this branch.

It has frequently been observed that it is just as impossible to think of Sinai without the Law-giver as it would be to think of Jerusalem without including the Man of Sorrows. This is perfectly true; and of the association of great lives with particular places there are many more examples. Imagine Greece without Homer; Rome without Horace; Genoa without Columbus; Venice without Titian; Antwerp without Rubens; Florence without Dante; Weimar without Goethe and Schiller—all are equally impossible. In our own country there are scores of names which are inseparably linked to places. To specialists and students there are many more; but examples

known to all will amply suffice to show the connection.

Take first the rivers, which every true poet loves, and of which many of our greatest bards have sung. Think of the Avon without Shakespeare! The Doon, even without the adjective 'bonnie,' cannot be thought of without recalling memories of Burns; and the Tweed, the gentle ripple of which could be heard by those present at the death of the great novelist, will ever be associated with the genius of Scott. Then imagine the Ouse without Bunyan and Cowper; the Dove without dear old Izaak and his companion Charles Cotton; the Trent without Byron and Kirke White; the Thames without the bard of Twickenham!

As to places, who can think of the Lake Country without Wordsworth, Wilson, Coleridge, De Quincey—and, *inter alia*, of some nebulous passages in the *Confessions of an Opium Eater*—Southey, Harriet Martineau, and others? Or can anybody imagine Sheffield without Chantrey, Montgomery, or Ebenezer Elliott, whose rugged rhymes did so much towards the repeal of the corn laws? To a section of the reading public, Darwin is always associated with the Kentish village of Down, just as another section cannot think of Bournemouth without Keble. Nor can one think of Newcastle without Stephenson; Gadshill without Dickens; Kensington without Thackeray; Dean Prior, 'in dull Devonshire,' without Herrick; or Eversley without Charles Kingsley.

Edinburgh and London, the two great literary centres, are more especially peculiar in this respect, since many names are suggested at mention of the former, and some districts of the metropolis recall hosts of memories. Modern Athens is principally associated with the names of the famous contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. As to London, Chelsea is perhaps the most prolific district in suggestions of this kind. Carlyle, of course, comes first with everybody. Addison, Steele, Sir Thomas More, the Earl of Orrery, Locke, Boyle, Dean Swift, Arbuthnot, J. M. W. Turner, D. G. Rossetti, Sir Christopher Wren,

Leigh Hunt, Horace Walpole—these are a few of the names that will occur to most people at the mention of Chelsea. The district of which Fleet Street may be called the centre has also many great names connected with it. Fleet Street itself at once suggests Johnson, Goldsmith, and Fielding; the India House cannot be thought of without the gentle Elia; and the General Post-office conjures up memories of Trollope and other modern literary men.

These examples suffice to show how closely united in the mind men and places are. Even in the case of living authors or politicians, everybody must have noticed how inseparably connected the association is; and in addition to those names and places which are familiar to everybody, there are others which appeal to a limited circle only.

It is not without significance to note that, although a certain amount of interest is attached to the birthplace of a great man, posterity generally associates him with the place where the work for which he is famous was accomplished. Few people, for example, think of the birthplace of Macaulay, of Richardson, of Nelson, of Wellington, or of Havelock. There are exceptions, it is true; but the exceptions in the case of really great men might be counted on the fingers of both hands, even when they have spent the greater portion of their lives in their birthplace. It is strange, too, that if a place produces one eminent man, it generally produces others; and that if a list be made of the birthplaces of the sixty most eminent men—confining the list to those who were dead by 1860—it will be found that about one-third of that number were born in London, although, it need scarcely be said, the metropolis never had one-third of our population. Among the poets, the capital produced Milton, Spenser, Chaucer, Ben Jonson, W. Blake, Pope, and Keats. Besides these, Defoe, Canning, Sir Thomas More, Bacon, Becket, Turner, Landseer, Gibbon, and Bentham were also Londoners. Both the north and the extreme south of England are badly represented on the list; while the district around Stratford-on-Avon, the county of Devonshire, and in the neighbourhood of Wiltshire, have been disproportionately successful. Shakespeare, Dryden, Samuel Johnson, Macaulay, Latimer, Richardson, and Bishop Butler were all born within a comparatively small district, of which Stratford is the centre. Bristol, and the counties adjacent to it, produced Locke, Fielding, Hobbes, Chatterton, Addison, Clarendon, and others; whilst in Devonshire were born Marlborough, Coleridge, Raleigh, Hooker, and Reynolds. Taking the list of sixty men, and going through the whole, it will be found that about one-tenth of the country has produced more than half its greatest men. It is therefore not surprising that certain districts should be so full of interesting associations, whilst others are absolutely barren, seeing that the birthplaces of men of genius are not scattered over the whole of England, but massed together. Among contemporary poets, London still maintains a good average, for it produced both Browning and Swinburne. In regard to novelists, it is strange that Portsmouth in this century has produced two—Charles Dickens and Walter Besant.

Another interesting phase of the association of men with places is shown when one hears or reads

of any of those famous battles in which British arms have proved victorious. Think of Agincourt, Cressy, 'immortal Waterloo,' and many other places, and what a flood of names rush through the memory! Longfellow says: 'Even scenes unlovely in themselves become clothed in beauty when illuminated by the imagination, as faces in themselves become so by the expression of thought and feeling;' and this special interest that attaches to places by the association of great lives or great deeds serves not only to transform those places; it also helps to keep in the memory much which should never be forgotten.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

By GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,' ETC.

CHAPTER L.—THE CAP MARTIN CATASTROPHE.

As Warren Relf paused there on the step of the carriage one second, before he jumped, he was dimly aware of a curious fact that caught his attention, sideways, even at that special moment of doubt and danger: many other doors on the landward side of the train stood also open, and other passengers beside himself, with fear and surprise depicted visibly on their pale faces, were stepping out, irresolute, just as he himself had done, upon the narrow footboard. Could they have heard the struggle? he wondered vaguely to himself. Could they have gained some hasty inkling of the tragic event that had taken place, so secretly, all unknown as he supposed, in his own compartment? Had some neighbouring traveller caught faintly the muffled sounds of a desperate fight? Had he suspected an attack upon some innocent passenger? Had he signalled the guard to stop the train? for it was slowing still, slowing yet more sensibly and certainly each moment. More and more pale faces now appeared at the doors; and a Frenchman standing on the footboard of the next compartment, a burly person of military appearance, with an authoritative air, cried aloud in a voice of quick command, 'Sautiez, donc! Sautiez!' At the word, Warren leaped, he knew not why, from the doomed carriage. The Frenchman leaped at the self-same moment. All down the train, a dozen or two of passengers followed suit as if by a concerted order. Warren had no idea in his own mind what was really happening, but he knew the train had slackened speed immensely, and that he had landed on his feet and hands on the rubbly bank with no more result, so far as he himself could see just then, than a sprained ankle and some few bleeding wounds on his knees and elbows.

Next instant a horrible crash resounded through the air, and bellowed and echoed with loud reverberation from the rocky walls of those sheer precipices. Thud, thud, thud followed close on the crash, as carriage after carriage shocked fiercely against the engine and the compartments in front of it. Then a terrible sight met his eyes. The train had just reached the ledge of cliff beyond, and with a wild rocking disappeared all at once over the steep side into the sea below. Nothing in life is more awful in its unexpectedness than a great railway accident. Before Warren had even time to know what was taking place by his

side, it was all over. The train had fallen in one huge mass over the edge of the cliff, and Hugh Massinger, with his eleven thousand pounds safe in his pocket, was hurried away without warning or reprieve into ten fathoms deep of blue Mediterranean.

Everybody remembers the main features of that terrific accident, famous in the history of French railway disasters as the Cap Martin catastrophe. Shortly after passing Roquebrune station (where the through-trains do not stop), one of the engine-wheels became loosened by a violent shock against a badly-laid sleeper, and, thus acting as a natural brake, brought the train almost to a stand-still for a few seconds, just opposite the very dangerous ledge known locally as the Borrigio escarpment. The engine there left the rails with a jerk, and many of the passengers, seeing something serious was likely to take place, seized the opportunity, just before the crash, of opening the doors on the landward side, and leaping from the train while it had reached its slowest rate of motion, on the very eve of its final disaster. One instant later, the engine oscillated violently and stopped altogether; the other carriages telescoped against it; and the entire train, thrown off its balance with a terrible wrench, toppled over the sheer precipice at the side into the deep water that skirts the foot of the neighbouring mountains. That was the whole familiar story as the public at large came, bit by bit, to learn it afterwards. But for the moment, the stunned and horrified passengers on the bank of the torrent only knew that a frightful accident had taken place with incredible rapidity, and that the train itself, with many of their fellow-travellers seated within, had sunk like lead in the twinkling of an eye to the bottom of the bay, leaving the few survivors there on dry land aghast at the inexpressible suddenness and awfulness of this appalling calamity.

As for Warren Relf, amid the horror of his absorbing life-and-death struggle with Hugh Massinger, and the abiding awe of its terrible consummation, he had never even noticed the angry jerking of the loosened wheel, the whir that jarred through the shaken carriages, the growing oscillation from side to side, the evident imminence of some alarming accident. Sudden as the catastrophe was to all, to him it was more sudden and unexpected than to any one. Till the actual crash itself came, indeed, he did not realise why the other passengers were hanging on so strangely to the narrow footboard. The whole episode happened in so short a space of time—thirty seconds at best—that he had no opportunity to collect and recover his scattered senses. He merely recognised at first in some stunned and shattered fashion that he was well out of the fatal train, and that a dozen sufferers lay stretched in evident pain and danger on the low bank of earth beside him.

For all the passengers had not fared so well in their escape as he himself had done. Many of them had suffered serious hurt in their mad jump from the open doorway, alighting on jagged points of broken stone, or rolling down the sides of the steep ravine into the dry bed of the winter torrent. The least injured turned with one accord to help and tend their wounded companions. But as for the train itself, it had simply disappeared. It was as though it had never been. Scarcely a sign

of it showed on the unruffled water. Falling sheer from the edge of that precipitous crag into the deep bay, it had sunk like a stone at once to the very bottom. Only a few fragments of broken wreckage appeared here and there floating loose upon the surface. Hardly a token remained beside to show the outer world where that whole long line of laden carriages had toppled over bodily into the profound green depths that still smiled so sweetly between Roquebrune and Mentone.

For a while, distracted by this fresh horror, Warren could only think of the dead and wounded. His own torn and blood-stained condition excited no more attention or curiosity now on the part of bystanders than that of many others among his less fortunate fellow-passengers. Nor did he even reflect with any serious realisation that Elsie was saved and his own character practically vindicated. The new shock had deadened the sense and vividness of the old one. In the face of so awful and general a calamity as this, his own private fears and doubts and anxieties seemed to shrink for the moment into absolute insignificance.

In time, however, it began slowly to dawn upon his bewildered mind that other trains might come up from Monaco or Mentone and dash madly among the broken debris of the shattered carriages. Whatever caused their own accident might cause accidents also to approaching engines. Moreover, the wounded lay scattered about on all sides upon the track, some of them in a condition in which it might indeed be difficult or even dangerous to remove them. Somebody must certainly go forward to Mentone to warn the *chef de gare* and to fetch up assistance. After a hurried consultation with his nearest neighbours, Warren took upon himself the task of messenger. He started off at once on this needful errand, and plunged with a heart now strangely aroused into the deep darkness of the last remaining tunnel.

His sprained ankle caused him terrible pain at every step; but the pain itself, joined with the consciousness of performing an imperative duty, kept his mind from dwelling too much for the moment on his own altered yet perilous situation. As he dragged one foot wearily after the other through that long tunnel, his thoughts concentrated themselves for the time being on but one object—to reach Mentone and prevent any further serious accident.

When he had arrived at the station, however, and despatched help along the line to the other sufferers from the terrible disaster, he had time to reflect in peace for a while upon the sudden change this great public calamity had wrought in his own private position. The danger of misapprehension had been removed by the accident as if by magic. Unless he himself chose to reveal the facts, no soul on earth need ever know a word of that desperate struggle with mad Hugh Massinger in the wrecked railway carriage. Even supposing the bodies were ultimately dredged up or recovered by divers, no suspicion could now possibly attach to his own conduct. The wound on Hugh's head would doubtless be attributed to the fall alone; though the chance of the body being recognisable at all after so horrible a catastrophe would indeed be slight, considering the way the carriages had

doubled up like so much trestle-work upon one another before finally falling. Elsie was saved; that much at least was now secured. She need know nothing. Unless he himself were ever tempted to tell her the ghastly truth, that terrible episode of the death-struggle in the doomed train might remain for ever a sealed book to the woman for whose sake it had all been enacted.

Warren's mind, therefore, was made up at once. All things considered, it had become a sacred duty for him now to hold his tongue for ever and ever about the entire incident. No man is bound to criminate himself; above all, no man is bound to expose himself when innocent to an unjust yet overwhelming suspicion of murder. But that was not all. Elsie's happiness depended entirely upon his rigorous silence. To tell the whole truth, even to her, would be to expose her shrinking and delicate nature to a painful shock, as profound as it was unnecessary, and as lasting as it was cruel. The more he thought upon it, the more plain and clear did his duty shine forth before him. Chance had supplied him with a strange means of honourable escape from what had seemed at first sight an insoluble dilemma. It would be folly and worse, under his present conditions, for him to refuse to profit by its unconscious suggestion.

Yet more: he must decide at once without delay upon his line of action. News of the catastrophe would be telegraphed, of course, immediately to England. Elsie would most likely learn the whole awful episode that very evening at her hotel in London: he could hear the very cries of the street boys ringing in his ears: 'Speshul Edition. Appalling Railway Accident on the Riviayrer! Great Loss of Life! A Train Precipitated into the Mediterranean!' If not, she would at anyrate read the alarming news in an agony of terror in the morning papers. She knew Warren himself was returning to San Remo by that very train. She did not know that Hugh was likely to be one of his fellow-passengers. She must not hear of the accident for the first time from the columns of the *Times* or the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He must telegraph over at once and relieve beforehand her natural anxiety for her future husband's safety. But Hugh's name and fate need not be mentioned, at least for the present; he could reserve that revelation for a more convenient season. To publish it, indeed, would be in part to incriminate himself, or at least to arouse unjust suspicion.

He drove to the telegraph office, worn out as he was with pain and excitement, and despatched a hasty message that moment to Elsie: 'There has been a terrible accident to the train near Mentone, but I am not hurt, at least to speak of—only a few slight sprains and bruises. Particulars in papers. Affectionately, WARREN.' And then he drove back to the scene of the catastrophe.

It was a week before all the bodies were dredged up by relays of divers from the wreck of that ill-fated and submerged train. Hugh Massinger's was one of the last to be recovered. It was found, minus a large part of the clothing, which the sea had torn off. The eleven thousand pounds in French bank-notes never turned

up at all again. His money indeed had perished with him.

They buried all that remained of that volcanic life on the sweet and laughing hillside at Mentone. A plain marble cross marks the spot where he rests. On the plinth stand graven those prophetic lines from the plaintive poem to *A Life's Philosophy*:

Here, by the haven with the hoary trees,
O lurid poet's heart, lie still:
No longer strive amid tempestuous seas
To curb wild waters to thy wayward will.
Above thy grave
Wan olives wave,
And oleanders court deep-laden bees.

That nought of fulfilment might be wanting to his prayer, Warren Relf with his own hand planted a blushing oleander above the mound where that fiery poet's heart lay still for ever. He had nothing but pity in his soul for Hugh's wasted powers. A splendid life, marred in the making by its own headstrong folly. And Winifred, who loved him, and whose heart he broke, lay silent in the self-same grave beside him.

CHAPTER LI.—NEXT OF KIN WANTED.

The recovery of Hugh's body from the shattered train gave Warren Relf one needful grain of internal comfort. He identified that pale and wounded corpse with reverent care, and waited in solemn suspense and unspoken anxiety for the result of the customary *post-mortem* examination. The doctors' report reassured his soul. Death had resulted, so the medical evidence conclusively proved, not from the violent injuries observed on the skull, and apparently produced, they said, by a blow against the carriage door, but from asphyxiation, due to drowning. Hugh was still alive, then, when the train went over! His heart still beat and his breath still came and went feebly till the actual moment of the final catastrophe. It was the accident, not Warren's hand, that killed him. Innocent as Warren knew himself to be, he was glad to learn from this authoritative source that even unintentionally he had not made himself Hugh Massinger's accidental executioner.

But in any case they must break the news gently to Elsie. Warren's presence was needed in the south for the time being, to see after Winifred's funeral and other necessary domestic arrangements. So Edie went over to England on the very first day after the fact of Hugh's disappearance in the missing train had become generally known to the little world of San Remo, to soften the shock for her with sisterly tenderness. By a piece of rare good fortune, Hugh Massinger's name was not mentioned at all in the earlier telegrams, even after it was fairly well known at Mentone and Monte Carlo that the lucky winner, whose success was in everybody's mouth just then, had perished in one of the lost carriages. The despatches only spoke in vague terms of 'an English gentleman lately arrived on the Riviera, who had all but succeeded in breaking the bank that day at Monte Carlo, and was returning to San Remo, elated by success, with eleven thousand pounds of winnings in his pocket.' It was not in the least likely that Elsie would dream of recognising her newly bereaved cousin under this

highly improbable and generalised description—especially when Winifred, as she well knew, was lying dead meanwhile, the victim of his cold and selfish cruelty, at the *pension* at San Remo. Edie would be the first to bring her the strange and terrible news of Hugh's sudden death. Warren himself stopped behind at Mentone, as in duty bound, to identify the body formally at the legal inquiry.

He had another reason, too, for wishing to break the news to Elsie through Edie's mouth rather than personally. For Edie knew nothing, of course, of the deadly struggle in the doomed train, of that hand-to-hand battle for life and honour; and she could therefore with truth unfold the whole story exactly as Warren wished Elsie first to learn it. For her, there was nothing more to tell than that Hugh, with incredible levity and brutal want of feeling, had gone over to Monte Carlo to gamble openly at the public tables, on the very days while his poor young wife, killed inch by inch by his settled neglect, lay dead in her lonely lodging at San Remo: that he had returned a couple of evenings later with his ill-gotten gains upon the fated train: and that, falling over into the sea with the carriages from which Warren just barely escaped with dear life, he was drowned in his place in one of the shattered and sunken compartments. That was all: and that was bad enough in all conscience. What need to burden Elsie's gentle soul any further with the more hideous concomitants of that unspeakable tragedy?

Elsie bore the news with far greater fortitude than Edie in her most sanguine mood could have expected. Winifred's death had sunk so deep into the fibres of her soul that Hugh's seemed to affect her far less by comparison. She had learnt to know him now in all his baseness. It was the recognition of the man's own inmost nature that had cost her dearest. 'Let us never speak of him again, dear Warren,' she wrote to her betrothed, a few days later. 'Let him be to us as though he had never existed. Let his name be not so much as mentioned between us. It pains and grieves me ten thousand times more, Warren, to think that for such a man's sake as he was, I should so long have refused to accept the love of such a man as I now know you to be.'

Those are the hardest words a woman can utter. To unsay their love is to women unendurable. But Elsie no longer shrank from unsaying it. Shame and remorse for her shattered ideal possessed her soul. She knew she had done the true man wrong by so long rejecting him for the sake of the false one.

At sand-girt Whitestrand, meanwhile, all was turmoil and confusion. The news of the young Squire's tragic death, following so close at the heel of his frail little wife's, spread horror and surprise through the whole community. The vicar's wife was all agog with excitement. The reticule trembled on her palpitating wrist as she went the round of her neighbours with the surprising intelligence. Nobody knew what might happen next, now the last of the Meyseys was dead and gone, while the sandbanks were spreading half a mile to seaward, and the very river was turned from its course by encroaching hummocks into a new-cut channel. The mortgagees, to be

sure, were safe with their money. Not only was the property now worth on a rough computation almost as much as it had ever been, but Winifred's life had been heavily insured, and the late Mr Massinger's estate, the family attorney remarked with a cheerful smile, was far more than solvent—in fact, it would prove a capital inheritance for some person or persons unknown, the heirs-at-law and next-of-kin of the last possessor. But good business lay in store, no doubt, for the profession still. Deceased had probably died intestate. Endless questions would thus be opened out in delicious vistas before the entranced legal vision. The marriage being subsequent to the late Married Woman's Property Act, Mrs Massinger's will, if any, must be found and proved. The next of kin and heir-at-law must be hunted up. Protracted litigation would probably ensue; rewards would be offered for certificates of birth; records of impossible marriages would be freely advertised for, with tempting suggestions of pecuniary recompense to the lucky discoverer. Research would be stimulated in parish clerks; affidavits would be sworn to with charming recklessness; rival claimants would commit unblushing alternative perjuries on their own account, with frank disregard of common probability. It would rain fees. The estate would dissolve itself bodily by slow degrees in a quagmire of expenses. And all for the benefit of the good attorneys! The family lawyer, in the character of Danaö—for this occasion only, and without prejudice—would hold out his hands to catch the golden shower. A learned profession would no doubt profit in the end to a distinct amount by the late Mr Massinger's touching disregard of testamentary provision for his unknown relations.

Alas for the prospects of the learned gentlemen! The question of inheritance proved itself in the end far easier and less complex than the family attorney in his professional zeal had at first anticipated. Everything unravelled itself with disgusting simplicity. The estate might almost as well have been unencumbered. The late Mrs Massinger had left no will, and the property had therefore devolved direct by common law upon her surviving husband. This was awkward. If only now, any grain of doubt had existed in any way as to the fact that the late Mrs Massinger had predeceased her unfortunate husband, legal acumen might doubtless have suggested innumerable grounds of action for impossible claimants on either side of the two families. But unhappily for the exercise of legal acumen, the case as it stood was all most horribly plain sailing. Hugh Massinger, Esquire, having inherited in due course from his deceased wife, the estate must go in the first place to Hugh Massinger himself, in person. And Hugh Massinger himself having died intestate, it must go in the next place to Hugh Massinger's nearest representative. True, there still remained the agreeable and exciting research for the missing heir-at-law; but the pursuit of hunting up the heir-at-law to a given known indisputable possessor is as nothing in the eyes of a keen sportsman compared with the Homeric joy of battle involved in the act of setting the representatives of two rival and uncertain claims to fight it out, tooth and nail together, on the free and open arena of the Court of Probate. It was with a sigh of regret, therefore, that the family attorney, good

easy man, drew up the advertisement which closed for ever his vain hopes of a disputed succession between the moribund houses of Massinger and Meysey, and confined his possibilities of lucrative litigation to exploiting the house of Massinger alone, for his own use, enjoyment, and fruition.

It was some two or three weeks after Hugh Massinger's tragic death that Edie Relf chanced to observe in the Agony Column of that morning's *Times* a notice couched in the following precise and poetical language :

'HUGH MASSINGER, Esquire, deceased, late of Whitestrand Hall, in the county of Suffolk.—Any person or persons claiming to represent the heir or heirs-at-law and next of kin of the above-named gentleman (who died at Mentone, in the Department of the Alpes Maritimes, in the French Republic, on or about the 17th day of November last past) are hereby requested to apply immediately to ALFRED HEBERDEN, Esq., Whitestrand, Suffolk, solicitor to the said Hugh Massinger.'

Edie mentioned the matter at once to Warren, who had come over from France as soon as he had completed the necessary arrangements at San Remo and Mentone; but Warren heard it all with extreme disinclination. He couldn't bear even to allude to the fact in speaking to Elsie. Directly or indirectly, he could never inherit the estate of the man whose life he had been so nearly instrumental in shortening. And if Elsie was soon, as he hoped, to become his wife, he would necessarily participate in whatever benefit Elsie might derive from inheriting the relics of Hugh Massinger's ill-won Whitestrand property.

'No, no,' he said. 'The estate was simply the price of blood. He married that poor little woman for nothing else but for the sake of Whitestrand. He killed her by slow degrees through his neglect and cruelty. If he hadn't married her, he would never have been master of that wretched place: if he hadn't married her, he would have had nothing of his own to leave to Elsie. I can't touch it, and I won't touch it. So that's flat, Edie. It's the price of blood. Let it, too, perish with him.'

'But oughtn't you at least to mention it to Elsie?' Edie asked with her plain straightforward English common-sense. 'It's her business more than it's yours, you know, Warren. Oughtn't you at least to give her the option of accepting or refusing her own property?—It's very kind of you, of course, to decide for her beforehand so cavalierly.—Perhaps, you see, when she learns she's an heiress, she may be inclined to transfer her affections elsewhere.'

Warren smiled. That was a point of view that had never occurred to him. Your male lover makes so sure of his prey: he hardly allows in his own mind the possibility of rejection. But still he prevaricated. 'I wouldn't tell her about it, just yet at least,' he answered hesitatingly. 'We don't know, after all, that Elsie's really the heir-at-law at all, if it comes to that. Let's wait and see. Perhaps some other claimant may turn up for the property.'

'Perhaps,' Edie replied, with her oracular brevity. 'And perhaps not. There's nothing on earth more elastic in its own way than a good perhaps. India-rubber bands are just mere child's

play to it.—Suppose, then, we pin it down to a precise limit of time, so as to know exactly where we stand, and say that if the estate isn't otherwise claimed within six weeks, we'll break it to Elsie, and allow her to decide for herself in the matter?'

'But how shall we know whether it's claimed or not?' Warren asked dubiously.

'My dear, there exists in this realm of England a useful institution known to science as a penny post, by means of which a letter may be safely and inexpensively conveyed even to so remote and undistinguished a personage as Alfred Heberden, Esquire, solicitor to the deceased, Whitestrand, Suffolk.—I propose, in fact, to write and ask him.'

Warren groaned. It was an awkward fix. He wished he could shirk the whole horrid business. To be saddled against your will with a landed estate that you don't want is a predicament that seldom disturbs a modest gentleman's peace of mind anywhere. But he saw no possible way out of the odd dilemma. Edie was right, after all, no doubt. As yet, at least, he had no authority to answer in any way for Elsie's wishes. If she wanted Whitestrand, it was hers to take or reject as she wished, and hers only. Still, he salved his conscience with the consolatory idea that it was not actually compulsory upon him to show Elsie any legal advertisement, inquiry, or suggestion which might happen to emanate from the solicitors to the estate of the late Hugh Massinger. So far as he had any official cognisance of the facts, indeed, the heirs, executors, and assigns of the deceased had nothing on earth to do in any way with Elsie Challoner, of San Remo, Italy. Second cousinhood is at best a very vague and uncertain form of relationship. He decided, therefore, not without some internal qualms, to accept Edie's suggested compromise for the present, and to wait patiently for the matter in hand to settle itself by spontaneous arrangement.

But Alfred Heberden, Esquire, solicitor to the deceased, acted otherwise. He had failed to draw any satisfactory communications in answer to his advertisement save one from a bogus firm of so-called Property Agents, and one from a third-rate pawnbroker in the Borough Road whose wife's aunt had once married a broken-down railway porter of the name of Messenger, from Weem in Shropshire, and who considered himself, accordingly, the obvious representative and heir-at-law of the late Hugh Massinger of the Utter Bar, and of Whitestrand Hall, in Suffolk, Esquire, deceased without issue. Neither of these applications, however, proving of sufficient importance to engage the attention of Mr Alfred Heberden's legal mind, that astute gentleman proceeded entirely on his own account to investigate the genealogy and other antecedents of Hugh Massinger, with a single eye to the discovery of the missing inheritor of the estate, envisaged as a person from whom natural gratitude would probably wring a substantial solatium to the good attorney who had proved his title. And the result of his inquiries into the Massinger pedigree took tangible shape at last, a week or two later, in a second advertisement of a more exact sort, which Edie Relf, that diligent and careful student of the second column,

the most interesting portion of the whole newspaper to Eve's like-minded daughters, discovered and pondered over one foggy morning in the blissful repose of 128 Blethingley Road, South Kensington.

'CHALLONER: Heir-at-law and Next of Kin Wanted. Estate of HUGH MASSINGER, Esquire, deceased, intestate.—If this should meet the eye of ELSIE, daughter of the late Rev. H. Challoner, and Eleanor Jane his wife, formerly Eleanor Jane Massinger, of Chudleigh, Devonshire, she is requested to put herself into communication with ALFRED HEBERDEN, Esq., Whitestrand, Suffolk, when she may hear of something greatly to her advantage.'

Edie took the paper up at once to Warren. 'For "may" read "will,"' she said pointedly. 'Lawyers don't advertise unless they know. I always understood Mr Massinger had no living relations except Elsie. This question has reached boiling-point now. You'll have to speak to her after that about the matter.'

PEOPLE'S BANKS.

SINCE the two articles on this subject appeared in these columns on the 22d of September and the 24th of November 1883, a movement was begun which has resulted in the establishment of a People's Bank in Edinburgh. At a meeting held on the 17th of March 1888 of the 'East of Scotland Co-operative Conference Association'—a body composed of about a dozen district Co-operative Associations—a set of rules was framed, and instructions were issued to a Committee to prepare and despatch a prospectus stating the objects of the bank to any persons likely to become shareholders. Previous meetings had been held on the subject, and it was unanimously and finally resolved to proceed with the formation of the bank.

The groundwork of the rules is laid on the model of the Italian rather than the German People's Banks, for the former have limited, and the latter unlimited liability. The new People's Bank is strictly co-operative in character, and can, as restricted by the Act, lend only to its own members, each of whom must hold one share of one pound nominal value per share. Thus, if one wanted to borrow, a deposit of 5s. would fall to be made, as representing the 2s. 6d. call for allotment and 2s. 6d. call on application for one share. The Italian People's Banks are more elastic than this; for, after satisfying the wants of their own members, they reserve the power to lend what is over of their available means to non-members.

In the rules of the new People's Bank, the Board of Directors may sell, exchange, or mortgage, build or rebuild upon any land; and its object is stated as 'to carry on the business of banking, the buying and selling of all kinds of produce and manufactures, and the buying and selling of land.' With regard to the last-named, two powers which are only intended to be held *in potentia*, it may be stated that the Scotch banks find their troubles begin when they stray from the path of banking proper. Readers of Sir William Forbes's *Memoirs of a Banking House* will remember that he dates the prosperity of his bank

from the time when he determined resolutely to devote his whole energies to banking alone.

The new Banking Society is prepared to borrow from any one on loan, which loan 'shall be a first charge upon the general assets of the Society.' Deposits will be taken at rates to be agreed upon; but the loans and deposits thus obtained must not exceed the general assets of the Company for the time being.

Registration of the Society as the 'People's Bank, Limited,' is made under the Industrial and Provident Societies' Act, 1876; and certain advantages arise therefrom. By thus registering, a corporate body is formed; no list of shareholders need be given; and the funds of the corporation, and not of the corporators, are held for the debts when the shares have been paid up. The bank can re-register at any time as a Limited Liability Company, and the personal interest of each member in the Society cannot exceed two hundred pounds. It is exempt from income tax and certain stamp duties; and special facilities are afforded for dealing with the funds of intestate members. The officers are bound to furnish security; and by an appeal to the Registrar, the bank's Board can speedily be taken to task in the event of anything proving amiss with the affairs of the bank. The Act containing these paternal provisions is intended to foster and protect such institutions; and it may be stated that its promoters prefer this mode of registration to that under the Limited Liability Acts, as more power is conferred on the directors under the latter system than under the Provident Acts, which secure and safeguard members' rights more effectually, and fetter more rigidly the powers of the Board of management. It is stipulated in the rules that no office-bearer can get a loan from the Society. This would have been a good rule for the directors of some banks that have failed. A strong point of difference between this bank and the Italian People's Banks is that, according to the Act under which it is registered, it cannot lend money against or on the security of its own shares, whereas the Italian banks do so. This legislation is intended to keep the capital intact in the interests of the depositor.

It may be worth while glancing for a little at the causes which have contributed to impede the movement for the establishment of People's Banks in this country. The great cause has been, without doubt, the ready means for investing money in small sums offered by the Post Office and other Savings Banks, along with the reasonable rate of interest allowed on all such placements. In this country, too, there is a vast amount of large capitalists against whom it would not be easy for working-men to contend; prejudices against ideas of continental origin are strong; and the English mind is not prone to change. Moreover, it is only within recent years that co-operation has reached any degree of development at all commensurate with the extent of the area on which it can act. There has been co-operation in everything affecting the employed in their relation to their employers, in cheapening the cost of the necessities of life, and to some extent in production; but none for the extension of credit to or the diffusion of money among the members of the industrial classes in connection with the operations of trade generally.

Now that a moneyed co-operation has been begun, it will be interesting to watch its further progress and ultimate development. There is room for such a movement, which need not interfere in the slightest with the work and usefulness of the larger banks.

As the new People's Bank proposes to imitate the Italian Co-operative People's Banks, we shall give a detailed account of these institutions, which have accomplished splendid results within a short period, and have helped to build up the best kind of Italian unity—namely, material comfort and prosperity.

There is much that is favourable to the growth of small banks in Italy—that land of the olive and the vine—notably the existence of so vast a mass of peasant proprietors, many of whom, till taken by the hand by these People's Banks, were wretchedly poor, being bled almost to death by usurers. In fact, there was a vast field for credit co-operation to work on, and what was better, a brotherly feeling to work with.

The last Foreign Office Report of 1887 contains valuable statistics, of which we shall present a summary narrating the condition of these banks down to 1885.

In the year 1865, the first People's Bank was founded; and on the 31st of December 1885—twenty years later—there were no fewer than 423 Co-operative Associations of credit and People's Banks in Italy, the rate of increase being such that 107 new banks were established in 1885 alone, chiefly in the south. The capital represented by these 423 Italian banks is £2,764,244 nominal capital—that is, capital which they have the power to create—£2,678,084 of subscribed capital, and £2,498,688 paid-up capital. From this statement, the capital would appear to be pretty well paid up. This capital has attracted deposits of savings to the extent of £6,684,344; and other deposits on accounts current for £5,026,880; while interest-bearing bonds for a definite term, and necessarily commanding a higher rate of interest, stand at £1,367,124.

Under the head of Advances by these banks, the principal item appears to be that for short bills—namely, three months' bills and under, which stands at £5,363,400; the bills over this currency being £3,004,924; and renewals, or, as they term them, 'prolongations,' £778,077. This yields the large sum of £9,146,400 as advanced in all on bills, which demonstrates that a bill as a commercial instrument enjoys as much repute in Italy as in this country.

The sum of £99,907 represents advances on pledge of goods, and shows an average of about £240 loan per bank. This is not considered a desirable form of security, but it could hardly fail to form part of what would be tendered in this way by the industrial class. On State Debt Securities a sum of £2,361,036 appears to have been lent; and on Accounts Current, £2,544,884. The other advances would seem to be on obligations of corporate bodies, Companies' debentures, mortgages, and private corporations. Small unsecured loans were given to private persons to the extent of £3910. It is a very creditable feature the apportioning thus of a small sum annually out of the profits towards what are called 'loans of honour' to the very poor. In the same balance-sheet of December 31, 1885, a sum appears on

both sides of £1,893,816, being value of deposits free and for safe keeping. It appears commendable to include this item in the banks' balance-sheet and books. These deposits must be securities in the banks' custody, and the object of entering them as obligations is to ensure that they shall not escape notice as obligations of the banks. This system might be recommended to other banks, as offering a check on the articles of value under their care.

As regards the membership of these banks, 195 establishments were represented by 139,949 persons, being an average of 717 shareholders to each bank. A classification of these members according to occupation gives an average of 24·28 to small farmers; 26·40 to small manufacturers and merchants; 8·57 to workmen; clerks, &c., 14·54. This shows the classes mainly benefited by these People's Banks to be the small agriculturist, merchant, and manufacturer. Of course, a working-man who starts in business for himself would no longer be reckoned as such. The value of these banks is proved by their elevating him into a fitting position and enabling him to reap the fruits of his toil.

The distribution of banks according to the Reports furnished by the same 195 establishments shows in the like year (1883) that the highest number of banking associations and members was in Lombardy; Venetia ranking next; then Emilia, the Marches and Umbria; and after them, Naples and Sicily.

With regard to the profits on the capital, the average amount earned by these banks is stated at nine per cent. per annum, 'with a tendency to increase.' This is a good record, if we consider the youth of many of the banks included in the return. The reserve fund is fed by sums carried to it from the annual profits, and its average amount in 1885 ranged from one-third to one-fourth of the amount of the capital stock of the banks. These profits are allocated in a methodical manner, and their distribution in 1882 may be taken as a sample. Dividends and interest on capital absorbed, 79·67; reserve fund, 10·65; Board of Directors, 1·51; gratuities to clerks and directors, 4·81; charitable, 1; surplus brought forward, 2·36. Before these net profits arise, the expenses of management are of course deducted. The salaries stand at an average of 35·20, and sundry expenses at 27·51 in 1882; while income tax alone is 31·01, and sundry taxes are 9·28 for same period. This cost of management is moderate; and a calculation on the figures makes it to be 8s. 9d. per cent. of deposits; the Scotch banks' average having been stated in the parliamentary inquiry of 1875 as about 21s. per cent.—a striking difference.

These Italian banks do not appear to be banks of issue; but a novel feature is observable in glancing at their published accounts during the period of their existence. In 1871 a sum of £598,232 *buoni di cassa*, or cash coupons, appeared to be in circulation, and stood then at the banks' debit. This sum gradually dwindled down to £11,680 in 1876, and in 1877 to nothing. The deposits in guarantee of this circulation were in 1871, £325,172, which diminished each year, till they reached £54,120 in 1875, and in 1876 nil. There is no doubt that these banks cause a demand to spring up for more currency, for they

give rise to a multiplicity of small transactions, whose settlement cannot be expressed by book-entries, but must take the form of notes or coin, which will readily pass from hand to hand. The presence of so many peasant-proprietor and small agricultural shareholders helps to swell the number of operations on this restricted scale.

Agriculture has drawn largely on the People's Banks in Italy, and the number of persons following this industry will be best seen in figures. In 1884, out of 208 banks, there were 44,431 agriculturist members, of whom 9173 were large farmers, 30,604 small farmers, and 4654 peasant labourers. In Southern Italy, People's Banks have been most developed, and have been mainly instrumental there in opening up agriculture, which stagnated formerly through the combined evils of misgovernment and usury. It may not be generally known that in this country there is much usury practised, the rate charged being ten per cent., and the security exacted being for the most part personal. These agricultural loans are well managed in Italy. As they are granted for six months with a prospect of renewal, the banks do not advance the amount until an equivalent bond can be floated by them for the same period, thus securing that their own money is not indefinitely tied up. These bonds are issued at four per cent., and sometimes at four and a half and five per cent. per annum.

The kinds of operations in distributing credit by the banks average as follows: Loans on shares or personal securities, 25·24; discount of bills, 50·34; advances upon stocks and goods, 14·25; payments in account current, 10·17. Of these, Lombardy and Calabria appear to have cultivated advances on stocks to the extent of 21·50 and 32·80 respectively; while bills in Sicily stood at 86·26 in the year 1881. Before loans are granted, one-half of the shares must be paid up. All applications must be approved by a special Discount Committee (*Comitato di Sconto*). A register is kept of each member and his maximum credit, the register-keepers being members elected by general assembly, namely, Directors, Controllers, and members of Discount Committee.

These banks have drawn up the most minute instructions regarding every point likely to arise in connection with their banking practice; and their balance-sheets in their fulness of information are models of what such statements should be. In short, their system of organisation is as nearly perfect as can be.

With reference to these loans, the question may be asked: What rates do these banks charge? In the words of the Report: 'They vary between four and a half per cent. and ten per cent., the higher ones prevailing in the central and southern regions, particularly in Basilicata, Puglia, and Sicily.' In addition, a commission is often charged from one-tenth to two per cent.

As regards the interest allowed, the rate on current accounts ranges from two to six per cent., the lowest rates being in Upper Italy, where four and a half per cent. sometimes obtains in Venetia and Emilia. The rate of interest on saving deposits does not alter much, being a little higher than on the other deposits, and usually from three to six per cent., an extra allowance being made in some special cases of thrift. Interest-bearing bonds yield three to six per cent. of

interest, while re-discounting is done at from four to five per cent. on an average.

It is stated by Signor Luzzati, the great founder of People's Banks, that these rates compare favourably with those of the Credit Unions of Germany, where the bank rate is much lower as a rule. He also points out how the tendency of the Italian banks has been to reduce interest and commission of late, thus cheapening the terms on which money can be raised.

The management of the People's Banks has been already alluded to as of an economical character. The paid employees are few in number, consisting of a Business Manager, Cashier, Book-keeper, and Auditor. The salary of a manager has been occasionally fixed at £60 as what is considered fair remuneration; the cashier at £52; and the bookkeeper at £44. A gratuity allowed out of the profits serves to quicken the zeal of the staff.

The shares of the banks have a maximum value of four pounds, while two-pound shares are recommended and generally adopted, only a few (thirty-one) being over that amount at the close of 1885. They thus reach the class for whom they were intended, and it may be stated incidentally that the small loans always get a preference over the large ones.

The object of these banks is avowedly to benefit production, and it may with truth be said that they are admirably fulfilling their purpose. They are now settled institutions enjoying public confidence, recommended by the government, and possessing a large and increasing membership. They have without doubt found a congenial sphere of operation, and they have built up from the very bottom of the social structure, till now a stately edifice has been reared as the work of their hands.

WHO DID IT?

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

By H. F. ABELL.

CHAPTER I.

'WHAT, sir! You have the face to come here and say that you want to absent yourself from the office to-day for the purpose of playing cricket! Once for all, Mr Richard, let me tell you'—

'Now, look here, uncle. What on earth's the good of working yourself into an apoplexy about nothing? We are playing Belford to-day. It's the great match of the season, and I must play, because they depend on me. There's no business doing, simply because all Colyton will be at the cricket-field; and I think it's awfully hard lines on a fellow that he can't get a little recreation now and then, especially when he works like a nigger and there's no need for it.'

'No need for it! Because a parcel of idle gossips talk about me as being a millionaire, and look upon you as a millionaire in prospective, you choose to think that there's no need for you to work as I have worked, and as your father did before you.—Don't you delude yourself into a belief in any such nonsense, and just remember that by a stroke of the pen'—

Scene—Old Jethro Seaton's study at Colyton Hall. Speakers—Old Jethro himself, a retired solicitor, reputed of great wealth, but as careful of every penny spent, and as careless of his own appearance, as if he were a pauper: and his nephew, Dick Ottery, a fine athletic young fellow of five-and-twenty, who with his sister Mary, now seated at her work in the window, had been left orphans at an early age under the guardianship of their uncle.

'I suppose you mean that you'd disinherit me?' retorted the young man.

'Yes, I do,' said Uncle Jethro emphatically.

'Which would be a peculiarly just and graceful proceeding, considering that my father helped you to make your money,' growled Dick. 'I suppose you'd leave it to that silent, sneaking fellow Claude Shute, who comes pottering and smelling about here after Mary?—I tell you what it is, uncle, I'm getting jolly sick of this sort of thing. Here am I condemned to drudge away at your office day after day from ten to six, just as if I was a poor banker's clerk, with hardly enough pocket-money to pay for beer and 'baccy, just because you won't be fair and treat me like a man, instead of like a boy.'

'Very well, then, sir,' roared the old gentleman, who, although he was seventy, bent, wizened, and gouty, had sound lungs. 'Go and make a way for yourself in the world, and see how admirably qualified you are to fight an uphill battle! Try it; you have my permission; I daresay I can fill your place at the office easily enough.'

'If it wasn't for Mary, I would,' replied Mr Dick, angrily. 'But I know that if I went, Claude Shute would be after her.'

The girl rose from her seat—a pretty girl, with a kind, rather a sad face, and laid her hand quietly on her infuriated brother's arm, saying: 'Do keep still, Dick, for my sake;' and added in a whisper: 'Go off to the cricket-field; uncle's bark is always worse than his bite.'

Dick would have perhaps taken her advice; but the old man's next speech stung him to the quick. 'Well, sir,' he said, 'and if Mr Shute does choose to pay his attentions to your sister, why shouldn't he? He's every bit as good as you are by birth, and a great deal better in breeding.'

'That sneaking, short-sighted muff as good as I am!' exclaimed the young man. 'Looks like a Socialist or a Moonlighter—that's what he looks like; and I daresay, if you took the trouble to inquire into his antecedents, you'd discover some rum truths.'

'Dick!' whispered Mary, 'remember you are insulting me, when you speak like that.'

'You're only a woman, and can't see much beyond your nose,' retorted her brother. 'Because that fellow has the gift of the gab and can quote poetry and all that tommyrot, you think he's a what d'ye call it—a paragon. If the man could do anything—even play lawn-tennis, the last refuge of duffers—he'd be worth something. I'm not going to have a muff like that for a brother-in-law, and I'll tell him so pretty plain if he comes humbugging about here much more.'

'Mary,' interposed her uncle, 'they have discovered an old Roman *via* on Bury Hill, and the Archaeological Association are going to inspect it.

I may try and get as far, so don't expect me in to lunch.'

'Very well, uncle,' said the girl; and having helped the old man with his overcoat, she accompanied him to the door and bade him good-bye.

Dick took no notice of the old gentleman's departure, but remained at the window, whistling and gazing out at the tangled wilderness which had once been a pleasant, formal, old-fashioned garden.

Mary linked her arm with his and said gently: 'Dick, I am really almost ashamed of you. Poor old uncle is touchy and peculiar, I know; but you might respect him better than to talk to him as you do.—Remember, if he hadn't taken us to his house after father's death, things would have been very different with us.'

'He was only doing his duty,' replied her brother. 'He has no kids of his own. Father helped him to make his fortune, so that I'm blessed if I see under what peculiar obligation we are to him.—Well, I'm not going to stand it, and that's positive.—And just look here, Mary—I'm awfully fond of you and all that; but that fellow Shute is not coming here to spoon you.'

'Surely that is my business, Dick?'

'No, it isn't,' replied her brother. 'Uncle thinks that because he himself is learned and fond of reading, everybody else with the same tastes must be worth something. I know better, and I don't trust Mr Shute. I like a fellow who makes a little more noise, and your quiet mysterious men always make me suspicious.'

'Well, I can tell you that you are wofully mistaken about Claude.'

'I may be; that has to be proved,' answered Dick.—'And now, it's late, and I must be off to the field.' So saying, he hurried away, to reappear in a few minutes clad in flannels, and went out by the back door, for the cricket-field adjoined Jethro Seaton's property, and a path led through the tangled deserted garden to a door in the wall which opened on to it.

In truth, poor Mary Ottery's life was by no means happy and easy. Old Jethro Seaton loved her dearly, and was kind to her; but he required a great deal of loving in return, and translated the most trifling neglect and the most unwitting forgetfulness into want of appreciation and affection. Altercations between him and Dick were of daily occurrence, and, in spite of all the girl's efforts at mediation, seemed to get more bitter as the opponents respectively grew older. But worse than this by far was the extraordinary and, to Mary, unaccountable dislike entertained by her brother towards Claude Shute. Shute was certainly not one of those men who win popularity amongst their own sex, or who captivate the feminine eye so easily as do men of the hearty, true-Briton stamp of Dick. He was ordinarily a quiet, reserved, silent young man, although upon occasion he could blaze forth into a tropical fury which seemed suitable to his dark complexion and his generally oriental appearance. He had never feathered an oar, nor dropped a goal, nor fielded a ball in his life; but Mary knew him as a quiet, unassuming, studious English gentleman, and loved him accordingly—partly because perhaps his own nature harmonised

better with hers than would that of her brother's typical men—fine animals, but little else.

Dick Ottery had been gone about an hour, and Mary was alone in the gaunt, half-furnished old house, when Claude Shute came in. The girl greeted him joyfully, but she noted at once that he was sad.

'I am glad you are here alone, Mary,' he said. 'I am hipped and sick at heart, and I made up my mind that I would come and make a last appeal to you to put me out of my suspense. Will you decide my fate here now one way or the other? I have waited patiently, as you bade me wait two years ago; but hope deferred, you know, maketh the heart sick.'

'You know that what you call your fate, Claude, has long been decided,' replied Mary; 'but if you mean, am I ready to marry you, as I have promised, I cannot answer you as you would wish.'

'Are you still, then, afraid of the bulldog?'

'No; I am not afraid of him; but my mission in this house is to try and keep peace as long as I can; and if I were to leave it as your wife, such mischief would ensue between my uncle and my brother, that I should never cease to reproach myself for having practically withdrawn the only influence which might have prevented it.'

'But, Mary, surely it is not just that our happiness should be blighted simply because an obstinate old gentleman and a hot-headed young one do not choose to agree? We might wait ten years longer before our opportunity would come.'

'If I can wait, Claude, surely you can. But I do not think that it need be so long as that. Dick may marry, or—God forbid that you should think I am calculating upon such an event!—or my uncle might die. Remember, he is very old, and every month almost increases his ailments, although he does get about wonderfully. If Dick married, he would have concerns enough of his own to attend to without bothering about ours. If uncle should die, Dick would be a rich man, and would soon make Dolly Copplestone his wife. I can wait, Claude.'

Her lover was silent. 'Mary,' he said at length, 'do you think that your brother thinks I am afraid of him?'

'I daresay he does, Claude. You know he cannot associate an unathletic, unsporting man with any of the ruder virtues, such as pluck, hardihood, and so forth.—Why do you ask?'

'Because I would very soon show him that I am not,' replied Claude quietly; 'and it is this as much as anything—this notion that he thinks I am afraid of him—that makes me wonder if I am acting like a man in only coming to see you when I know he is out of the way.'

'No, no, Claude; you are doing so at my request.—Dick would be sure to insult you; and I do know that you have a temper, although I never feel it; you would fire out; there would be a regular row, and matters would be worse than they were before.'

'Well, Mary, you are generally right; at least I think so. But it is weary work waiting, and the cause for the necessity is to me rather humiliating. I wish your brother would marry Dolly Copplestone and take himself off. It's very hard for the happiness of two people to be dependent

on the whims of a prejudiced man. I've never done your brother any harm, and I wish none to come to him; and because I don't see the fun of running about in the sun after one kind of leather ball, or of rolling about in the mud after another, or of blistering my hands with an oar, or of getting my face knocked out of shape by a boxing-glove, he doesn't think I'm a fit candidate for the hand of his sister. So I must go on waiting either until he marries, or until'—

'Only for a while, Claude. Remember, that all things come to him who waits.—And now, will you mind if I go away and dress? I promised Dick faithfully that I would come on the ground to see Colyton beat Belford, and besides one meets friends on these occasions whom one rarely sees at other times.'

'Of course I don't mind, Mary,' said Claude; 'anything which makes you happy pleases me. But I'm fearfully depressed, and I don't seem to care for anything now.'

'That's very foolish,' said the girl, laughing. 'Faint heart—you know the rest.'

'I'm not faint-hearted; on the contrary, I seem to long to do something startling, so as to show Mr Richard that I'm not the poor lump being he takes me for.—Where is Mr Seaton?'

'He talked of going to Bury Hill with the antiquaries, but he changes his mind often,' replied Mary.

Claude stood for a moment, looked at his watch, embraced Mary, and left the house; whilst Mary dashed up-stairs to attire herself as became one who was reputed the prettiest girl and the best dresser in South Ruddyshire.

ORANGES AND ORANGE-BLOSSOM.

CONSIDERABLE confusion has arisen as to the precise date of the introduction of the orange into Europe. On the one hand, many writers assert that it has been known from the time of the Romans; while others as confidently allege that its importation can only be traced back to a comparatively recent period. Gibbon himself has fallen into the former error, and in the second chapter of his *Decline and Fall* includes the orange among the fruits cultivated in the Roman gardens. The *Aurea malo*, however, of the Latin writers were certainly not oranges; they may have been citrons, or were possibly nothing more than a light-coloured apple, similar to the golden pippin of our own time. Other authorities, without going back so far, state that the orange was imported soon after the Christian era, that it was growing in Italy in the fourth century, and was seen by the Crusaders, during their various expeditions, in Palestine. On the other hand, we are assured that it was unknown in any country north of the Mediterranean previous to the fifteenth century, and that all statements to the contrary are founded upon a mistaken interpretation of the facts.

These apparent contradictions have their origin in a lack of discrimination between the sweet and the bitter varieties of the fruit. The latter, which is the original stock and from which the former is derived by cultivation, is a native of India and China. Sir Joseph Hooker found it

growing wild in several districts south of the Himalaya, and it has also been noticed by Royle and other botanists. From India the Arabs obtained it in very early times—probably soon after the destruction of the Roman empire—and after spreading over Africa, it was introduced by the Moors into Spain, and thence made its way gradually over France and the neighbouring countries. The word *aurantium*, from which we get our word 'orange,' first appears in the low Latin, and is itself a corruption of the Sanskrit term *nagrunja*. The Arabian physicians had a high opinion of its medicinal qualities, an opinion which was subsequently shared by their European colleagues; and in the middle ages, the bitter orange occupied a high place in the pharmacopœia of all civilised practitioners. The sweet orange seems to have been first brought from China by Vasco da Gama and his companions in 1498, although, again, there is considerable uncertainty on this point.

There can be little doubt that the sweet orange is an offshoot of the bitter variety, obtained by careful cultivation, and that it was originally the Chinese gardeners to whom we are indebted for it. In fact, the connection between the two is of the closest description; and a number of experiments made by different observers distinctly show that, unless certain exigencies of soil and climate be satisfied, the sweet orange is very liable to 'cast back' to its original rusticity. Galesio indeed alleges that no such thing occurs, and that he never met with an instance of a 'bitter orange from the seed of sweet oranges, or of a sweet orange-tree from the seeds of bitter oranges.' These results are, however, exactly contrary to the experience of many other experimentalists.

The precise period when orange-trees were first brought into England is uncertain, but it was in all probability some time during the reign of Elizabeth. Their introduction, like that of many other things, has been ascribed to Sir Walter Raleigh. The only foundation, however, for this tradition would seem to be the fact that some of the earliest trees known in England were cultivated at Beddington, in Surrey, the owner of which place, Sir Francis Carew, had married Raleigh's niece. A part of those at Hampton Court are also said to have been among the earliest importations, a few of them, according to the assertion of the gardeners, being more than three hundred years old. That the orange-tree frequently attains a great age is certain; and it is a well-ascertained fact that many of those which are known to be at least a hundred years old appear to be in their prime, and go on bearing long after that age. It is even alleged that in the Azores there are trees which have produced fruit after their third century. We may take it, however, that as a general rule the orange is at its best up to a hundred years, and after that time begins gradually to decay.

It was during the reign of James I. that oranges were first imported into this country as articles of commerce; but it may be presumed that the quantity brought in was small and the quality poor. In any case, they were looked upon as expensive and fashionable luxuries, and cultivated with as much care for the table as are hothouse grapes in the present day. Every great house had its orangery, under which the trees were

placed, either growing in tubs or planted in the ground. These orangeries—of which many examples still remain, as, for instance, at Kensington Palace and at Kew—were merely greenhouses on a large scale, the glass resting against a high wall, so as to give a minimum height of some fifteen or twenty feet. It was from these that for more than a century the chief supply of oranges was derived; and country gentlemen vied with each other in the excellence of the fruit and the quantity produced.

On their first introduction into England, oranges seem to have been sold for about eightpence each, a sum equal to more than a shilling in the present day. By the middle, however, of the seventeenth century the ordinary price had come down to sixpence, as we know from Mr Pepys, who makes several doleful observations on the subject. He first 'saw them grow,' he tells us, in 1666 'at my Lord Brooke's at Hackney,' where some of them were 'green, some half, some a quarter, and some full ripe on the same tree; and one fruit of the same tree do come a year or two after the other. I pulled off a little one by stealth, the man being mightily curious of them, and eat it; and it was just as other little, green, small oranges are, as big as half the end of my little finger.' What pleasure Mr Pepys could find in eating 'little green oranges' the size of his finger-end, or what he expected the flavour to be, he does not tell us; but such a petty larceny seems unworthy of a gentleman dressed, as he proceeds to inform us, for the first time, in his 'new black stuff bombazin suit.' A year or two later he became better acquainted with the price, if not with the taste, of oranges, for, in March 1668, he went 'to the Duke of York's house to see the new play, where the house was, it not being one o'clock, very full. But my wife and Deb. being there before, with Mrs Pierce and Corbet and Betty Turner, they made me room, and there I sat, it costing me eight shillings upon them in oranges at sixpence apiece.' The same price is mentioned two months later, when, at the same theatre, 'there happened one thing which vexed me, which is that the orange-woman did come in the pit and challenge me for twelve oranges which she delivered by my order at a late play at night, in order to give to some ladies in a box, which was wholly untrue; but yet she swore it to be true. But, however, I did deny it, and did not pay her; but, for quiet, did buy four shillings worth of oranges of her at sixpence each.' By the commencement of the succeeding century, oranges had evidently much decreased in price, and were sold, as now, in the streets.

The usual price of an orange throughout the last century seems to have varied from threepence to fourpence, a rate which was high enough to make the home cultivation of the fruit still worth the expense.

During the early years of the present century, orange cultivation in England went altogether out of fashion and gave place to that of grapes. It is, however, difficult to see the reasons for this entire change of taste. One would have supposed that, notwithstanding the diminished value of the fruit, orange-trees were still worth growing for the sake of ornament. A more beautiful plant, or rather shrub, does not exist, and nothing can be handsomer than an orange-tree in the month of April

or May, when the white blossoms, and the yellow fruit of the preceding year, stand out against the vivid dark green of the foliage. On the Continent, it is better appreciated. In France and Germany, no country-house or garden of any pretensions is supposed to be complete without its set of orange-trees in their tubs, which are placed out in summer and taken in again for the winter. In the Tuileries gardens, as every visitor to Paris will remember, many hundreds are kept, some of which are said to be over three centuries old. The only place in England, however, where the custom is still maintained seems to be Hampton Court Palace, where also, as we have seen, a very venerable age is ascribed to many of the trees. The continental gardens are still supplied to a great extent, as were our own in the last century, by the growers of the Riviera or the neighbourhood of Genoa. As it is an extremely tedious process to raise the plants from seed, they are usually imported when several years old, and thus, by the time they reach more northern latitudes, have become somewhat expensive luxuries. In South Germany, where they are perhaps cheaper than elsewhere, an average price for a moderately sized tree is about six pounds of our money; but, of course, everything depends upon the shape and size, a 'scraggy' specimen being sold for much less, while an exceptionally fine one will be rated accordingly. There is, however, one spot in the British Isles where orange-trees are still grown, and what is more, are grown in the open air, and that is Salcombe, in Devonshire, not far from Torquay. Here they are planted in the open ground, as in Italy or Spain; and trees are pointed out to the visitor which, it is stated, have withstood the rigours of English winters for more than a hundred years.

The blood-orange is a mere variety of the sweet orange obtained by cultivation, and appears first to have been raised by the Spanish gardeners in the Philippine Islands, from the capital of which (Manila) it, together with the well-known cigars, formed at one time one of the chief articles of export. On its first appearance in Europe it excited a considerable sensation; and in the last century, very high prices were demanded for the trees which bore the wonderful fruit. None, however, now come to us from Manila, our supply being derived almost entirely from Malta, where great pains and attention are bestowed upon their cultivation. It was for a long time supposed, and indeed the idea is not yet quite extinct, that blood-oranges were produced by the grafting of the orange with the pomegranate; but there is not the slightest foundation for this belief.

Of the immense numbers of oranges yearly imported into England, the greater part come from Portugal, Spain, Sicily, and the Mediterranean countries. The best, however, if we except the newly introduced Jaffa oranges, are still brought from St Michael, the largest of the Azores. They have the peculiarity of containing few or no pips, and their cultivation forms one of the chief industries of the island. The average annual yield of each tree is from seven hundred to a thousand; but some old trees produce much more, and continue to bear, it is said, for two or even three centuries. In the year 1878, four hundred thousand boxes, each containing about four hundred oranges, were exported to England; but, as

already stated, these hundred and sixty millions form but a small part of the total quantity consumed in the British Isles. It is evident, however, that the whole sum, if reckoned out, would present such an array of milliards as to convey no very clear idea to the ordinary intelligence.

To some people, the chief charm of the orange-tree lies in its beautiful and fragrant blossoms, and it seems strange that it is not more cultivated in our hothouses on this account alone. Nothing can be more delicious than the perfume of the orange-flower, although it is possible, according to the opinion of some over-sensitive individuals, to have too much of it. There are, for instance, places in Spain where it certainly is rather overpowering; and at Seville, in the month of April, the whole air is laden for several weeks with the strong pungent odour. To most of the visitors to that picturesque city this can only be a delightful experience; but there are others who allege that the intensity of the scent, or rather perhaps its persistency, night and day for so long, produces headache, and even nausea. Of the ubiquitous blossoms themselves, little use is made in Spain. In some of the convents, the nuns employ a certain quantity in the manufacture of orange-flower water, which they dispose of at a ridiculously low and merely nominal price; but which, by the time it has been retailed in England at a moderate profit of several hundred per cent., becomes almost as dear as an ordinary perfume. At Nice, however, and along the Riviera, precisely in that region which in the last century supplied our gardeners with their orange-trees, a considerable trade has sprung up in orange-blossoms. They are despatched in boxes to all parts of Europe for the purpose of being fashioned into bridal wreaths, or the wreaths themselves are sent ready made up, at prices varying from a few francs to almost a small fortune. As regards the latter point, the time of the year of course makes a considerable difference, the supply being attended with more difficulty in autumn and winter than in the spring, and is effected, it is to be supposed, by a system of forcing similar to that which enables our florists to produce winter roses and lilies of the valley at Christmas.

The custom of wearing orange-blossom at weddings is of comparatively recent date with us. It came to us, like most other female fashions in dress, from the French, who in their turn had derived it from Spain. In the latter country it had long obtained, and is said to have been originally of Moorish origin. There is, however, an old Spanish legend which gives a different account of its introduction. According to this, soon after the importation of the orange-tree by the Moors, one of the Spanish kings had a specimen of which he was very proud, and of which the French ambassador was extremely desirous to obtain an offshoot. The gardener's daughter was aware of this, and in order to provide herself with the necessary dowry to enable her to marry her lover, she obtained a slip, which she sold to the ambassador at a high price. On the occasion of her wedding, in recognition of her gratitude to the plant which had procured her happiness, she bound in her hair a wreath of orange-blossom, and thus inaugurated the fashion

which has become universal. As the orange was introduced into Spain at a very early period by the Moors, this legend sufficiently establishes the antiquity of the custom as far as that country is concerned, although many centuries elapsed before it spread over the rest of Europe. Up to forty or fifty years ago, it was the practice for ladies to be married in hats or bonnets; and the fashion of dispensing with the bonnet seems first to have established itself after the example set by her present Majesty on the occasion of her wedding in 1840. 'Her dress,' says the *Annual Register*, 'was a rich white satin trimmed with orange-flowers, and on her head she wore a wreath of the same blossoms, over which, but not so as to conceal her face, a beautiful veil of Honiton lace was thrown.' For some years after this, however, bonnets were still often worn at weddings, the orange-flower wreath, natural or artificial, being placed on them, and not directly on the head. It is probably not more than thirty years ago that they were finally dispensed with and the wreath and veil substituted. Even in Germany, the time-honoured chaplet of myrtle, to which there are so many allusions in literature and poetry, has now been discarded in favour of orange-flowers; and there seems little reason to doubt that this custom, now become universal, and pretty and appropriate in itself, will continue to be followed for a long time to come.

UNEXPECTED ANSWERS.

'I WOULD like my bill paid,' said a tailor to an impecunious customer.—'Do you not owe any one anything?' asked the debtor.—'No, sir; I am thankful to say I do not.'—'Then you can afford to wait,' was the answer as the customer walked away.

A country clergyman was impressing upon his gardener the importance of his giving due attention to his utterances in the pulpit, and told him to provide himself with a pencil and paper to take notes of any passages which he particularly dwelt upon. Next Sunday morning he was glad to perceive John busily following his advice. After the service he accosted him on his way home and asked to see his notes. After some demur John produced his paper. To the clergyman's astonishment, it was scrawled all over with unintelligible words and sentences. 'Why, John, this is all nonsense,' he said, somewhat indignantly.—'Deed, sir, to tell the honest truth, I thoct that a' the time ye was preaching!'

An Irish girl who was servant to a lady was complimented by her before company on the elaborate ornamentation of a large pie at dinner. 'Why, Bridget, you are quite an artist. How did you manage to do this so beautifully?' she inquired, thinking to rally her for the company's amusement.—'Indade, it was meself that did it, mum,' said Biddy with a malicious grin. 'Isn't it purty, mum? I did it with your false teeth, mum!'

A notorious miser was once presented by a clergyman with a pamphlet on almsgiving. Seeing him some time afterwards, he asked him what he thought of it. 'It's very fine, sir.'—'Well, I trust you will act up to its teachings,' said the minister. 'You would perceive the great necessity of charity being freely given.'—'So

much so,' answered the old niggard, 'I have a great mind to turn beggar myself.'

An English nobleman travelling incognito in the United States and wishing to enjoy his trip free from all the strict etiquette of his life at home, was one day annoyed by a negro waiter loitering about the room, although he had several times told him he did not require him to wait table. At last he peremptorily ordered him to leave the room.—'Excuse me, sah,' said Sambo, with a look of immense importance.—'excuse me, but I'se 'sponsible for de silver.'—This same nobleman relates that while sleeping in a remote Western hotel after a long day's journey, he was awakened early in the morning by a black waiter. Feeling rather tired, he went to sleep again, but in a short time was again awakened by the bed-clothes being quietly pulled off.—'What do you mean, you black rascal?' he indignantly demanded. 'Can't you let me sleep in peace?'—'Guess you can sleep as long as you like, sah,' replied Cuffy, 'only I must hab de sheet anyhow, 'cause dey're waitin' down-stairs for de big white tablecloth!'

A gentleman recently married was continually expatiating on the beauties and good qualities of his better-half, much to the disgust of his friends, who were somewhat dubious of the lady being such a paragon of perfection. One day, after listening to a big dose of fulsome praises about the lady, a gentleman remarked that it was quite right his friend should be blessed with the hand of such a treasure.—'How do you make that out?' asked he. 'What special right had I to her?'—'By the law of nations, of course, as the first discoverer.'

In a certain town in the north of Scotland there lived a barber who was somewhat addicted to frequent bouts of drinking. One morning after a deep boose he was shaving the parish minister, who, observing his hand was somewhat unsteady, and that he had drawn blood once or twice, solemnly remarked: 'James, my friend, it's a very sad thing to see a man a victim to strong drink.'—'Deed, it's that, sir,' complacently answered the barber; 'it's a very bad thing, and mak's the skin unco tender.'

'Well, Pat,' said a victorious general to a soldier after the battle, 'what did you do to help us to win this great victory?'—'Do, yer honour? Why, I walked bowldly up to one of the inimy and cut off his fut.'—'His foot! Why didn't you cut off his head?'—'Ah, sure, yer honour, an' that was off already.'

An American Professor attempting to explain to a little girl the manner in which the lobster casts his shell when he has outgrown it, remarked: 'What do you do when you get too big for your clothes? You throw them aside, don't you?'—'O no; we let out the tucks!'

A confirmed bachelor happening to see a lady looking at a picture representing a man on his knees before a beautiful woman, indignantly exclaimed: 'Before I would bend my knee to a woman, I would go and hang myself. Do you not think it would be the best thing to do, madam?'—'It would certainly be the best for the woman,' was the sarcastic reply.

Dr Abernethy was once called in to attend a man who had had a somewhat stormy altercation with his better-half, and found the poor man with his face all bleeding and marked with the points

of her finger-nails. The worthy Doctor could not help remonstrating with the woman upon her conduct. 'Madam,' he said, 'are you not ashamed of yourself, treating your husband like this, your husband, who is the head of the house—the head of all—in fact, *your* head, madam?'—'Well, Doctor,' fiercely returned the virago, 'and am I not at liberty to scratch my own head?'

Having purchased some butter from an Irish-woman, the merchant on weighing the lumps found them all light weight, and challenged her with trying to cheat him.—'Shure, it's yer own fault if they are light,' said Biddy; 'it's yer own fault, sir; for wasn't it a pound o' soap I bought here that I had in the other end o' the scales when I weighed 'em!'

'You'll grow up very ugly, Daisy, if you make faces.'—'Will I, auntie? Did you make faces when you were a little girl?'

At an examination at the College of Surgeons, a candidate was asked: 'What would you do if a man was blown up with gunpowder?'—'Wait till he came down,' was the somewhat cool reply.—'Very good,' continued the Professor. 'And suppose I was to kick you for such an impertinent answer, what muscles would I put in motion?'—'The flexors and extensors of my arm; for I would at once knock you down.'

A clergyman reprimanding one of his church members for quarrelling so frequently and loudly with his wife as to be a source of continual annoyance to the neighbours, remarked that the Scriptures declared that man and wife were one. 'Ay, that may be,' answered the delinquent; 'but if you were to pass when we were at it, you'd think there were a score of us.'

An auctioneer in Edinburgh of the name of Martin was one day selling some books, and not being much of a scholar, he made some awkward attempts to unravel the titles of some foreign works amongst the number. At last a French work was put up, and a young swell, thinking to have a laugh at the auctioneer's expense, asked him to read the title again, as he did not quite understand it.—'Oh!' said Martin, 'it's something about manners, and that's what neither you nor me has ower muckle o'.'

Fénelon, who often bothered Richelieu for subscriptions to charitable purposes without any success, was one day telling him that he had just seen a capital portrait of him. 'And I suppose you would ask it for a subscription?' said Richelieu with a sneer.—'Oh no; I saw there was no chance—it was too like you.'

Doctor passing a stone-cutter's yard: 'Good morning, Mr Jones. Hard at work, I see. I suppose you finish your gravestones as far as "In Memory of," and then wait for some one to die, eh?'—'Why, yes; unless somebody's sick and you're doctoring 'em; then I keep right on.'

'You don't love me now, Tom, as you used to,' said a shrewish wife to her dejected husband; 'when we were married first, you often declared you were so fond of me you could eat me up.'—'Yes, my dear,' was the melancholy rejoinder; 'and I've been sorry ever since I didn't do it.'

A pompous but bald-headed merchant who had amassed a considerable fortune was continually informing people of the fact that he was a 'self-made man.' 'I say with pride, Mr Blank,' he

began to a stranger one day, 'I am a self-made man. Nobody helped me. I made myself'—'Well, well,' interrupted the listener, 'when you were about it, why the dickens did you not put a little more hair on the top of your head?'

As I and my wife, at the window one day,
Stood watching a man with a monkey,
A cart came along with a 'broth of a boy,'
Who was driving a stout little donkey.

To my wife I then spoke by way of a joke:
'There's a relation of yours in that carriage.'
To which she replied, as the donkey she spied:
'Ah, yes, a relation—by marriage.'

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN EGYPT.

AN interesting collection of antiquities has lately been on exhibition in London, consisting of the various objects brought to light by Mr Flinders Petrie during his recent excavations in Egypt at Hawera, on the site of the ancient Labyrinth described by Herodotus. These objects are not so very ancient—that is, they belong to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, which, although dating back to about 300 B.C., is quite modern according to the Egyptian standard. Nevertheless, to many people these relics, which speak so eloquently of the manners and customs of the Romans in Egypt, from about the birth of Christ to 200 A.D., and of the preceding Ptolemies, better known to us historically than their ancient predecessors the Pharaohs, will be of more interest than those of far greater antiquity.

The first thing which strikes us is a series of portraits on wood, so perfect and fresh in appearance, that it is difficult to believe that they have been buried for nearly two thousand years; yet such is the case, for these portraits represent Romans interred during the Ptolemaic period. It is singular that the Romans in Egypt should have adopted the mode of burial of the Egyptians; but the faces and dress of these portraits are undoubtedly Roman, although they covered the heads of mummies beautifully and elegantly swathed in the numerous linen bandages peculiar to Egyptian burials, but more artistically arranged than was common in the more ancient mummies, for the crossings of the bandages form a beautiful honeycomb pattern of extraordinary symmetry, each panel finished with a gilt band. The board upon which the portrait was painted was bandaged in skilfully over the head, and thus the relatives might have the mournful pleasure of contemplating the features of the deceased whenever they pleased; and certainly no artist even of modern times could have more faithfully portrayed the individual than did the portrait-painter of two thousand years ago. They are evidently what are usually called 'speaking' likenesses. There is one of an old man, who might have been a general, or one of the Cæsars, in his white toga, every line and furrow of the face carefully delineated; whilst several of the ladies, and particularly two young girls, might be exhibited as likenesses of professional beauties of the present day. The material employed for these durable portraits was a wax medium, which has been employed with excellent effect in modern times, and might be used more frequently with advantage. The beautiful views of Greece in the *Neue Pinakothek* at Munich,

executed by order of the old King Ludwig, are of this kind; and we believe some of the pictures in the Houses of Parliament, Westminster, are also painted on wax.

The mummies with the portraits were generally deposited in unadorned wooden coffins with movable lids. These coffins, which are not made of slabs of wood, but of small pieces neatly joined, are raised a few inches from the ground upon four short feet; and beside them were placed the four canopic vases with animal heads, containing the viscera, such as are always found in Egyptian tombs. Several of these jars are exhibited by Mr Petrie, as well as some of the flint knives used ceremonially, long after the invention of iron, by the embalmers in making the necessary incisions in the body.

There are also to be seen funeral wreaths, one still adorning the head of a mummy, made of flowers, the species of which are still distinguishable; wheat, barley, and other seeds; grasses and leaves of shrubs. Still more curious are a number of toys, some of which are almost identical with those prized by boys and girls of to-day. There are spinning-tops for the boys, jointed dolls for the girls, and a rag-doll for baby; a wooden bird on wheels, and other animals, including a crocodile; a toy bedstead, and a sedan-chair in terra-cotta containing a lady, who can be moved at pleasure.

The domestic arts are represented by fragments of beautiful embroideries; a set of bobbins such as are still used for lace-making; a bundle of leather-workers' needles and awl; spindles, and a dress made of coarse linen, with two broad purple bands inserted, just as represented in some of the portraits—the purple bands probably denoting the rank of the wearer. There is also a pair of short knitted socks made to tie round the ankle, and with a separate division for the great toe; this, of course, was for the convenience of the wearer of sandals; but it is amusing to find that the 'fad' of the hygienists of the Health Exhibition is at least as ancient as the Christian era, only the Egyptians had a reason for separated toes, which those who wear boots have not.

Perhaps one of the most interesting of the objects discovered is a lens of thick glass resembling the bull's-eye of a lantern, but suggesting the possibility that the Egyptians might have known more of the magnifying power of glass than we give them credit for, and may even have possessed telescopes.

A large case at one end of the room in the Egyptian Hall, in which Mr Flinders Petrie's discoveries are appropriately exhibited, contains a beautiful collection of Egyptian antiquities of an older date than those we have been describing—hundreds of those well-known curious little images of gods in blue porcelain, jewels of gold, necklaces, rings, bracelets, and ear-rings, among which we noticed some fine pearls; numerous scarabæi, and other curious and interesting objects, serving to show the high development of art in Egypt at a very early period.

Where shall we look for the beginnings of that art? In Mr Flinders Petrie's collection we see it as it existed in Roman times; in the British Museum we can trace it back into far remote pre-historic times; but it seems even then as vigorous, and in many respects as perfect, as in the more

modern period. Yet buried beneath the magnificent ruins of the cities and tombs of the Pharaohs, and even incorporated with the tufa out of which these tombs were constructed, are found rude flint implements, telling of a time when all this magnificent civilisation had no existence. Where shall we look for the transition stage, the period between the users of flint implements and the builders of the Pyramids? and how shall we estimate the time which has elapsed since the valley of the Nile was first occupied by man?

The recent discoveries of Mr Flinders Petrie and fellow-workers have done much to elucidate doubtful points in Egyptian history. We are daily discovering proofs of the truthfulness of the writings of Herodotus. Lake Mœris and the Labyrinth are no longer myths; the Shepherd kings have been made known to us; and the Pharaohs of Joseph and of Moses seem to be identified. Who shall say how much more of the hidden story written on the stones and on the tombs of ancient Egypt may be revealed to us by the zealous explorers, of whom Mr Flinders Petrie is chief? Let us hope that the British Museum may be enriched by these recent finds.

D E A D.

A QUAIN old cottage was on a hill,
With latticed panes and a doorway low;
(I know not whether it be there still,
For this was many years ago).
And a lady was singing there all the day—
Singing, and moving to and fro;
But now she is under the damp brown clay
(For this was many years ago).

And there, the latticed panes outside,
The roses bloomed all white and red;
Oh, they were sweet in the summer-tide,
But in the winter they were dead.
The roses died in the winter cold . . .
It must be winter now, I know,
For the lady lies in the clinging mould
(But this was many years ago).

Then she would sing there, day by day,
And one would come over the hills at eve,
And oft they would pause in the little doorway,
Those dreamers of dreams that Love can weave.
And oft they would stand on the green hill's brow
When the winds were hushed and the sun was low—
What does he think of that old time now?
(For this was many years ago).

'The red-rose-bloom was on her cheek,
The summer sunshine in her hair;
And she is dead! . . . she does not speak,
But her eyes—they follow me everywhere!
And most, when falls the sombre night,
And wavering shadows blacker grow,
They haunt me with their mournful light—
A dream of many years ago!'

PAUL WALSH.

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OXFORD PASS SCHOOLS.

'GREATS.'

AFTER the triumph of having at last actually passed 'Mods' (see *Chambers's Journal*, 14th May 1887) has a little subsided, our typical undergraduate, already in his third year, sees quite new prospects opening before him. That long and verdant path, strewn with roses, which awaited his willing steps after 'Smalls,' has now become a thing of the past; few and evil are his remaining days at Oxford: like Macbeth's witches, when he stirs his caldron, he perceives in it only 'Double, double toil and trouble.' As long as Mods occupied his gaze, the hugeness of the obstacle filled his horizon, and prevented him from looking beyond; but now that it is removed, he suddenly and to his amazement perceives that while on the one hand the greater part of his life at the 'varsity is over, on the other the major portion of his work there has still to be performed. Poor creature! He had imagined that when once Mods was passed most of his labours would be finished. On the contrary, he finds that they had little more than begun. He is now the proud possessor of two *testamurs*; but three more must be his ere he can claim that magic B.A. degree which does for a 'varsity man what the stamp of the royal mint effects for a sovereign.

Until two years ago, indeed, one more trial remained which had to be undergone by all alike—by the professional 'pot-hunter'—that is, the constant seeker after university rewards and aids to learning, who commences his career by getting a scholarship at Balliol, and finishes it by landing the Craven; and by the humble denizen of 'Teddy Hall' or 'The Tavern,' who considers six years a very reasonable time to consume in attaining to the status of a Bachelor of Arts. Appropriately to the history and destination of man, this meeting-place of manifold intelligences was theological, not to say polemical, in its character. Theoretically, it constituted one of the two

great divisions of the Second Public Examination; practically, it was the slightest and easiest of all Oxford schools.

Although the hand of change has laid its ruthless clutch upon 'Rudiments,' or 'Pass Divinity,' as it was indifferently termed, insomuch that since 1886 it has ranked merely as one amongst the many pass schools out of which the Passman can select the fatal three, it is still worth while to dwell for a moment upon its departed glories, before they vanish for ever into the limbo of a forgotten past.

The time required to prepare for this tremendous ordeal used to be differently estimated. A testamur in Moderations having been actually secured, it becomes the painful task of the being whose fortunes we follow to prepare himself for his other three pass schools. It is to be noted that he is no longer the lighthearted mortal he was of yore; a change has come over the spirit of the scene, and the realities of existence have begun to press heavily upon him. The Oxford dun, like Pale Death himself, knocks impartially at the doors of the rich—who have exceeded their allowance—as well as at those of the poor. All the extravagances of former days are now beginning to bear their acrid fruit; every post brings a bill; every knock may announce the appearance of a furious creditor. Bad enough it often is for the comparatively wealthy; but for the poor! Who can describe the agony of the ruined man, who feels that the whole of his previous history is one long record of waste—waste of time, waste of opportunity, waste of life! Too often he has the additional pain of knowing that he has destroyed by his mad prodigality the very home that nourished him. Parents and sisters are impoverished; he himself is compelled to expiate by a lifetime of drudgery and indigence the drivelling idiocy of his earlier years. It is evident that to such a man as this, to obtain his Degree is often almost literally a question of life or death. If he succeed, there are possibilities which may serve in some measure to mitigate the punishment

he has brought upon himself. If he fail—but here we cannot follow him—'tis too bitter! Enough has been told to show that the Passman is likely to toil for his Finals in a fashion very different from that which he formerly pursued. He palters no longer; all he can do he does, but, unfortunately, that is not very much. He infinitely desires now, probably, to 'get through' with all possible speed; but he is informed that he has at present no chance of success. By far the most difficult of the fences he has still to negotiate is Pass Greats. This school may be considered as representative in some sort of the old 'Great Go,' a kind of relief, or survival from, a former state of things: 'The last rose of summer left blooming alone.' It is indeed at once the most venerable and the stiffest of all Oxford Pass Exams., perhaps the only one which may be said to really demand some little exercise of the higher intellectual faculties. It is now that the Passman (as a rule) gets his sole glimpse into the upper regions of education. From the foot of the mountain he, as it were, looks up, and sees peak after peak piled high above him, each more inaccessible than the last. With awe he gazes, and at last turns away, feeling that 'the quest is not for him.'

At this point in their progress many men bid a long farewell to the classical pursuits which have occupied so many of their previous years. If they enter the Church, or if they attempt tuition, it is true that their classics will still be of service to them; and if they read for the bar—which comparatively few Passmen do—or become articled to a solicitor, it is possible that such Latin as they possess may be turned to account. But, with these exceptions, it is probable that very few non-honour men, when once they have obtained a *testamur* in 'No. 1 Group A,' ever again make the slightest use of the lore which they have acquired at the cost of so many weary hours, and of cash to an amount which is known to Paterfamilias alone.

His two remaining schools the Passman can elect out of a number which it is open to him to attempt; but as several of these are mathematical or scientific in their character—and therefore, of course, to be shunned like the plague—his power of picking and choosing is practically considerably restricted. The historical schools—English or modern European—are a frequent choice; and perhaps the greatest difficulty to be encountered in connection with them is the essay which has to be written during the exam. upon some subject of general interest discovered by the examiners. To indite a brief disquisition on, for example, 'Fairy Tales' or the 'British Constitution' may not seem a very stupendous feat to a man who has ever accustomed himself to use his pen and his brains—even though but one hour be allowed for the deed—but it is an almost impossible performance to a being who has never thought consecutively for so long a period before, and whose habitual language is a slang dialect, which, however forcible and expressive, is not adapted to literary purposes.

Thus, then, we have traced the steps of our hero from the moment when, as an unfledged—or at least 'unplucked'—nestling he entered the arena of the schools to bear away the crown

of victory from 'Smalls,' to the time when he has won his last *testamur* in Final Schools. One more scene still remains, in which we may take a glance at him before we bid him adieu for ever. It is a 'Degree day,' and the *apodyterium* of the Convocation House is thronged with young men, clad for the last time in undergraduate apparel. Within are to be seen seated many of the relatives of the aforesaid—principally ladies—who have come to see dear Tom, or Dick, or Harry take his B.A. Tom, Dick, and Co. have to wait in the outer portion of the building until they have all exhibited their bundles of hardly earned *testamurs*, paid the required cash, and inscribed their names in the university register. Each of the batches of men from the several colleges is presided over by a sort of sponsor, in the shape of a Fellow or Tutor from the same Society, whose duty it is to warrant the respectability and genuineness of his protégés.

As soon as the necessary preliminaries have been observed, the latter find seats for themselves—or at anyrate endeavour to do so—in the interior, and there become spectators of events. It cannot be said that the externals of the affair are very striking; in fact they might be described as a trifle dingy; but notwithstanding, there is not wanting a certain amount of impressiveness. The Degrees in the 'superior faculties'—namely, in Law, Medicine, and Divinity—are first conferred, that is, if there happen to be any candidates for the same—and then those in Arts; men who are about to become M.A.s naturally taking precedence of their juniors. In each case, though the formula recited varies, the proceedings accompanying it bear a strong family resemblance. The recipients of the Degree are introduced by some responsible authority to the notice of the Vice-chancellor, who sits in a chair on a sort of dais at the end of the chamber, and whose business consists in taking off and replacing his cap and in indulging in the prescribed Latin orations. At the conclusion of each such ceremony, the newly-made graduates retire to robe themselves in their appropriate vesture, and then reappear to make their bow to the 'Vice.' These Oxford garments are rather 'seedy'-looking articles, their prevailing black being usually only relieved by the colour of the hood. The gown of a D.D., however, is truly gorgeous to behold, and when seen suspended in a shop-window, is calculated to fill little girls with an awful respect. As the new Doctor of Divinity, clad from head to foot in black and scarlet, proudly displays his splendour to the public view, he vividly recalls the description of the serpent before the Fall given by a Sunday-school boy in reply to a young lady anxious to ascertain if her lessons had borne any fruit: 'If you please, 'm, you said he were a very 'andsome hanimal.'

We are keeping the would-be B.A.s waiting all this time; but, as this is exactly their actual fate, there is no harm done. When at last their turn comes, the names of the men of each college are read out separately, and an extraordinary phenomenon is then witnessed. The two proctors, who are stationed near the Vice-cancellarial chair, start forward, as if suddenly galvanised into movement, and precipitate themselves in a highly alarming manner upon the

narrow path which serves as a thoroughfare, apparently having just discovered some delinquent of whom they are going in chase. They seem to find out they have made a mistake, however, by the time they have got half-way down the room, for they stop with a jerk, turn round, and return to their former position. This strange piece of eccentricity on the part of these high disciplinary officials is due to an old custom, which allows any unsatisfied creditor to 'pluck' the gown of the proctor when he hears the name of his hapless debtor, and thus arrest the bestowal of a Degree until his claims have been satisfied. Probably 'the oldest inhabitant' would fail to recollect an instance of this right being exercised; but Oxford is a place where old customs long survive, and even after credit and its corollary, debt, have both been abolished by an enlightened legislature, we may look to see this one still perpetuated.

As their names are uttered, the contingent of youths from University or Balliol, or Merton or Exeter, stumble forward with much banging and shuffling, for, though there may be much learning, there is little space in the Convocation House. When they are drawn up in front of the 'Vice,' the Don, who is acting godfather, discharges his function by a slight bow, and perhaps a wave of his hand, as much as to say, 'There is no deception here, gentlemen;' and then the men for whom he vouches immediately give way to those from other colleges. When all have in turn been presented to the Vice, the latter gets up and unburdens himself of some remarks (in Latin), which he seems to have been longing to make. Then the new 'Bachelors of Arts' retire once more to the antechamber, and there abandon themselves to the 'pleasing pain' of putting on the *toga virilis*, and at the same instant disbursing coin right and left, here, there, and everywhere at once. All the vulture-like hangers-on of a college, scouts, porters, sub-porters, common-room-men, even the proctor's bulldogs, will audaciously demand tips, with much the same cool impudence, one would think, as the highwayman who in the good old times politely requested people to give him their money or their life. In one respect, the plight of the victim is even worse, for to him no alternative is allowed; to refuse is impossible: it is regular plundering, from which he is fortunate if he escape still in possession of funds enough to take him down.

And now that the play is at last fairly played out and the game is over, it may occur to some inquiring mind to wonder whether it was worth the candle. What has the fortunate graduate in truth gained in return for all the time and all the money he has spent in pursuit of his Degree? In the first place, it should be said that any words which may seem to have been spoken disparagingly of Oxford life and Oxford opportunities have been aimed against not the use but the abuse of these. It must be remembered that not above one-half of the undergraduates of the present day are Passmen; and of them many are far superior to the 'average specimen' whose typical character we have endeavoured to sketch. Still, it may be doubted whether, with the exception of men who intend to take holy orders, or again of men who intend to do nothing at all, it is, strictly speaking,

worth anybody's while to take a Pass Degree. Those who really make their 'varsity career a paying thing are the scholars, who afterwards develop into Fellows of their colleges. These are the men who win the prizes in the Oxford lottery; but it does not quite follow that all the rest of the tickets are blanks.

To take the lowest kind of benefit obtained—some amount of worldly experience must at least be secured. But further than this, it may be said that though it is certainly possible for men, as hundreds annually prove, to leave the university as essentially unlettered as they were when they came up, after all the achievement is a remarkable one. For those who have either eyes to see or ears to hear, there is an education apart from the schools. Culture and refinement are in the air; it is a man's own fault if he do not imbibe them. There is no other spot in Britain, perhaps in the world, where the past, the present, and the future are more closely united than they are here. All that activity of modern thought, all that movement of mind, which tend to produce results until now indefinable, here find fullest scope; for Oxford is no longer an oasis of Conservatism planted amidst a wilderness of change. It is a place keenly susceptible of impressions from without, and of which the pulse keeps true time with the heart of England. But there ever exists in the background the far-reaching influence of a thousand years, filled with imperishable memories, and indissolubly connected with events that are yet to come. The Past lives on at Oxford, dim and shadowy, it may be, but potent none the less; the very stones are historic. Ill befall the wretch who can find no good thing to say of the oldest and noblest of English homes of learning! Let a man set himself resolutely to draw out the good, and not the evil, from his surroundings, to lead the higher not the lower life which is there offered him, and—even though his name figure in no class lists—it will be hard indeed if he bear not away with him that which will raise him in the scale of being for the rest of his days.

THIS MORTAL COIL.

CHAPTER LII.—THE TANGLE RESOLVES ITSELF.

'You must never, never take it, Elsie,' Warren said earnestly, as Elsie laid down the paper once more and wiped a tear from her eye nervously. 'It came to him through that poor broken-hearted little woman, you know. He should never have married her; he should never have owned it. It was never truly or honestly his, and therefore it isn't yours by right. I couldn't bear, myself, to touch a single penny of it.'

Elsie looked up at him with a twitching face. 'Do you make that a condition, Warren?' she asked, all tremulous.

Warren paused and hesitated, irresolute, for a moment. 'Do I make it a condition?' he answered slowly. 'My darling, how can I possibly talk of making conditions or bargains with you? But I could never bear to think that wife of mine would touch one penny of that ill-gotten money.'

'Warren,' Elsie said, in a very soft voice—they were alone in the room and they talked like lovers—'I said to myself more than once in the old, old

days—after all *that* was past and done for ever, you know, dear—I said to myself: “I would never marry any man now, not even if I loved him—loved him truly—unless I had money of my own to bring him.” And when I began to know I was getting to love you—when I couldn’t any longer conceal from myself the truth that your tenderness and your devotion had made me love you against my will—I said to myself again, more firmly than ever: “I will never let him take me thus penniless. I will never burden him with one more mouth to feed, one more person to house and clothe and supply, one more life to toil and moil and slave for. Even as it is, he can’t pursue his art as he ought to pursue it; he can’t give free play to his genius as his genius demands, because he has to turn aside from his own noble and exquisite ideals to suit the market and to earn money. I won’t any further shackle his arm. I won’t any further cramp his hand—his hand that should be free as the air to pursue unhampered his own grand and beautiful calling. I will never marry him unless I can bring him at least enough to support myself upon.”—And just the other day, you remember, Warren—that day at San Remo when I admitted at last what I had known so long without ever admitting it, that I loved you better than life itself—I said to you still: “I am yours—at heart. But I can’t be yours really for a long time yet. No matter why. I shall be yours still in myself, for all that.”—Well, I’ll tell you now why I said those words.—Even then, darling, I felt I could never marry you penniless.’

She paused, and looked up at him with an earnest look in her true gray eyes, those exquisite eyes of hers that no lover could see without an intense thrill through his inmost being. Warren thrilled in response, and wondered what could next be coming. ‘And you’re going to tell me, Elsie,’ he said with a sigh, ‘that you can’t marry me unless you feel free to accept Whitestrاند?’

Elsie laid her head with womanly confidence on his strong shoulder. ‘I’m going to tell you, darling,’ she answered, with a sudden outburst of unchecked emotion, ‘that I’ll marry you now, Whitestrاند or no Whitestrاند. I’ll do as you wish in this and in everything. I love you so dearly to-day, Warren, that I can even burden you with myself, if you wish it: I can throw myself upon you without reserve: I can take back all I ever thought or said, and be happy anywhere, if only you’ll have me, and make me your wife, and love me always as I myself love you. I want nothing that ever was his; I only want to be yours, Warren.’

Nevertheless, Mr Alfred Heberden did within one week of that date duly proceed in proper form to prove the claim of Elsie Challoner, of 128 Blethingley Road, in the parish of Kensington, spinster, of no occupation, to the intestate estate of Hugh Massinger, Esquire, deceased, of Whitestrاند Hall, in the county of Suffolk.

The fact is, an estate, however acquired, must needs belong to somebody somewhere; and since either Elsie must take it herself, or let some other person with a worse claim endeavour to obtain it, Warren and she decided, upon further consideration, that it would be better for her to dispense the revenues of Whitestrاند for the public good, than

to let them fall by default into the greedy clutches of the enterprising pawnbroker in the Borough Road, or be swallowed up for his own advantage by any similar absorbent medium elsewhere. From the very first, indeed, they were both firmly determined never to spend one shilling of the estate upon their own pleasures or their own necessities. But if wealth is to be dispensed in doing good at all, it is best that intelligent and single-hearted people should so dispense it, rather than leave it to the tender mercies of that amiable but somewhat indefinite institution, the Court of Chancery. Warren and Elsie decided, therefore, at last to prosecute their legal claim, regarding themselves as trustees for the needy or helpless of Great Britain generally, and to sell the estate, when once obtained, for the first cash price offered, investing the sum in consols in their own names, as a virtual trust-fund, to be employed by themselves for such special purposes as seemed best to both in the free exercise of their own full and unfettered discretion. So Mr Alfred Heberden’s advertisement bore good fruit in due season; and Elsie did at last, in name at least, inherit the manor and estate of Whitestrاند.

But neither of them touched one penny of the blood-money. They kept it all apart as a sacred fund, to be used only in the best way they knew for the objects that Winifred in her highest moods might most have approved of.

And this, as Elsie justly remarked, was really the very best possible arrangement. To be sure, she no longer felt that shy old feeling against coming to Warren unprovided and penniless. She was content now, as a wife should be, to trust herself implicitly and entirely to her husband’s hands. Warren’s art of late had every day been more sought after by those who hold in their laps the absolute disposal of the world’s wealth, and there was far less fear than formerly that the cares of a household would entail on him the miserable and degrading necessity for lowering his own artistic standard to meet the inferior wishes and tastes of possible purchasers, with their vulgar ideals. But it was also something for each of them to feel that the other had thus been seriously tried by the final test of this world’s gold—tried in actual practice and not found wanting. Few pass through that sordid crucible unscathed: those that do are of the purest metal.

On the very day when Warren and Elsie finally fixed the date for their approaching wedding, the calm and happy little bride-elect came in with first tidings of the accomplished arrangement, all tremors and blushes, to her faithful Edie. To her great chagrin, however, her future sister-in-law received the news of this proximate family event with an absolute minimum of surprise or excitement. ‘You don’t seem to be in the least astonished, dear,’ Elsie cried, somewhat piqued at her cool reception. ‘Why, anybody’d say, to see the way you take it, you’d known it all a clear twelvemonth ago!’

‘So I did, my child—all except the mere trifling detail of the date,’ Edie answered at once with prompt common-sense, and an arch look from under her dark eyebrows. ‘In fact I arranged it all myself most satisfactorily beforehand. But what I was really thinking of just now was simply

this—why shouldn't one cake do duty for both at once, Elsie?'

'For both at once, Edie? For me and Warren? Why, of course, one cake always does do for bride and bridegroom together, doesn't it? I never heard of anybody having a couple, darling.'

'What a sweet little silly you are, you dear old goose, you! Are you two the only marriageable people in the universe, then? I didn't mean for you and Warren at all, of course; I meant for you and myself, stupid.'

'You and myself!' Elsie echoed, bewildered. 'You and myself, did you say, Edie?'

'Why, yes, you dear old blind bat, you,' Edie went on placidly, with an abstracted air; 'we might get them both over the same day, I think seriously: kill two weddings, so to speak, with one parson. They're such a terrible nuisance in a house always.'

'Two weddings, my dear Edie?' Elsie cried in surprise. 'Why, what on earth are you ever talking about? I don't understand you.'

'Well, Mr Hatherley's a very good critic,' Edie answered with a twinkle: 'he's generally admitted to have excellent taste; and he ventured the other day on a critical opinion in my presence which did honour at once to the acuteness of his perceptions and the soundness and depth of his aesthetic judgment. He told me to my face, with the utmost gravity, I was the very sweetest and prettiest girl in all England.'

'And what did you say to that, Edie?' Elsie asked, amused, with some dawning perception of the real meaning of this queer badinage.

'I told him, my dear, I'd always considered him the ablest and best of living authorities on artistic matters, and that it would ill become my native modesty to differ from his opinion on such an important question, in which, perhaps, that native modesty itself might unduly bias me to an incorrect judgment in the opposite direction. So then he enforced his critical view in a practical way by promptly kissing me.'

'And you didn't object?'

'On the contrary, my child, I rather liked it than otherwise.'

'After which?'

'After which he proceeded to review his own character and prospects in a depreciatory way, that led me gravely to doubt the accuracy of his judgment in that respect; and he finished up at last by laying those very objects he had just been depreciating, his hand and heart, at the foot of the throne, metaphorically speaking, for the sweetest girl in all England to do as she liked—accept or reject them.'

'And the sweetest girl in all England?'—Elsie asked, smiling.

'Unconditionally accepted with the most pleasing promptitude.—You see, my dear, it'll be such a splendid thing for Warren, when he sets up house, to have an influential art-critic bound over, as it were, not to speak evil against him, by being converted beforehand into his own brother-in-law.—Besides which, you know, I happen, Elsie, to be ever so much in love with him.'

'That's a good thing, Edie.'

'My child, I consider it such an extremely good thing that I ran up-stairs at once and had

a regular jolly old-fashioned cry over it—Elsie, Arthur's a dear good fellow.—And you and I can be married together. We've always been sisters, ever since we've known each other. And now we'll be sisters even more than ever.'

THE END.

THE OPAL MOUNTAIN OF FAROE.

STROMOE, the chief of the Faroe Islands, is only about twenty-five miles long by six or seven in breadth; yet in its small area it includes two wonderful mountains. One of these is known as the Opal Mountain, because it contains much precious stone of the opal kind. The other is the Myling Head precipice, a headland two thousand two hundred feet above the sea-level, and perpendicular. Humboldt, the great traveller, has pointed out how very rarely this or that rock with a reputation for perpendicularity is really perpendicular. But the Myling Head mountain positively hangs over the sea at its summit, so that you may watch the waves beating its base half a mile beneath you.

With the intention of visiting these two phenomena of nature, the writer left Thorshavn, the capital of the Faroes, one August morning. One can never depend on Faroe weather; and though at the time I started from the steep stony little streets of the town the sun was bright over the sea, and a brisk north wind was blowing, ere I got to Kollefjord the whole land might be bathed in fog. However, the weather kept good, and so I did not lose my way in the bogs and mountain uplands between Thorshavn and Kollefjord. Eight hours of soft and hard going had made me tired enough by the time I was skirting the blue waters of the fiord towards my destination for the night. I passed several knots of Kollefjord-men in their red caps, lounging by the water-side, or getting into their boats for the evening fishing. They were astounded to see a stranger, and stopped singing until I was out of sight.

At about seven o'clock I reached the farm to which I bore a letter of introduction. A man who spoke excellent English had joined me in the valley. From sheer love of England and the English, he assured me, it would delight him to interpret between me and the bonder. He had fished for several years at Grimsby, and served on a Scotch smack; but the needs of an old mother, and an increasing family of his own, had tied him to Faroe for the last five years.

We halted at the door of a house fronting some haybeds—the Faroe cultivable patches are small and rectangular, and environed by trenches: literal beds—which sloped to the water's edge about two hundred yards distant. On the grass in front, a number of fleeces were spread to dry, and home-spun jerseys of blue, crimson, green, yellow, and white wool. A rush of dogs ensued; several light-haired sturdy boys and girls followed the dogs, and then uprose a cry of 'Fader! Fader!' One of the most perfect conceivable specimens of stalwart humanity strode out of the house in response to this cry, and accosted my guide. In his hands was a part of a cow's skin, out of which he had been employed in cutting a pair of moccasins; and he was redolent of the hay of his own

beds before us. No sooner did the farmer understand that he was called upon to receive a guest, than his fine hearty face flushed with elation. He lifted his turban with exquisite rare courtesy, and bowed his great body a quarter of its height from the ground. From my shoulders he unstrapped the knapsack with nervous haste, and then showed the way into his house, and besought me to take a seat in the *rogstue* (kitchen), where half a score of perturbed men and women were grouped about the fire. But I had scarcely entered the room when the lady of the house hurried after me, and with smiles of cordiality and vociferous upbraidings of her husband for blundering so obtusely, bowed me out of it, and into the guest-room proper.

On such short notice and at such a time of day, would she take me in? I asked.

But there was positive reproach in the worthy woman's tone and face when she asked in reply if it were likely she should do otherwise. There were others in Siov who would be only too ready to receive a stranger; but I had been recommended to her care, and she hoped I would confide in her. The best of everything in the house should be at my service, from the best feather-bed, over and under, to the best silver and the largest eggs; and her man himself should accompany me up the Opal Mountain, out to the fishing, or anywhere else whither I might require him. She herself would forthwith prepare supper, if I would tell her what I liked best.

Before leaving me, she uncovered and opened the window of the room. The scent of new-cut hay came in straightway with a light breeze from the sea. The evening shadows were creeping over the still fiord; but there were spaces of sunlight on the gray rocks which rose steeply a thousand feet or more from the water's edge on the other side; while at the end of the valley the summit of great Skelling himself (the highest mountain of Stromoe), deadly dark as to his lower parts, was swathed in a thick fold of white cloud. It was a scene of beauty and tranquillity; and the slow chant of some home-returning fishermen, with the faint rhythmic splash of their oars, came through the air, softened to solemnity.

'And the weather?' I asked of my jovial host during supper.

'Not so good,' said he. 'One day, good weather—not two.—But if you will ascend the mountain to look for the stones, it will not matter very much what the weather may be.'

Yes; I was determined to climb Odnadalstind (the Opal Mountain) on the morrow, and see if I could not find an opal worth carrying away: this, with the help of a dictionary, I made him understand. And then, for my encouragement, he told me that not long ago a gentleman of Westmannhavn (on the west coast of Stromoe) had picked up in the neighbourhood a superb stone worth many hundreds of crowns. Nothing could be easier than to make the ascent—under his guidance. He knew all the likely places; indeed, no one else had any business to know them. It was his own mountain, or rather his as the king's deputy; and for it he paid the king a hundred crowns rental. It gave grazing to eightscore sheep, a few cows and a bull, and living-room to sundry droves of geese which liked the breezy uplands; there were hares on it and some snipe:

and this, with what he got by selling his bits of opal to Copenhagen jewellers, surely made up a fair equivalent for the hundred crowns. Moreover, it was the third highest mountain in Faroe, and this was an additional feather in the cap of the good man's pride.

Oh yes! if he was to let go the mountain, which had come to him from his father and his father's father to the sixth generation, there were many Faroe people who would be glad enough to lease it at the same price—if they could get it. But the mountain would probably stay in the Johanneson family as long as Denmark was a monarchy. 'For'—with a look of approval at his wife—'there were two young boys born to him already, and both were sound in limb and wind.' The bonder had married twice; and my hostess, his second wife, and mother of the boys, was sister to his first wife. Such second alliances are much fancied in Faroe.

After supper, the good people left me to myself. It is not customary for the Faroese to use artificial light in summer; but they brought me their best winter's lamp, and then genially wished me good-night (*sov vel*). The bonder went to make me a pair of cowskin moccasins for the mountain climb; for, though he had unbounded admiration for my English boots, he considered them unfit for the wet and rocky surface of the Faroes.

A word about the room in which I was installed here at Siov, and which was fairly typical of the average guest-chamber of a Faroe farmhouse. It was wholly of wood, and clean in every part. The ceiling was so low that the antique gun which hung across it could be reached with ease. In one corner of the room was a sewing-machine; for my hostess was an expert dressmaker, having lived many years in Copenhagen. In another, two chests of drawers were set on end, forming an imposing piece of furniture which touched the ceiling. The third corner was occupied by a cupboard with a glass door, within which the family plate and china were displayed with some little ornamental skill. A sofa stuffed with soft straw stretched athwart one side of the room; and three or four heavy, hard, unpolished chairs were disposed about it. A couple of tables and a noisy clock made up the run of the furniture proper; though in the window there were some plants, existing, not flourishing; and on the walls were an oval gilt mirror, and a picture showing the silhouette heads and busts of three gentlemen (ancestors of my hostess), with plenty of hair, and noses of remarkable and varied developments. From the guest-room a little door allowed ingress to the bedchamber, which just held a bed.

The next day broke lethargically, and it was early apparent that the bonder was an experienced meteorologist. A dense fog pervaded all the valley. It was the phenomenon called by the Faroese *Pollamjörki* (from the Norwegian *Poll*, a little circular channel, and *mjörki*, a fog), inasmuch as it did not cover the tops of the mountains, which stood up from it like weird black trunkless giants. And when the sun came out and shone on the mountain-tops, making them lustrous through the lower mist, the effect was very eccentric. But, a little later, *Pollamjörki* changed to *mjörki* proper, which is a more unwelcome visitation. The fog rolled itself up, as it

were, and ascended the hillsides in eddying masses. Soon all the summits were wholly hidden, and their bases also, save for a few dozen yards, and the valley was filled with a light white mist. It seemed the most hopeless of days for mountain climbing, and I was quite prepared for a negative from the bonder. But, to my joy, he expressed contempt for the weather. He came in to me with my cowskin shoes in one hand, and a massy chisel and hammer gripped in the other, and his hearty face was red with the washing he had just bestowed on it in the cold mountain stream outside his door.

Odnadalstind is a mountain very conspicuous from the southern part of Stromoe. Its shape is that of a well-formed isosceles triangle, on the apex of which is a mass of rock congestion rising to a very limited actual peak. From Siov the ascent is easy, though in places the cliffs overhang in a rather troublesome manner. Only at the summit is there anything that need vex a nervous head. Here, however, for forty or fifty feet, the crags rise precipitously, and a firm but dainty tread is necessary in the climb. As for the view from the summit, it is said to surpass that of Skelling or Slatteritind (Faroe's king, 2890 feet, in Osteroe). Most of the Faroes are discernible from it. But of this, alas! I can say nothing, for the fog was persistent in its intervention between us and the land or sea level, though above us the sun shone with a tantalising brilliancy. From spaces of boulder-strewn heather we passed to steep inclines of broken rock; thence to much moss, wet with the saturation of subterfluent springs; and finally a long toil up a slope of painful shale brought us to the foot of the peak. A great bow of light cleft the fog just as we attained the summit, and seemed to augur a clearance; but this fog-bow was only a momentary though charming illumination.

Once we were on the summit of his mountain, the good bonder began to be patently oppressed by the cares of responsibility. He showed a solicitude for my safety that, howsoever laudable, was very ridiculous. By gestures rather than speech—for his language could not rise to the occasion—he gave me to understand the awful nature of the abysses on either hand falling from the foot of Odnadalstind's crest; and at first his hands flew to my neck or my arm if I did but move an inch, and he gripped like a vice. But he became more reasonable as he got accustomed to the position. However, for all we saw, we might as well have left Odnadalstind alone. From the north-east valley, whither the mountain-side fell very abruptly, came the deep roar of many fosses, subdued maybe by the fog, but still impressive; while, as if in contrast, the lowing of a single cow on the south-west side of the mountain also came to us, though infinitely lessened. The waterfalls were nothing to my guide; but when the cow lowed, he looked intelligent, and at the repetition of the sound he pricked up his ears, and informed me that it was Christina, one of his own beasts.

By this it was time to look after the opals. We had already tapped certain of the rocks during the ascent, though not in earnest. But now, beaded as to our noses, beards, and ears with fog-drops, we made our way to the site reputed most prolific in precious stones, and, in grim

sincerity, fell under the sway of jewel-fever. On our hands and knees we groped excitedly over the boulders, pulling away the moss, heather, and soil to seek those splits in the porphyry indicative of the latent existence of the stones, the more energetic parts of which were thus bursting towards the light. And, thanks to the knowledge of Johanneson, we were very soon upon the track of some promising stones. Between the boulders, where the downflow of accumulated rains had carried the earth, we espied a number of ruby particles. Digging, we discovered larger fragments; and, later, having followed the course of these minuter bits, we arrived at the block itself which by disintegration was enriching the lower soil. Here, then, the hammer and chisel came prominently into use.

Tons upon tons of the native porphyry in this locality were specked and flaked with opaline substances, and tiny jewels of very engaging colours: rich claret, clear yellow, and red-brown, flesh, milk-white, and gray. It seemed to my ignorant eyes that we were destined inevitably to release just as many stones as we pleased. But, alas, hope after hope was crushed when the hammer and chisel were brought into play. In the first place, the matrix was terribly hard; and secondly, when it did yield to Johanneson's sturdy blows, the stones embedded in it, and which had formerly looked so fine, were with it shattered all to pieces. Or when, by good luck, they came out unblemished, they proved of no depth: opaque, and therefore valueless: mere 'laminae.'

'No, no; you must not blame my mountain,' said the bonder, when a strong exclamation of disappointment had come from me: an iridescent stone like a cat's-eye had just broken asunder without the least encouragement. 'It is the way they go always; and I can tell you it asks much time and work with the chisel to gather ten opals, for which I receive one crown [thirteenpence-halfpenny] each from the Copenhagen merchants.'

I suggested an investment in dynamite as likely to be lucrative. But the bonder, when he began to understand the nature of the explosive, assumed an aghast countenance. What would become of his mountain, for which he paid the king yearly a hundred crowns, if once such a fell substance were introduced to it? And besides, it was very clear to him that the jewels would be as little likely as himself to favour the stuff: they would split, one and all, with their mother-rock. Indeed, such a train of possible evils occurred to the imagination of the bonder—for example, the destruction of his sheep and his geese, the deterioration of Christina's milk, the flight in terror of the seabirds for miles in the vicinity—that I was forced to join issue with him, and demonstrate the unlikelihood of dynamite ever being brought into common use in the Faroes. Then, in part comforted, he resumed the search for opals.

Eventually, after four or five hours' incessant labour, digging and hammering, bathed in the eternal fog all the time, we filled our pockets with jewels in better or worse condition, and for the most part environed with a lump of the hard porphyry matrix. The bonder said it was no bad day's work. But when, that evening, we submitted all our treasure to the criticism of an expert who lived in the valley, he shook his

head and pronounced sentence: 'No good!' No good, that is, as jewels: no jeweller would buy the stones for setting. On the other hand, as mere specimens, pretty and suggestive, they were very good.

On the way down, the bonder took me aside to a ledge of rock which had evidently been prospected and worked already. It was his prime depot, and he could not subject it to any diletantante mutilation. The porphyry rose in irregular tiers, two or three feet between each tier; and down its entire length ran a bright line of yellow jewel substance, which sparkled gaily through the thick atmosphere. On either side of it the rock had sprung, and the marks of Johanneson's hammer and chisel on previous occasions were very visible. He contemplated this valuable fissure with fixed eyes and swelled red cheeks; when he spoke of it, his voice was tremulous; and I could see his fingers tightening round his implements, as though they itched to be employed in real profitable toil. But with an effort he broke away from the place.

That evening I asked the good bonder how he contrived to keep such a property as Odnadalstind from despoliation.

'It is not kept so,' he exclaimed warmly. 'They go up when no one knows, and they take the stones without being allowed. And there is many a man and woman in Kollefjord who gets finer opals than I do, for all it is my own mountain, and was my father's and grandfather's before me. And when they show the stones, they say they picked them up in the valley. But it is all one lie: there is only one real opal mountain in all Faroe, and that is Odnadalstind.'

On the third day I said 'Good-bye' to my kind hosts. They could not have done more for King Christian himself than they did for me, a perfect stranger. And though I strove my utmost to convince them that by thus entertaining me with their best as a free gift they were positively wronging themselves and their children, I could not on this occasion induce them to take any money from me. Nor would they even receive thanks for their hospitality without a protest that they had done nothing deserving of thanks. The favour, they said, was on my side, not theirs. In fact, to my mind these honest, generous north-countrymen were much more interesting than the mountain of Odnadalstind, with all its hidden treasure.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

THE date was a certain 3d of July, when the present century was some forty years younger than it is now. The moon was rising in unclouded brightness when Miss Maria Granby, having seen that the preparations for supper were duly completed, entered the drawing-room, carrying a lighted lamp in her hand, and then, to her surprise, perceived that the vicar was sitting alone in the dusk.

'Dear me, brother, where can Agnes and

Wilmot have run off to?' she said. 'I left them sitting on the sofa not a quarter of an hour ago, and now'—

'I don't know, I'm sure, my dear,' replied Mr Granby, rousing himself from one of those reveries which of late had become habitual with him. 'I was under the impression that they were sitting there still.'

Miss Granby without more ado took up the skirts of her dress and passed through one of the French-windows, determined to go in quest of the missing ones. 'Surely,' she said to herself, as she returned for her pattens, for which old-fashioned articles she entertained a private predilection, as being good for the constitution in damp weather—'surely Wilmot can never have been foolish enough to trail that girl down to the river and the grass as wet as it is!' With that she clumped away through the moist shrubbery, accompanied by Tiny, a favourite cat, who, being in a moonstruck mood, bounded on with elevated tail in front of her mistress, and then stopping to munch grass till she came up, rubbed against her feet, gave utterance to a plaintive mew, and scampered off as before.

Mr Granby, sitting with a faint smile hovering round his mouth, and one finger inserted between the leaves of a calf-bound volume of sermons, was left alone in the lamp-lighted room.

Meanwhile, the fugitives had wandered slowly through the meadow which skirted the vicarage garden, and now stood, two lithe and youthful figures, watching the 'gleaming river seaward flow from the inner land,' and listening to its dreamy slumberous murmur, but with very opposite feelings. To the ears of the girl it sounded like a mournful valediction whispered by the water-sprites, for she and Wilmot were to part to-night, and her sinking heart responded 'farewell,' and tears sprang to her eyes, so that the moon looked blurred and dim. To Wilmot Burrell it sounded like the far-off murmur of the distant ocean over whose waters he was so soon to wander; and if any thought of his approaching separation from her he loved, or believed he loved, crossed his mind, it was but as a transient shadow which left no impression behind. 'You'll think of me sometimes when I'm far away, won't you, darling?' he asked as he drew Agnes's arm closer within his own and turned towards the house.

'How can you ask!' she said with a trembling voice in which there was a faint ring of reproach. 'You know that I shall think of you very, very often.'

'I knew you would before I asked; but I can't have the sweet assurance too often from your lips.'—Then to himself: 'Confound it all! I quite forgot to call at the *Red Lion* this afternoon for that half-box of Cubas which the land-lord promised me. It's an awful nuisance. Too late now, of course, to fetch it.'

They paced in silence for a little while, then Wilmot said: 'And you'll write me lots of letters, won't you, dear? Never mind my short

ones. You don't know under what disadvantages a fellow writes on board ship—so much to distract his attention—so many duties to attend to—so little time to himself, that it's almost Love's labour lost to attempt it.—Why, you are quite melancholy to-night. Cheer up, little one. Two years will soon pass away, and then— But here comes aunty in search of us, so now we may look out for squalls.'

But Wilmot was mistaken, for Miss Maria, who would probably at any other time have scolded them as heartily as she knew how, which at the best was but poorly, remembering that he had but two more hours to stay with them, was too much melted by the thought to be more than mildly cross, and was, indeed, more inclined for tears than aught else. 'Come in, you foolish children, do!' she exclaimed with a little quaver in her voice. 'You will catch your deaths of cold, and supper will be quite spoiled—though neither of you deserves any, after running away in this fashion.'

'Don't say that, *ma chère marraine*,' replied Wilmot gaily. Then with a sigh, which, however, had nothing of sadness in it: 'Ah! many's the rough supper I shall have before I set eyes on either of you again.'

On reaching the vicarage they found Mr Granby slowly pacing the room with his hands behind him—a tall, fine-looking old man, but with an indefinable something in his expression which seemed to betoken a certain vacillation of purpose and infirmity of will.

Supper was soon over, for they were all too preoccupied to eat much. At the conclusion of the meal, Mr Granby, having drawn the cork of a bottle of his choicest port, an operation he would entrust to no hands but his own, arose, glass in hand. 'I drink,' said he with much solemnity, pushing up his spectacles on his forehead, 'to the health of the son of my oldest friend—to Wilmot Burrell. May he have a safe and prosperous voyage, and may we all be here to receive him on his return!'

Wilmot made a neat, sailor-like speech in reply, in which, after referring to the days of his childhood, all the recollections of which, he said, had reference in a greater or lesser degree to the persons then present and to the old house in which they then were, he alluded briefly to the prospects of his manhood, and hoped, in conclusion, that a new and a sweeter tie would in a little while bind him still closer to those whom he had loved and honoured from his youth upward. There was a brief silent pause after he sat down, which was pregnant with pathos to all there except to the young man himself.

And now Miss Maria became restless and uneasy, referring frequently to the timepiece, and listening intently for the slightest noise from without, for fear Wilmot might miss the night-coach by which he was to travel, although quite aware that it was not due for another half-hour. Presently she left the room for the purpose of satisfying herself that Wilmot's luggage had been brought down into the hall and was all properly labelled. Then the vicar took up his soft felt hat and went for a moonlight stroll on the veranda, and the two young people were left alone.

'Let us go into the drawing-room,' said Wilmot. 'I want you to sing me *The Murmur of the Shell*

and one or two other favourites, which will haunt my memory when I am far away.'

So Agnes seated herself at the piano and began to sing, while Wilmot bent over her and turned the music. One of his hands rested caressingly on her shoulder, and now and then his lips lightly touched her hair. But before long the striking of the clock warned them that in ten minutes more the coach would be due, and the same warning note brought back the vicar and Miss Maria.

The latter brought with her a long worsted comforter of divers colours, her own handiwork, with which she proceeded to envelop Wilmot's throat and chest, and succeeded in tying it in an inextricable knot behind, notwithstanding his laughing resistance and a pathetic request that she would not make such a 'guy' of him. Then the good old man drew Wilmot to his side on the sofa, and taking one of his hands in both his, he addressed to him a few last words of kindly counsel and admonition. The young man listened with downcast eyes and a half-smile, wondering within himself why elderly people should nearly always be so much more prosy and tiresome than young ones. It was a relief to him when the sound of the distant horn put an end to the vicar's monologue. Juxon, the vicar's man, had already wheeled the luggage to the gate, and our friends now followed it, Miss Maria with a little white shawl pinned over her faded curls, to keep the night-air off. As they walked down the garden path, she pressed into Wilmot's unreluctant hand a silk purse of her own making—not an empty purse by any means. She was his godmother, and as he had lost both his parents when quite young, she had always looked upon him as being in some sort her own especial property. The coach came rattling up. There was a last hand-shake for the vicar, a hearty kiss for Miss Maria, a more lingering one, or it may be more than one, for Agnes, with a whispered, 'Do not forget me, darling, and write as often as you can;' and then Wilmot leaped blithely up beside the driver. A wave of the hand, a crack of the whip, a blast from the guard's bugle, and they were off—off, melting gradually into the summer darkness and seeming to become a portion of it, then detected by the ear alone, till that, too, failed and silence claimed its own again. Silently and sadly the three who were left went back to the house, over which a shadow seemed already to have fallen. Already they missed Wilmot's light-hearted laughter and the fresh brightness of his handsome face.

Little inclined for sleep was Agnes when she went to her own room. The moon threw its broad silver beams into her chamber, and the spirits of the night seemed to whisper sadly at the casement—one dear name. She blew out her candle and sat down on the low window-seat. All things spoke of him: the old summer-house, dimly discerned, where they had spent so many happy hours; the quivering poplars, up which he had climbed when a boy; the distant river, on whose banks they had so often wandered. She gazed and gazed, immersed in a thousand memories, till she lost all sense of time and place. Her spirit flew forth into the night to embrace his, pursuing him, swift as Ariel's self,

along the road he had gone. And not on that night alone, but on many after nights, when the winds were high and the black waters troubled, did she wander forth in fancy through the waste of darkness in search of him she had lost.

Wilmot, meanwhile, was being whirled rapidly along towards his destination. He happened to be the only outside passenger, and in ten minutes after taking the box-seat he and the driver had become the best of friends. Both driver and guard must help themselves out of his cigar case, and as often as they stopped to change horses, each of them must have a glass of 'something hot' at his expense. Wilmot dearly loved to play the part of Don Magnifico in his little way.

The coach drew up in Dale Street, Liverpool, next morning as the clocks were striking six, by which time the young man was pretty well 'slewed up' as he termed it; so he made his way at once to the *Crooked Billet* in Exchange Street East, where he ordered a bed and slept till four o'clock in the afternoon. He arose in the best possible humour with himself and everybody. He had examined the contents of Miss Maria's purse, which proved more valuable than he had expected; so, as he was to sail in the course of a few days and could not make sure of another evening to himself, he decided to seek out a couple of friends, whom he would treat to a first-rate dinner and a box at the theatre afterwards. Hang the expense! the little purse would stand it all.

He had not forgotten Agnes—by no means. He often thought of her, and always with a little self-satisfied smile playing round his mouth. By Jove! what a lucky fellow he was. Here was a girl, as pretty as you would see in a day's walk, who loved him with all the fervour of her fresh young heart, and had promised to wait till he should be in a position to marry her—a girl with good expectations, too, which made matters all the pleasanter. What with his living and his private income, the old vicar must be decidedly 'warm,' and he did not look like a man who would trouble this world many years longer. Wilmot Burrell felt that he would have given much for a peep at Mr Granby's banking account.

THE RAT.

THE rat has earned for himself the reputation of being one of the most sagacious of four-footed creatures; and we are of opinion that he has fairly earned it. That he is exceedingly sharp and cunning, we have had manifold opportunities of proving to our cost. Not seldom have we found, when he was bent on evil courses, that it took us all our time to outmanœuvre him, and sometimes we have been compelled to acknowledge defeat.

We live in the country, where we cultivate a small farm; and the outhouse premises, drains, hedgerows, and shrubbery close by have been found comfortable homes and convenient shelters for these destructive rodents. Sometimes they literally swarm everywhere; sometimes very few are about; and on several occasions we have

been successful in banishing them altogether for several months. From what we have observed, we cannot doubt that it is not an unusual thing for them, when the conditions of life are adverse, to change their quarters *en masse*. And this is not always explainable on the ground of a failure of food supplies; rather some grand catastrophe, or the anticipation of it, would appear to be the cause of migration. One time a fire had been kindled under a boiler in an outhouse. A big rat had evidently been prowling about, and had sought temporary refuge and concealment in the smoke-flue. Very soon, however, he found his hiding-place getting too warm for him; the heat forced him to attempt an escape; but the only possible outlet was through the rapidly kindling flames. It had to be done, however; and at last he made the rush, right through the fire and smoke, and escaped. We cannot say whether he was badly burned or only slightly singed, or if he survived the fiery ordeal; but certain it is from that day for fully six months not a rat was seen or known to be about the premises. This would also go far to prove the accuracy of the observation often made, that rats are so afraid of fire, that even the smell of singeing will terrify them into 'making tracks.'

On another occasion we got quit of an army of these troublesome neighbours in a curious way. They had drilled a hole in an outhouse floor just over a cross rafter beam. This opened a passage to the granary, and they were obviously having fine times of it amongst the grain. Our boy dearly loves the hunt and sport of every description, and he is withal of a very ingenious turn of mind. Here was an opportunity for displaying his inventive genius, which he determined to improve. Hearing us make some hostile remarks about the thieves, he carefully examined the hole; then came to us with a very determined air and said: 'Father, the first rat that dares to come through that hole shall die; you see if he doesn't. And if he is the father of all the rats, teaching the others to steal, which is most likely, all the better.'

'Very well,' said I, highly amused. 'Try what you can do; but most probably you will be defeated. The rats are very cunning animals.'

'I know they are,' was the prompt reply; 'but I am cunning too.'

He did not tell us his plan: he was going to surprise us; and feeling himself put upon his mettle by our bantering challenge, he was determined not to be baffled. This was how he set to work. To one end of a piece of lancewood about two feet long—the remains of a broken bow—he firmly attached, at right angles, a short skewer, sharpened to a fine point. The other end of the lancewood he nailed securely to the floor—thus extemporising a sort of spring of sufficient strength and elasticity for his purpose. The point of his arrow he supported right above the rat-hole by a little bit of loose wood an inch broad, in such a way that there was no possibility of a rat crossing the beam or coming up through the hole without displacing this supporting pin and freeing the arrow, which the elasticity of the bow would drive home, and so slay any rat that might be foolhardy enough to dare the passage. All being carefully arranged and fixed up before evening, the result was

watched and waited for with intense interest, the proceedings being in the meantime kept a secret from us. Some little time after darkness had fallen, we were sitting in our room reading, when our boy rushed in, in a state of frantic excitement, and a little pale, we thought.—‘The rat!’ he cried. ‘Come, quick, quick! I don’t know what to do.’

We followed him with a lantern; and there, sure enough, was a monstrous fellow transfixed to the beam, and screaming fearfully in his agony. We felt at a loss what to do. It was impossible to haul him out and despatch him. But we could not bear to hear the pitiful cries of the writhing prisoner, so we hurriedly pulled up the skewer, and he disappeared. As far as we could judge, he had been pierced through one of his hind-legs. Whether or not the wound proved mortal, we could not tell; but we came to the conclusion that he must have been a leading and influential member of the tribe, and doubtless advised a change to safer quarters; for not a rat troubled us for months after that, and our young hopeful was abundantly satisfied with the result of his stratagem.

Rats are certainly very destructive to grain both in stack and in the granary; but their ravages amongst young poultry are more obtrusively apparent, and consequently more provoking. We have observed, however, that some seasons, although they are known to be numerous about the premises, they don’t attack the young birds; while at other times their persistent onslaughts render it exceedingly difficult to rear a single brood without half or all of it falling a prey to their voracity. We take it that, birds not being their natural food, they don’t always find out they are so easily killed, and withal so toothsome; but when some old and powerful chief of the tribe, perhaps half accidentally, through falling in with a dead or weakly bird, makes the discovery, the rest follow his lead in the work of slaughter; and then the broods are despatched without stint or mercy. It is curious that the mother-bird seems to be no protection whatever. She will fly furiously at dogs or cats, if they come near or attempt to molest her; and she will with great courage—as we have more than once witnessed—repulse the attacks of hooded crows and even ravens. But the rats don’t mind her a bit; at anyrate, they are not beat off by her, but carry on their depredations in contempt of her. And yet one would think a hen’s powerful beak might prove a not ineffective defence if properly used.

As a general rule, dogs and cats are not of much use in destroying these pests. We have a fine Skye terrier with a splendid nose for rats, and inspired with a great love of sport. The hens’ court is surrounded by a tall thick hedge, at the roots of which there are not a few rat-holes. Master ‘Scamp’ is aware of this, and often watches for the ‘varmin’ for hours after the manner of cats. Occasionally, he is successful when some enterprising rat ventures forth to claim a share of the hens’ food or of pickings that may be scattered about; but generally, the cunning rat makes sure, even if at some distance from his hole, to be near enough the hedge to secure a safe retreat. On the least alarm or movement, if he cannot reach his hole, he rushes to the hedge and runs up into the branches, where he hides amongst the leaves, and

can laugh at Scamp’s furious barking and challenge to come down if he dares; and he takes good care not to leave his place of safety and concealment until the coast is clear.

As to cats, some of them are good ratters, and when they are, they are invaluable; but, as a general rule, they will scarcely look at a rat, and evidently don’t regard them as their proper prey. A short time ago we witnessed, at a friend’s house, a curious incident, illustrative of the sagacity and prompt fertility of resource of a grand old rat. He had somehow got into a large empty barrel, but could not leap out, and had not had time to gnaw his way out before he was discovered. My friend had a fine large cat, ‘Muffin,’ a capital mouser, but not a ratter. Here, thought Mr B——, was a fine opportunity of forcing on the combat; and perhaps, if Muffin once got a lesson, he might develop a taste for rat-hunting; so he was dropt into the barrel. Manifestly, however, he did not approve of this mode of procedure, and sprang upwards. The old rat was equal to the occasion. Muffin’s forepaws had scarcely touched the edge of the barrel, when, quick as thought, and with admirable promptitude, he made a spring on to Muffin’s back, and ran right over him; and would to a certainty have escaped but for another enemy close by in the shape of a great St Bernard dog that was sitting watching the proceedings with interest. Right into his capacious jaws the unfortunate rat leaped, and there was of course an immediate end of him. That rat deserved a better fate.

We have tried every description of rat-trap we could lay hands on, but have found them all unsatisfactory. Occasionally, a single rat may be caught; but the others take note, and are not to be tempted by the most seductive bait; nor are their suspicions lulled by very cunning devices. We have set traps carefully concealed round the outlet of their holes in such a manner that we did not think it possible they could pass without being caught. But somehow they did; or they had some other outlet which they utilised.

Last year we were fairly put on our mettle. We had a fine brood of valuable chickens which we were watching and cherishing with great solicitude. They were about three weeks old. No attack had been made upon them, and we were in hopes it was going to prove a season of exemption. We were rudely awakened from our pleasant dreams. One morning five of our best chickens had disappeared. Our old enemies, we found, had been at work and begun their depredations. They had gained access by scraping a hole in the hard soil under the edge of the coop. It was plain we must devise some means of excluding the robbers. Meantime, we transferred ‘Amelia,’ the mother-hen, and the remainder of her brood to a small outhouse, to which there was no access even for a rat, and locked the door, which was strong and closely fitted. What was our dismay next morning to find the audacious burglars had with their sharp teeth drilled a hole through the door at one corner and devoured or mangled every one of the chickens! Amelia was left lamenting. We were thoroughly roused. In our wrath we vowed vengeance, and resolved it should be such as would teach the tribe a lesson they would not soon forget. Long we

pondered over the situation. All ordinary methods, we knew, would prove of little avail. We must try something novel; we must invent a new species of trap more deadly than any with which we were acquainted.

We shall endeavour to describe our invention and the plan we adopted. We made a narrow box just long enough to reach across the top of an empty herring-barrel, and about eight inches broad, and the same deep. The lid of the box we nailed down, except eight inches at one end, which was open. Right underneath this opening, and of the same size, we fitted a sort of trap-door, adjusted with a species of pivot hinge, balanced in such a way that it yielded to the slightest weight when dropt on it, but immediately returned to its level position. Our object will be apparent. The rats must not suspect that this part of the bottom of the box was less secure than it seemed, until they sprang down on it and found out, when too late, its treacherousness. At one end of our stable there is a loose horse-box, seldom used, except by the rats, which find it a convenient place for holding their midnight revels, and from the manger of which, on the approach of danger, they have an easy passage to a loft and to their secret and safe retreats. Here, close to the manger, we set the barrel, into which we poured a couple of buckets of water. We then adjusted the box, nailing pieces of board at both its sides across the uncovered top of the barrel, to hide the inside from the keen eyes of our destined victims. Thoroughly to lull their suspicions, we judged it expedient to bolt up the trap-door and feed them for a few days. We therefore put into the box a goodly supply of highly flavoured viands peculiarly tempting to rat palates—bits of old cheese, fat of roast beef, and such-like.

For five days they were proof against the temptation, and we had almost begun to fear we were going to be balked. However, we waited patiently, and on the sixth morning we were not a little satisfied to find that all the contents of our box had disappeared. We suppose the wary old members of the tribe regarded the whole apparatus with suspicion, and declined a closer inspection, lest they should come to grief, until some adventurous young brave led the way. Finding he came to no mishap, and all being apparently quite safe, the others would follow. For several days we still continued to introduce into the box fresh supplies of food, which each morning disappeared. When we were satisfied that all suspicions were completely lulled, we drew the bolt of the trap-door and anxiously awaited the result. Next morning, we had the pleasure of fishing up no fewer than twenty-two rats of various sizes which had found a watery grave in the barrel. Dead rats tell no tales; and the survivors, although they might, and no doubt did, miss their companions which had so miserably perished, could not see, and apparently did not understand, the manner or cause of their disappearance, and did not suspect, until too late, the little box from which they had enjoyed so many delightful feasts. Two days afterwards we found that twelve more had made the grand plunge which had proved so fatal to their kindred. We don't suppose the whole colony was extirpated; we daresay a few survived; but they seemed to have been so struck with terror at the dreadful mystery of the disaster

which had befallen the tribe, that they made tracks, and we were no more troubled with them for the rest of the season. Amelia was amply avenged, and so were we.

WHO DID IT?

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

MARY returned early from the cricket-field, for her uncle might come back at any moment, and she knew that it irritated and put him out to find the house empty. He had not, however, returned, so she seated herself at the window, which looked over the neglected expanse of a once pleasant lawn, bounded by a ruddy old wall, about which clambered in unkempt profusion plums and pears and nectarines, and reviewed the events which were taking place in her little world. The result of an hour's meditation over Claude's not unnatural impatience and disappointment, and the state of affairs between her uncle and her brother, so evidently getting from bad to worse, was that she had a good cry, and was found with her face buried in her hands by Dick on his return from the match.

'Well,' she said with assumed sprightliness, 'and who won?'

'Oh, we beat 'em by five wickets.—You didn't see my smack, did you?'

'Your smack, Dick? Why, you haven't been hurt, have you?' asked Mary anxiously.

'No, no; I mean my hit. You know that the wickets were pitched closer up to the garden wall than usual. Well, they put on slows, and I got a half-volley to square leg which I couldn't resist, so I put all my beef into it and sent the ball spinning away over the wall. "Lost ball" of course it was, and I got six for it, for you might look for a week in the garden without finding a cricket ball.—Where's the old man?'

'He has not come back yet, and I'm getting anxious.'

'Oh, he's all right,' said her brother. 'Why, he'd stay away for a week on the chance of finding a lot of dirty old stones or a bit of broken pottery. Besides, he often goes away, stays later than he intended, and puts up at some fellow's house for the night.—But what are you crying about?'

'I'm not crying, Dick.'

'I'll swear you were when I came in, and your eyes are red now.'

'Oh, I think I'm a little put out, and perhaps I'm anxious about uncle—that's all.'

'Not you. That beggar Shute's been here. Lucky I wasn't in.'

'I think you are very unkind and unjust about "that beggar Shute," as you are pleased to call him; and I'm sure I don't know why.'

'Because I hate fellows of his kidney, poor as church mice, who come sponging and sneaking and cadging about for what they can get. He's already got round the old man, and he's got round you, and he's only got to get round me, and his artful game is won.—Now, if it was a chap like Jack Straddles of Pommel Hall, I'd say

nothing. He's the sort of man I'd choose for a brother-in-law; and he'd stand on his head for a week, with a little encouragement from you.'

'Mr Straddles is not a man to my taste. He has only got two topics—sporting and stables.'

'And two very good topics they are; better than rhymes and old stones and nigger languages and that sort of thing. All I can say is that Shute shan't be your husband with my consent.'

Mary's heart was full, and she was longing to speak up in vindication of her lover; but she knew that it would not only be fruitless, but that it would serve to anger her hot-headed brother still more against him; so she remained silent.

As Dick insisted, they did not wait dinner, and had a silent, uncomfortable sort of meal together; Dick being rather ill at ease, because he was perhaps conscious of having talked too freely and violently upon a matter which in reality was but of little concern to him; Mary unsettled and anxious on account of her uncle.

'If he is not home soon,' she said in reply to her brother's exhortations not to be silly about nothing, 'I shall be sure that there is something wrong. I know that formerly he used sometimes to stay away at night without having given us notice, but that was when he was stronger, and he has not done it for at least a year.'

Dick sauntered away after dinner to play billiards with a neighbouring Squireen. Mary hurried off down to the railway station to inquire if her uncle had gone by train anywhere, for she knew that if he had done as he intended, gone with the antiquaries, the distance was too far for him to walk.

In reply to her question, the station-master said that he had only issued a ticket to one gentleman, and that was to Mr Shute, who had gone to London by the three o'clock train.

So she hastened homewards again; but her uncle had not returned, and as it was getting dark, her anxiety became more intense. He was an old man, and it was quite possible that in order to save the train-fare he might have attempted to walk the five miles to Bury Hill; and that, in such a lonely part of the country, he might have been seized with a fit or have broken a blood-vessel without any one being near to help him.

Remain in the house alone in company with these and other dreads of a similar character she could not, so she sent a servant with a message to Mr Richard that he should come home at once.

Half an hour elapsed before Dick arrived, and he was in no gentle mood at being disturbed in his evening's amusement for what he considered the foolish whim of a nervous girl.

'Dick,' said his sister, 'I am sure there is something wrong. Uncle has never been out so late before without letting us know. I've been to the station, and he hasn't been there. No one has seen him about the village.'

'Well then,' said Dick, 'if he didn't go with the antiquarian Johnnies, and hasn't taken the train, and hasn't been seen in the village, he's somewhere about the grounds: there's plenty of room for him on fifty acres of land.'

'Perhaps at the old summer-house,' said Mary. 'Yes, yes; Dick, let us go and look.'

'The last place in the world where he'd go when there was a cricket match going on,' said

Dick. 'Why, he always swears he can't read a line or think because of the noise.'

But Mary was so resolved to go and look, that Dick got a lantern, and with his sister close at his heels for fright and nervousness, led the way through the bushes and thick undergrowth, silent and weird in the faint sickly light of the rising moon, towards the old summer-house.

A quarter of an hour's walk brought them to the summer-house, a tumble-down, rickety old structure, standing on a small open space amidst the trees, and facing a quiet pool of dark water which extended as far as the boundary-wall, some thirty yards distant, long since abandoned to rats and bats, but by reason of its solitude, much frequented by old Jethro Seaton, who often passed the long hours of an entire summer day here in company with a favourite volume from the dusky, dusty shelves of his library. The place barely stood together, for the thatched roof had peeled off in a dozen places, and the rats had burrowed holes all about the flooring; but old Jethro would not have it touched—from sentiment, he said—from motives of parsimony, it was generally believed.

The ray of lantern light thrown into the building showed a dark mass on the floor. Mary uttered a cry of horror, and in a moment was kneeling beside the helpless body of her uncle. Dick stood like a man in a trance, his wide-open eyes fixed on the inert heap, the lantern trembling in his hands.

'Dick, Dick!' cried the girl. 'He may not be dead! You must get help! As quick as you can; there may be a chance.—O uncle! my dear old uncle!'

Dick placed his hand on the white cheek, and shook his head. 'There is no chance,' he said in a low voice; 'he is as cold as marble. He must have had a fit, poor old uncle, for he has fallen sideways from the chair.'

'Dick, Dick!' whispered the girl, seizing his hand, 'it is a dreadful thought, but do you think there has been any crime committed?'

'Crime! You mean do I think he has been murdered? Certainly not. What earthly object could any one have in murdering a poor old harmless man like uncle? However, you stay here. I'll leave the lantern; I can find my way back easily enough. I'll get some men to help us take him into the house, and then I'll go for Dr Waller: he'll say at once what has been the cause of death.' So he started off, leaving Mary moaning and crying by the side of the body, and in a very short time returned with a couple of men, by whose aid it was carried into the house.

The doctor examined the body, and could find no traces of violence; but when he came to the head, he pointed out the wound behind the ear, that must have been the result of a tremendous blow, sufficient, he said, to have killed instantaneously a much younger and stronger man. It had not been such a blow as would have been caused in falling, he said, but a deliberately aimed blow. 'In short,' he summed up, 'I am afraid there has been foul-play, and it will be my duty to communicate my suspicions at once to the police.'

'My God!' exclaimed Dick, 'and I quarrelled with him to the very last!'

And the stalwart young athlete, who had never

shed a tear since his mother's coffin had been carried out of the house, threw himself into a chair and sobbed bitterly.

Mary was calm and quiet in her grief; so calm and quiet that her brother was surprised.

'Mary,' said Dick presently, 'we must not leave a stone unturned to come at the root of this. Who could possibly have done this?'

Mary was looking at him with a strange questioning look. Then she took his arm, and said: 'Dick, it is a horrible question, but I must ask it. Do you know anything about this?'

'I! I!' almost shrieked the young man.—'Mary, do you mean to ask me if I have done this? Oh no, no! But I shall be suspected; I know that. Every one knows of the quarrels between me and my uncle. Every one knows that I have an uncontrollable temper, and they will say that we had a quarrel, and that I struck him dead! But Mary, although you do think so badly of me, you do not believe that I could be capable of such a deed? Say that you don't!'

'Of course I believe you, Dick, and I don't think badly of you, as you say; but the thought did flash across me that perhaps uncle had met you coming from cricket, had reproached you for having left business, and that you had replied, and—— But no, you *could* not have done it, I am sure.'

'It is too late now to think of searching,' said Dick; 'but to-morrow, as soon as it is light, I will go down to the summer-house and look for some evidence of the murderer. Anything will serve as a clue—footmarks, something dropped in the hurry of flight, the smallest clue will be sufficient. And yet I cannot conceive who could have anything to gain by murdering one who, strange and unpopular as he might have been, never did harm to any one. Gain could not have been the object, for poor old Uncle Jethro was too careful to go about with anything worth robbing about him except his watch. We shall find that in the summer-house, I have no doubt, for you know he always used to read with it placed on the table beside him.' So they took a parting look at the poor body stretched on the bed in his own room, and having, according to local custom, placed four candles lighted in the room, turned the pictures with their faces to the wall, and reversed the looking-glass, betook themselves to such sleep as they could snatch under such terrible circumstances.

But one face haunted Mary throughout that long night—the face was that of Claude Shute, and on the dark brow she saw the deep brand of Cain.

OPIUM 'JOINTS' IN THE BLACK HILLS.

IN 1877 and 1878, when Deadwood, the metropolis of the Black Hills, one of the richest mining camps ever discovered in the United States, was over three hundred miles distant from the nearest railroad, it was ascertained that the Chinamen had introduced the vice of opium-smoking among the white inhabitants. I was employed at the time as Deputy-Sheriff, and received instructions to investigate the subject, with a view of closing the houses and punishing the proprietors.

While so employed, I discovered that there were no fewer than ten houses where smoking was in-

dulged in, and that these houses would accommodate over two hundred smokers at one time.—During all hours of the day and night they were well patronised, and because of the rough character of the majority of the population, the Chinese proprietors made but very little effort to hide the real nature of their business, although here, in common with other sections of the States, the laws against this traffic were very severe, but had never been enforced. However, the better class of the inhabitants realised that some effort to stop the vice was necessary, because the proportion of regular smokers, or 'fiends' as we styled them, was becoming so large as to cause scandal even among the reckless adventurous spirits found in the population of a rich mining camp. It was then I first saw the interior of a 'joint;' and if your readers will for a short time accompany me in their imagination, I will describe it.

From the outside appearance of the frame building we are approaching, and the sign 'Sin Lee Laundry,' this is only one of the numerous Chinese laundries which are established by the Celestials in every mining camp in the West. We step from the street into a small room entirely unfurnished, except by a short pine-board counter, on which is a pair of scales for gold-dust, and the counting-board used by all the Chinese to assist them in figuring. A small saw-toothed, almond-eyed Chinaman, with his queue twisted around on the top of his head, and dressed in a gaily coloured quilted silk robe with wide-flowing sleeves, wide trousers, and shoes peculiar to this race of people, stands behind the primitive counter, ready to attend to the wants of customers. He is not the proprietor, as we ascertain by inquiring for Sin Lee, which provokes the response: 'Him not here. What you wantee?' This is in accordance with his instructions, for these Chinamen are very 'cute, and never acknowledge that they are the particular ones you want until they ascertain the nature of your business; and in keeping up such a mystery they are ably assisted by nature, for all the men bear such strong likeness to each other, that unless a white man is really well acquainted with the particular Chinaman he wants to see, it is almost impossible for him to pick him out of a crowd of them. But a sign being given, and a half-dollar or sack of gold-dust placed on the counter, our Celestial friend produces a card, on which he places a very small quantity of opium, and calls an attendant to conduct us to a smoke-room.

We step from the little front office through a doorway into a passage, from both sides of which open several small doors. One of these being opened by the attendant, we find ourselves in a room or stall about six feet wide and seven long, and although the ceiling is low, yet the partitions do not reach to it on either side. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all plain pine-boards; no paper-hanger, plasterer, or painter has ever tested his skill in any part of this house; no decorator or upholsterer has ever found his services needed to furnish this infamous den, presided over by as low a grade of Chinamen as ever landed on American soil. The only furniture in the stall the attendant has thrown open is a bench built the entire length of the room, about five feet wide and four feet from the floor; on this is stretched an old piece of carpet; in each corner

is a dirty pillow, which has the appearance of being stuffed with a block of wood; while in the centre of the bench stands a small lamp, with an opium pipe and piece of steel, which looks like a knitting-needle, lying beside it. There is no sign of a window in the room; no light can penetrate it except through the door in the passage. The smell of stale opium-smoke is sufficiently oppressive to give a novice such a fit of sickness as could hardly be excelled by the rolling of an ocean steamer in a stiff gale. No fresh air has ever mingled itself with the fumes; no ventilation or comfort is asked for by devotees to this vice; for old smokers have told me that the fascination is so great, that after smoking only a few times, they have found it almost impossible to break themselves of the habit, which in many cases mere curiosity caused them to form.

To the uninitiated, the opium pipe is a puzzle, for it has not any similarity to a tobacco pipe. The stem is about twenty-four inches long, and as thick as a medium-sized walking-stick; while the bowl of the ordinary pipe in this case presents a flat polished surface about an inch and a half in diameter, with a small hole in the centre. If the smoker is a novice, the attendant takes a reclining position on one side of the lamp, while the victim occupies a similar position on the other. Now we discover the use of the knitting-needle, for the Chinaman takes a certain quantity of the black gummy opium from the card on to the steel point; this he holds in the flame of the lamp, twirling the other end gently between his thumb and finger until the opium melts. Then he dexterously places the melted mass on the flat surface of the pipe, with the steel point in the hole in the centre. This is called 'rolling opium;' and regular frequenters of the 'joint' soon learn to roll for themselves as dexterously as the Chinamen. The pipe is then handed to the smoker, who proceeds to draw the fumes through the stem in the same manner that a man smokes a pipe full of tobacco, except that the bowl or flat surface on which the opium was placed has to be kept in the flame of the lamp to keep the drug alight. A few whiffs, and the rolling operation has to be gone through again; and a few pipes—unless the smoker be an old hand—will send him to sleep, and to dream, as some have described it, pleasant fairy-like dreams.

One initiated in this vicious habit can tell as soon as he sees the smoker take the first whiff whether he be a novice or a regular 'fiend.' The novice will draw in short whiffs quickly; but the old-timer takes what is known as the 'long draw;' in other words, draws slowly, and inhales the fumes through his entire system; at the same time his face wears such a satisfied look as to give an onlooker the impression that he is in an enviable state of bliss. Once asleep under the influence of this poisonous drug, the 'fiend' is allowed to occupy the stall until he awakes without interference. On awaking, his sensations are not so pleasant as they were; he feels a pricking through his entire body, as though some one was sticking pins into him by the thousand. If it has been his first experience, he is likely to feel very sick, as a man who has just awakened after a carousal on liquor; and if he is sensible, he will never again 'hit the pipe,'

as is the expression used. But if he is a regular 'fiend,' in a space of a few hours at most he will retrace his steps to the 'joint,' there to smoke himself again into a state of unconsciousness.

Let us take a further look through this establishment, where the Chinamen are getting rich, at the expense not only of the pockets but of the heart's-blood of their white neighbours. Stepping into the passage from our stall, and opening the other doors as we walk, we see in each room one, two, three, and sometimes four 'fiends' of both sexes, either dreaming off the effects of the deadly drug, or else smoking. So far as noise is concerned we might be in a vast tomb, for opium affects the brain in an entirely different manner from whisky, and the victims are entirely harmless. It quiets all the passions instead of inflaming them, and this is one of the reasons why opium-smoking can be carried on to such an extent without detection, for the older the smoker the more secretive he becomes; and the laws are now so strictly enforced all over this country, that it would be a most difficult matter to obtain a view of the interior of any smoke-house. Indeed, even in that far-away mining camp, and at that time, when the population were careless of such crimes as gambling and others against the morals of society, we virtually put a stop to this traffic in a short time; for when those ignorant of the terrible effects of the drug learned how quickly it would rob a man of all semblance of manhood, the officers received such assistance as frightened the Chinamen at least sufficiently to make them very secretive in conducting the business.

INVENTIONS IN GAUGING.

GAUGING, as every one knows, is the means of arriving at the approximate gross quantity or 'contents,' as it is called, of liquid in casks. To all brewers and distillers, and importers or exporters of beer, wines, and spirits, correct gauging is a matter of moment. The government gauger is the officer of customs or of excise whose duty it is to discover the contents of the casks of dutiable goods, with the object of assessing the amount of duty to be levied. A trifling error in the calculation, or, rather, in the system of calculation, means many thousands of pounds per annum out of the pockets either of the mercantile community or of the Crown. If the mode of calculation unduly favours the Crown, the merchants suffer, and *vice versa*. Hence, it is essential that the mode of gauging the contents of casks, by which so many millions of revenue are assessed, should be as far as possible strictly accurate. The safest plan to arrive at the quantity in any given cask would be to draw the contents off, and so measure them; but this is a tedious process, and is an impracticable one where tens of thousands of casks have to be dealt with. It is obvious, therefore, that some system of measurement must be adopted without reverting to the primitive one of drawing off the contents.

In the excise service, the measurement is arrived at by weighing the contents. The excise has mainly to deal with one item of spirit only, termed British Plain Spirits, consisting of home-manufactured gin or whisky or British brandy.

The goods to be assessed being home-manufactured, it is easy to ascertain the measurement of casks by weighing the empty casks; deducting this, the weight of full casks gives the required contents. But this cannot be done by the customs officers, who have to deal with casks of all sizes and construction imported from abroad. Knowing nothing whatever of the weight (or tare) of these casks of imported brandy, rum, geneva, plain spirits, and wines when empty, the customs department has perforce continued to use the recognised system of gauging by external wooden calipers, from which one inch is cut off—gauging officers having to supply differences according to the thickness of the cask or peculiarity of figure—the latter a geometrical allowance, in point of fact, for want of symmetry. Robert Burns himself gauged after this fashion. A rude attempt to allow for the ever-varying thickness of the heads of casks is made by causing the wooden calipers by which the officers take the lengths to show two inches less than the actual outside measurement. This arbitrary deduction of an inch from each head has to be revised by the guesswork of the gauger, who deems it sometimes necessary to greatly increase this allowance, and at other times actually to add to the length shown.

To obviate this chance-work, Mr Geo. D. Ham, a surveyor of the port of London, who has compiled several standard works on the customs and excise regulations for the revenue and mercantile communities, has just patented an ingenious invention for measuring the *internal* lengths of casks with absolute certainty by a rod or staff, which, when placed in the bung-hole of a cask, not only takes with absolute accuracy the exact internal length, and indicates it on the upper part, but actually registers it; so that at any time after he has withdrawn the rod, the gauging officer can, on referring to the instrument, see what is the length of the cask. The name given by the inventor to this instrument is Endometer (interior measurer); and this in conjunction with another invention of Mr Ham's—his Micrometer Compasses, which indicate the thickness of the long staves—will enable the heavy customs duties on foreign spirits to be assessed with an accuracy never before obtainable. The same ingenious officer has, after many years of patient experiment, improved the rule for making revenue calculations in regard to the ullage quantities—that is to say, the actual liquid quantity in casks not full. The quantity that a cask will hold when full—technically called the 'content'—is the basis for all subsequent calculation. As the casks remain in the warehouse they of course gradually become less and less full, and the quantity in a cask not full has hitherto been arrived at by a long and circuitous mode of double casting, supplemented by mental calculation. But Mr Ham's rule shows by one setting the exact ullage in the cask; and more than this, the same rule computes by one single setting the 'proof quantities'—that is, the standard or proof strength at which duties are charged and the revenue accounts kept.

As perhaps some of our readers may not understand what is meant by 'proof' quantities, we may observe that a certain mixture of alcohol constitutes what is termed 'proof,' and when the 'spirit'—brandy, gin, rum, &c., as the case may

be—does not contain this proportion of alcohol, it is termed 'under proof,' and an exactly corresponding deduction is made from the duty charged. On the other hand, if it contains more than the standard of strength, it is called 'over proof,' and charged accordingly. Thus, 100 liquid gallons at ten 'U.P.' are reckoned as 90 gallons; and on the other hand, some of the concentrated German spirit, now so extensively imported and, among other purposes, used largely for the adulteration of brandy, gin, rum, &c., is sixty-nine 'O.P.'—that is to say, 100 liquid gallons reckon and are charged as 169 proof gallons.

It is confidently expected that Mr Ham's inventions will revolutionise gauging. Whilst they are calculated to effect much saving in the time and labour of officers of customs and excise throughout the United Kingdom, their principal claim to consideration is that they will secure exactness in the assessment of revenue duties.

AUTUMN BLOOM.

Young Spring had gone by blushing, and kind Summer
Had smiled and lingered, then gone out of sight;
When Autumn came, a wrinkled sad new-comer,
With dark eyes dimmed in Memory's misty light.

I sought the woods—the hawthorn leaves were sear;
The haws were plucked, or withering on the bough;
The blue-bell stems had fallen prone—How dear
Their beauty and their fragrance would be now!

Then o'er my soul swept great waves of self-pity:
'Why has my time for joyance come so late?
My summer stilled in the smoky city—
And now the flowers are dead! O cruel Fate!'

I sought my chamber. Rain came hurrying down—
Resistless rain, that hid the solemn hills,
And quenched the laughter of the little town.
Then grew I more content with all my ills,

As with faint water-colours day by day
A landscape blurred was sketched by the wild rain—
'The year and I have both grown old and gray;
No bud shall blush or bloom for us again!'

After a week, I lifted up my eyes;
The sun was shining, and I ventured forth
Down by the river. What was my surprise
To see a rosy blush there in the North

On Tinto's cheek! Old Tinto, that had stood
Black-browed and frowning all the summer o'er.
'Twas heather-bloom! Then thought I: 'God is good;
Even in Autumn there are joys in store.

'O heart, hard heart! put on thy Autumn glow
(A richer red after the rainy weather!);
Mourn not for Spring, for the lost Long-ago;
But clothe thy yawning clefts with honeyed heather.'

MARION.

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TAWNY AUTUMN.

ONE afternoon in late autumn I ascended a gentle hill for the purpose of seeing if Nature had lit her beacons of bracken to warn all whom it might concern that the warfare of the seasons was about to commence.

Yes; there they shone, those flaming warnings, lighting up the dim green fastnesses of the distant fir woodlands with a glowing fire, so intense that the sky above them seemed to reflect the glory. But on closer examination I concluded that it was not the reflection of the bracken which thus mellowed the sky, but the softened radiance of the autumn sunshine which was not strong enough to absorb the moist and veiling atmosphere saturated with the laboured breathings, if I may so put it, of the dying foliage of the surrounding forests.

This throbbing haze, this tawny tint, gave a distinct character to the day. It stole out of the captive sunshine and rested upon the stubble-fields, and it was repeated with staccato effect by the yellow flowers which predominate in autumn. The yellow orbs of the silver-rayed daisy led the harmony of colour, for the tiny flower is Nature's hardiest pioneer and claims a share in every grassy sod all the year round; the blond enamel of a few lingering buttercups contrasted with the crumbling gipsy gold of the tall dock-sorrel still flourishing luxuriantly; the garish ragwort fringed the stubble, its gilded blossoms and rank spreading stems as strong as when in days of yore it was the dreaded steed of the witches who scoured the midnight skies; the sensitive mouse-ear hawkweed unfolded its golden fringes after the noonday siesta; and the straggling spires of the yellow bedstraw shone in the sun: all these accentuated the autumnal effect.

Still more pronounced was the russet bronze of a distant belt of beeches, lifting their sleek gray trunks beside the waters of a pool faintly shining at the base of the hill beyond the stubble-fields, its neutral tint broken by the silver track

of a water-hen, like a crack upon the smooth mirror.

The leaves of the elms crowning the hill came pattering down sapless and insect-eaten, and the remaining once green and rustling foliage had a duskier look in its scantier abundance, though a grateful circumference of shade still fell upon the warm sward, grown springy and soft through the constant nibbling of innumerable sheep.

The grasshoppers were enjoying the dewless afternoon, springing their whirring rattles to proclaim their presence in a hundred directions upon the sunny slope; and so still was the air that the curious 'flop' caused by their grotesque leaping as they filliped over the grass was distinctly heard.

This surrounding stillness, this spacious silence, is a never-failing satisfaction to me; it proclaims the fact that patient sunburnt Nature does all her unending works in that unhasting leisure which is almost immortal. Her stillness is the benign repose of conscious power—not the dull inertia of sheer exhaustion—not the vacant forgetful sleep of death.

'There is no death; what seems so is transition,' cries Nature, echoing the poet; and she proceeds to prove it by sending the last tenacious leaves of autumn from the boughs, pushed thence by the strong young buds of next year's spring. They are there on the trees, curled up and hiding amid the autumn tints; they will brave the winter, wrapped securely in downy sealed sheaths, awaiting her beckoning signal to burst forth in a silent haste.

She sends clouds of aerial seeds on their wandering mission of propagation, and she snugly hides beneath the earth millions of dormant living forces to bide the time when she shall command them to renew the yearly miracle of the spring. 'There is no death; what seems so is transition;' for Nature's old familiar forms, her primal elements, are continually being moulded anew into fresh creations.

While I was thus musing, fanned by the odorous south wind, and more than half asleep in the

languid afternoon, my ears were sharply assailed by what seemed to be the rapid cannonade of a mimic warfare. 'Pop! pop! pop!' came the prompt and steady discharge. Was Nature bewitched, or had I chanced upon a veritable 'Sleepy Hollow,' and thus become 'fey?' I started up fully awake and listened again. Again the mimic warfare raged at intervals, but where were the cannon-balls that were evidently flying about?—A marvel, a marvel! A ball suddenly struck my hand, and lo! it was a pea from a clump of broom bushes beneath whose shade I lay. The bushes had long lost their golden blossoms, and they now stood darkly green, laden with ripe pea-pods which now and again burst with a loud noise under the influence of the light and heat.

But anon another sound came echoing over the hill, and the woodlands became vocal with the hallooing of huntsmen, the baying of hounds, and the musical call of the horn. The red-coated riders came hurrying over the hill, leaping the fence near which I stood; swiftly they rode along the russet leaf-strewn path, hastening away to the upland woods in which sly Reynard was hiding.

It needed but this vanishing touch of scarlet to reveal the full warm splendour of the tawny autumn day. How the brown and crimson of beech and oak burst upon my vision as it followed the hunters flashing through the wood! How golden were the swinging tresses of the lady-birches against the far blue sky! how brilliant shone the poplars by the pool! A pheasant rose on heavy tawny wing; a brown rabbit hastened to its burrow in the bank of red earth just visible between the gaps of flaming bracken; and the mellow haze melted imperceptibly and harmoniously over all, as it leaned from the sky, softly pillowed upon the fragrant southern breeze.

Straight and level flashed the sunshine into many an otherwise unperceived brown burrow, revealing here and there a startled pair of twitching ears and a timid twinkle of fear-distended eyes as the sound of the horn and the 'Hark, away!' were borne backward through the woods. Slowly, slowly the drowsy calm returned to the warm hillside where tawny bees—those swart sun-lovers—were roaming, forgetful of the dew of the morning as they swung from flower to flower.

I descended the hill—for the pool shining far below attracted me—giving a wide berth to the straggling bramble sprays that would fain have detained me; passed a group of mountain-ash trees gay with coralline rowans; and paused to note the mossy crimson excrescences studding the leafy stems of the wild-rose bushes, for these gay imitators of the long-departed roses were the lovely many-celled homes of minute white worms.

At length I stood on the verge of the pool, just in time to see the last of the meadow-sweet shower its florets of foam upon the still water. The reeds were growing rusty and beginning to sigh in the rising autumnal breeze; soon their sapless pipes will flute the music of Pan the river-god—that wondrous music which awaits the passing-by of the poet to interpret its wind-swept melody.

I stood so still among the rushes that an unobtrusive thrush alighted on a gray stone almost at my feet. He had a snail in his bill, and he flung

the shell against the stone with a force that shattered the protecting home of the succulent inmate. The dainty was greedily swallowed by the thrush, who stood quite unconscious of my proximity, with his speckled head erect and eager.

How the wind sung in the firs that autumn day! It was a song that will live in my memory for ever. Now it sounded faint and far, crooning the dirge of the dying year, and ever it rose to higher heights of melody until it seemed to shake the woodlands, striking upon the harps of the firs with terrible chords as powerful as the sound of many waters.

Leaves were whirling, acorns and beech-mast were dropping into the ruffled pool, and no song of birds broke with familiar and reassuring treble upon that wondrous, primeval music from which I at last turned, awe-struck, away.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

THE Rev. Edward Granby was vicar of St Mary's, Ecclesfield, a small country town on the north-east border of Lancashire. The living was a comfortable one, and as his wife had brought him a small fortune, he was tolerably well to do in worldly matters. He had not married till rather late in life, and had had but one child, the young lady whose acquaintance we have already made, who at this time was nineteen years old. His wife had died many years before the opening of our story, and from that time the little household had been governed by his unmarried sister, who was some fifteen years younger than her brother.

Mr Granby had neither an impulsive disposition nor a warm temperament. Beyond his family circle he had never contracted but two real friendships, both of which dated from his college days. Of those friends one had been Wilmot Burrell's father; and the other a person whose life had been given over to commercial pursuits in a distant town. He, however, had died some half-dozen years back. When Wilmot's father lay on his deathbed, Mr Granby promised him that he would bring up his son as though he were a child of his own. That promise he had conscientiously fulfilled. When the boy was old enough, he had been sent to a good boarding-school, but all his vacations were spent at the vicarage. When, at sixteen years of age, he was asked what business or profession he would like to follow for a livelihood, he replied that he wanted to go to sea, and to that determination he adhered in spite of all persuasion to the contrary. As Wilmot had no fortune of his own, Mr Granby did not feel justified in obtaining a commission for him in the navy (it was before the days of competitive examinations); he was consequently obliged to fall back on the mercantile marine. A little while later a situation was found for the youngster as trading captain's clerk on board a merchantman belonging to a large firm in the African trade. He had been several voyages already in that capacity, and so well were his employers satisfied with him, that on this occasion he was going out in the responsible position

of supercargo, with a small commission on the freight in addition to his salary.

Agnes and he had been so much together almost from childhood that it seemed but the natural outcome of their intimacy that they should become engaged to each other when they grew up. Mr Granby offered no opposition to the arrangement, for although Wilmot was without private means, he had so imbued the simple-minded vicar with a belief in his abilities that the latter felt sure he could not fail to make his way in the world; besides which—and this latter reason was a weighty one with the vicar—Wilmot was the son of his dearest friend—the friend of his youth—to whose memory his thoughts still clung with old-time tenderness. Then, again, Agnes herself would not be without fortune—a much larger fortune, it might be, as the vicar often said to himself with an inward chuckle, than anybody was aware of. Little was said about it at the vicarage, but it was looked upon as a settled thing that the two young people should become man and wife at no very distant date. It was a matter about which there was no need for hurry.

With our little group at the vicarage time flowed on for some months after Wilmot's departure freighted with little or no change. Day followed day, and one week merged itself into another, each bringing its round of humble duties and its share of quiet pleasures; but neither in their thoughts nor their conversation was the young wanderer forgotten.

It was about Christmas when Miss Maria first began to notice how much her brother's correspondence seemed to have increased of late, and how he would stand gazing out of his study window of a morning watching impatiently for the coming of the postman. For several years past his friend Squire Dorison had sent him the *Times* day by day after it had been duly read and digested at The Sycamores, and this had hitherto satisfied all the vicar's requirements with regard to news from the outside world. But now the local bookseller had orders to obtain the *Times* direct each day and forward it to the vicarage immediately on its arrival, which, in those days, when the railway system was far from being as complete as it is now, was not till about six o'clock in the evening. The vicar's absences from home, too, began to be more frequent than they had ever been before. He had business of importance to transact, he told his sister, at the market town a dozen miles away. Miss Granby felt that there was a secret somewhere, the first there had ever been between her brother and herself, and she strove in her quiet way to fathom it, but in vain.

As the winter advanced she was pained to see how much older Mr Granby began all at once to look. His parishioners, in their homely way, said among themselves that 'the parson was getting the worse for wear.' The lines round his mouth and the furrows on his brow grew deeper and more plainly observable, and he acquired a habit of touching the wall with his fingers as he walked about the house, as though he were not certain of his steps. Miss Maria felt sure that he was ill, and told him so, but he replied that it was all nonsense, and peremptorily forbade her calling in any medical advice. As winter

merged into spring his correspondence grew more weighty and his absences from home more frequent. His congregation complained that his sermons became weaker and more diluted every Sunday, and that he frequently said the same thing two or three times over. As spring advanced he grew weaker in body and more preoccupied in mind, and a strange feverish excitement shone in his eyes, once so calm and gentle. His temper, which had wont to be so sweet and equable, had now become irritable and uncertain. Still, seeing it could hardly be said that he showed signs of any absolute bodily ailment, it came as a great shock to all who knew him when one morning it was reported through the town that the vicar had been found dead in his bed. All his failings of late were forgotten in the recollection of his pure and blameless life and of his faithful labours in his parish for nearly forty years.

But still greater was the shock when it became bruited about that he had died a pauper, one victim among thousands of others—for that was 'King Hudson's year'—to the mania for speculation in railway scrip and shares. The accumulated savings of many careful years, together with what was left of his wife's fortune, all of which had been intended for his daughter, had been dissipated in a few fatal months. The small ventures in which he had at first embarked having proved successful, he had been lured into deeper waters, only to struggle desperately for a time, while sinking deeper and deeper, and be hopelessly submerged at last. The key was found, the riddle solved; and when Miss Maria went in memory over her brother's manner and conduct during the last six months, she partly realised through what a soul-crushing struggle he must have passed. Too thoughtful for those he loved to make them sharers of his sufferings, perhaps too ashamed to let them become aware that he was a gambler and a dupe, he had locked up the secret in his breast, and unable to retrieve his steps, had gone on from bad to worse, hoping against hope, till the fatal knowledge, no longer to be gainsaid, that he and those he loved dearer than life were irremediably ruined, had crushed his already enfeebled constitution with its intolerable weight, and in the effort to bear up under it his heart had given way.

A number of bills which Miss Maria had believed to have been paid long before came trooping in like clamorous wolves as soon as the news of Mr Granby's death was circulated abroad. None of them was heavy individually, yet when taken in the aggregate they made up a total sufficiently alarming to one who saw no means of liquidating them. Miss Maria, after painful reflection, saw no course left but to sell off the library and household furniture, and after everybody should have been paid, for her and Agnes to retire to some spot where their story would be unknown, and there face the dark future as best they might.

So about a month after the funeral, the sale of 'the late Mr Granby's valuable effects' was announced in the usual way. This after-pain was very bitter both to the elder lady and the younger one. To have the home of so many years broken up, rendered still more sacred, as it seemed to them, by the recent presence of death—to have the hearth round which so many

memories clustered invaded by careless strangers, no chamber too sacred to restrain their callous curiosity and thoughtless remarks, no article to rest unprofaned by their rude touch, accustomed to appraise everything by the scale of the auctioneer's hammer—to hear her brother's conduct commented on beneath his own roof by those who saw only one side of the picture—was more than Miss Maria could bear. She had sent Agnes away to a friend's house, wishing to spare her all unnecessary pain, intending herself, true to her theory of duty, to remain on the premises till the last. But at the end of the first day after the contents of the vicarage had been on view, she was compelled in sheer weariness of heart to abandon her post, and leave the house and all it contained in charge of the men appointed by the auctioneer. There were some few things she could not bear to see pass into indifferent hands, which knew not the holy value they possessed in the eyes of a daughter and a sister. Such were the large Bible out of which Mr Granby had been used to read to his household daily for many years; the family clock, an antique piece of furniture, which had stood in the old house at home when Miss Maria and her brother were children; the bed on which the vicar had died, together with an easy-chair and a few other articles. These dear relics Miss Maria caused to be removed prior to the sale.

When all was over and all debts had been paid, Miss Granby found herself with a balance in hand of twenty-five pounds. This sum, together with an annuity of her own of twenty pounds a year, was all that she and Agnes had now to depend upon. Whither should they go? To what spot should they retire? It was evident they would have to labour for their living, and in some large and busy centre of life their chances of obtaining suitable employment would be much greater than in a small provincial town. To some large town, therefore, they must go. Not to London—it was too far away, and the very mention of it frightened Miss Maria, who had never been there, but who had heard fearful accounts of its size and wickedness. Not to Manchester—nobody but factory people lived there, or so ran the belief in remote country places; and besides, it was said to be exceedingly smoky and dirty. Why not to Liverpool? What place could be more eligible than that flourishing town? 'Indeed, I may call it a delightful town,' said the spinster, when debating the point with her niece. 'I spent a month there when I was about your age, and I remember that it was a continual whirl of dances, concerts, and picnics across the water. But I daresay the Liverpool people have sobered down in some measure by this time. And very genteel society, too, my dear, which is always a comfort to any one who has been properly brought up.' So to Liverpool it was decided that they should go.

Agnes was secretly delighted that they were going there, for she would then be on the spot to welcome her lover on his return. She had written to him, informing him of her father's death and their altered circumstances; but there had not yet been time to hear from him in reply.

A fortnight later, our two ladies were settled in their new home.

It had been dreary work hunting for lodgings, and it was not till the afternoon of the fourth day after their arrival that Miss Granby and

Agnes succeeded in finding rooms which were at all to their liking, and fulfilled some at least of the requirements which Miss Maria had catalogued in her own mind as being absolutely essential before setting out on their weary search.

'Liverpool is very much changed, my dear,' she said to her niece with a melancholy shake of the head—'changed for the worse, I'm afraid, since I was a girl. It is so dismal and dingy, that I should scarcely have known it for the same place, and the manners of the people seem to have very much deteriorated.'

The apartments they had engaged comprised what is called the 'parlour floor,' together with a small extra room fitted up as a kitchen, of a small house in a quiet street off the London Road.

Next day, when places had been found for the few articles of furniture they had brought with them from the vicarage, *vice* sundry other articles dispossessed, the rooms put on a much more pleasant and home-like appearance. And yet what a contrast to the dear home they had so lately left! To dwell upon the difference would have been heart-breaking, and neither of them spoke of it to the other. Neither of them forgot the white-haired old man lying low beneath the shadow of the yews in a far-away churchyard. He was much in their thoughts. With the familiar voice of the old clock sounding in their ears, they had only to shut their eyes to enable them to fancy themselves back at the vicarage, and to half expect to hear the vicar's well-remembered footstep in the passage. They cried quietly together without speaking much, like women who know and comprehend each other's sorrow.

No sooner were the breakfast things cleared away next morning than our two ladies set themselves seriously to consider what kind of regular employment it behoved them to look out for—'something at once genteel and remunerative,' as Miss Maria put it, 'and suitable for ladies in reduced circumstances.' Truly, a difficult question to decide upon—a question which, so long as they were at a distance from the spot, had not been without its hopeful aspects and had seemed capable of easy solution, but which, now that they were here among the veritable bricks and mortar of a large town, put on quite a different appearance. The longer they discussed it the more nonplussed they became. At last, in sheer despair, they summoned Mrs Strake, the landlady, to their councils—a worthy person, not devoid of ideas, only that her wits moved slowly, as though they needed lubricating. She did little more than shake her head and say, 'she really didn't know' and 'she really couldn't think.' Miss Maria was a little disheartened, but would have scorned to acknowledge it.

Next morning, after carefully scanning the advertisements in the newspapers, among which they found nothing likely, they put on their outdoor things and sallied forth. Arm in arm they went for a long ramble through the busy streets, peering into the shop windows and those of establishments and emporiums of various kinds, but nowhere finding an announcement of anything likely to suit them, as, indeed, it would have been somewhat wonderful if they had. At length, to Agnes's great delight, they found themselves on

one of the quays near the Prince's Dock, with the splendid river shining full and broad before them. They stood for a long time watching the steamers flitting to and fro, and the great ships floating out with the tide, and the busy crowds of people that swept round them in an unending stream. And so the second day came to an ineffectual end.

Mrs Strake came up from her basement kitchen next morning with the breakfast tray, and a suggestion that the two ladies should open a school in their little sitting-room for young children. There was nothing of the kind in the neighbourhood, she went on to say, and the want of one was much felt. She herself would engage to find seven or eight scholars among her neighbours to begin with; and by putting a card in the window, they would no doubt before long have as many as they could find room for. Then she added that if the ladies agreed to her proposition, she should want an extra shilling a week added to the rent, in consideration of the annoyance and dirt which a number of children 'traipsing' in and out of the house would cause her.

Miss Granby, after thanking her, said that she would take a little time to consider the matter; but at the end of a couple of hours she sent for Mrs Strake and told her that she and her niece had decided to accept the suggestion. So in the course of the day Miss Maria hunted out a few second-hand benches at a broker's shop, and purchased some spelling-books and other needful stock in trade, and on the Monday morning following the school was opened in due form. In a fortnight from the date of opening they had as many scholars as they could accommodate. It was a pretty sight to see the youngsters come trooping in of a morning as the clock struck nine, each bobbing a little courtesy, or touching a shining lock brushed carefully by loving hands before leaving home. Miss Maria they liked, though they stood considerably in awe of her; but Miss Agnes they loved with all their hearts, as who, indeed, could have helped doing.

The children were young and their parents poor, and Miss Maria's charges were necessarily low, so she soon discovered that, notwithstanding the number of her scholars, it was imperatively needful that she and Agnes should seek some additional mode of adding to their income. Consequently, Mrs Strake was again consulted. That slow-thinking person revolved the matter in her mind while washing up her pots and pans, then she went up-stairs and standing before Miss Maria, said abruptly: 'Shirt-making.' A blush mantled on Miss Maria's cheek as the word fell on her ears; and after that, she fumed for a couple of days at the thought of two gentlewomen lowering themselves to do work of the character implied. But as the great fact that they could not make ends meet out of their present means forced itself more forcibly on her mind, she began to see the necessity of yielding, at all events for a time, and till something more eligible should offer itself. So Mrs Strake's services were put in requisition, and by means of some occult influence possessed by her, our two ladies were supplied by one of the large outfitting firms in Lord Street with a number of shirts, ready cut out, which they were required to hem, fell, backstitch, gusset, and turn out complete at all points, and that for a sum so

preposterously small that Miss Maria went red and white by turns with surprise and indignation when it was told her, as many unfortunate seamstresses besides herself have done both before and since. The additional income from this source would have been hardly perceptible had not both aunt and niece sewed away hard and fast, early in the morning and late at night long after school hours were over, till cramped fingers and aching heads compelled them to leave off till the morrow.

MEDICAL PRACTICE IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.

It used to be said that the march of civilisation was always going westward. Probably it is, and that is the reason why so many habits and theories remain in the western counties, civilisation not having yet driven them out. I suspect that when another generation has had time to show the benefits of compulsory education, there will not be in this western county such interesting patients as I have met with in my practice of twenty-three years. It is not to be understood that every one of the incidents actually occurred to me, but they either came within my personal knowledge or were told me by people upon whose statements I could rely.

Now and then the belief in witchcraft appears either in conversation or in the police reports. A girl about twenty years of age had long suffered from headaches, which were largely due to working in a noisy factory. Now, please to follow the old mother's train of reasoning: the headaches resist the action of medicine—in which the west-country folk have the strongest faith—and there is no apparent earthly cause. The factory sounds are altogether left out of court. Therefore, it is presumable that the girl is under some supernatural influence, or, in the old woman's language, that she has been 'overlooked,' or that 'some one have 'a put some'at upon her.' Now for the cure. Jane Tomkins is going to the 'wise woman' at Wilston for professional advice, and takes the patient with her in the donkey cart—a Sunday expedition of ten miles out and ten miles home. But, alas! this was of no use; the fee was a sovereign, and the girl was all but destitute. The reader will be glad to learn that the headaches yielded to the quiet and good food of a household where Maria has long been a domestic servant. By the way, the errand which led Jane Tomkins to take her long drive to the 'wise woman' was rather interesting. Her husband had lost his wages on his way home after being paid; and Jane hired the donkey and cart to seek the help of the Wilston witch. Now, this spiritual person required carnal reward; for revealing the place where Jane's twelve shillings had been lost, this mercenary prophet asked fifteen shillings!

But this credulity is not found only among the uneducated. I think that a shoe of a horse or donkey would be found in the dairy of most farmhouses which have been standing for fifty years. A necklace made of short lengths of woody-nightshade is often put on a child who has had fits, to keep off evil influences. Witches and evil spirits are unwilling to pass over running water; this fact has been turned to account in this way: mercury by its fluidity is

supposed to cheat a short-sighted spirit, so it is worn in a little bottle hung round the neck night and day. I have seen this myself.

Fifty or sixty years ago, the rector of a village near the town where the writer lives was famous as a witch-finder. I have never learnt what he did with his victims. I say victims, because I suspect that cruelty and injustice were done to many poor old women without any reason whatever except the malignity of their neighbours.

While some of my patients are credulous, they are also very fond of assigning causes to all their diseases. Happily, they are easily satisfied. For instance, an innkeeper had a feeble child who did not take much food. The father was much disturbed about this, and confided to the doctor his belief that the son 'hadn't got no glutcher to glutch anything.' ('Glutch' is Somerset for 'swallow.') In infancy, the cause of all maladies is the 'wind;' later, 'teeth;' then comes the period of 'worms.' Later in life, everything arises from a 'chill' or a 'strain.' Both of these last are causes acting from the outside, be it noticed; a subtle compliment to the soundness of west-country constitutions. We do not like to confess any weakness in ourselves: all illness must come from a chill (that is, the climate) or a strain (that is, violence).

Townpeople are often troubled with sleeplessness. Perhaps we do better in this way because we live with green grass before our eyes. Professor Bain says that this is very soothing. Fresh air and early hours are also soothing, so that we in the west are apt to be sleepy. I once saw a farmer sitting out in his field on a three-legged milking-stool, with the pail between his knees, sound asleep. The cow had walked off, leaving him there with rain pouring into his pail instead of milk.

But another patient was constantly subject to fits of drowsiness. He was a professional man, and was much troubled by this tendency. One afternoon two parties—two or three persons in each—came to his house by appointment, and were sent into separate rooms. While talking to the first set, he had occasion to go to another part of the house to fetch a paper from his private room, passing through the room in which the second set were waiting. He sat down at his writing-table to take out the paper, and fell asleep. No one went to look for him; and when he awoke, about three-quarters of an hour later, all the people had left his house, tired of waiting.

This gentleman gave me a curious instance of the survival of the old doctrine of 'sympathy.' Price, a farmer who rented some of his land, had borrowed some hayforks from my friend, who had also fields which he farmed himself. Some careless person had placed a hayfork—prong upwards—against a haystack which was being made. The farmer's son coming off the stack, slid down, instead of descending by the ladder in the usual way. He unfortunately struck his leg against one of the points of the fork, producing a nasty wound, which went on badly, and eventually caused him to keep his bed. The landlord called at Price's house one morning to ask for the return of his hayforks, and hearing of young Price's accident, offered to call upon his medical man and ask him to go and see the injured man. 'No, sir,' said the mother; 'I won't trouble you; I think we can

manage without the doctor.' And then she went on to say that all the hayforks should be returned at once except one, this being the one which had caused the accident. It had been wrapped up with certain herbs and buried in the garden, that the wound might be healed through the influence of the herbs on the weapon which caused the wound. I have never met with any other instance of belief in the doctrine of sympathy propounded by Sir Kenelm Digby about 1650. Many of our readers will remember the story which Digby tells about a man who had been wounded in a duel, and who had obtained the loan of the sword from his enemy. The weapon was covered with 'sympathetic powder' and carefully laid aside. Then the wound became less painful; but a servant finding the sword, began to clean it, and the wounded man at once felt feverish, and the sore place grew hot and irritable. The patient suspected the cause of his pain, and ordered the powder to be again laid on the sword, which was carefully locked up until the wound had healed.

It was a common thing in one district, twenty years ago, to see a pitchfork in a bedroom. This peculiar weapon was so popular because a robber had been wounded by one; and the two punctures, of unmistakable shape, had led to the conviction of the criminal.

Very strange messages are sometimes sent. A favourite formula is, 'I don't expect she'll be alive again I get back.' Notes are often very curious. This is a copy of the best I ever received: 'GREEN-VALE, *Ogest* 11, 1879. Mr Toumkus. Sir if you Ples to send me one botol more the Lorshen Woter [lotion water]. Doses my Leg Gretel [a great deal] Good 2 Boxes Ointment with Burge [the carrier] then make out my A Count I am going to Live Greenvale by the midel the month of September.—From your Obedient Sirvent JOHN SMITH.

'Btes [Please] to Exquise my Writing and Spilling.'

Part of the difficulty which the untaught find in writing letters arises from the trouble they have in expressing their ideas, sometimes inclining to be over-particular about their words; for instance, the verb 'create' is always used when medicine is desired to bring an appetite. One of the most miserable old women I ever saw, when asked whether she could eat her food, said: 'I thank—I praise my glorifol Heavenly Father—I have a middlingish stomick to my vittles.' And a woman, to show how eager for his meals her husband was, said: 'He do bäal [bawl] for his vittles loud enough to zlat [crack] his kecker' [windpipe]. This difficulty in giving shape to their ideas makes some patients very trying to a busy medical man. If asked, 'What do you complain of?' they seem to think it a sharp repartee to reply: 'That is what I came to be told, sir.' The answer from an impatient doctor used to be: 'Then just sit down for half an hour and think what you came here to tell me.'

A man came into the surgery one day with a lot of mud on his clothes. He was asked, 'What have you been doing, John?'—'O sir, 'twas all along o' that there powny; he clipped up and he fell down, and he drawed [threwed] I down, and he drawed hisself down, and there we was booäth down together.' This wonderful sentence, which is quite genuine, is equivalent to the fact that the pony had fallen and thrown the man.

These expressions are queer; but the ideas of nurses are queerer. Why should a newly born infant be smeared all over with lard? Or why should the poor little thing have its head anointed with brandy? I can account for this last practice on the part of many nurses, as I have seen the way in which they warm the spirit. The temperature of her mouth being about the same as that of the infant's head, the nurse takes a mouthful of brandy, and after allowing it time to grow thoroughly warm, she ejects some or all of the diluted spirit into her hand and pours it over the little round head. Brandy must be very attractive to the poor, if one may judge from its universal use in emergencies. There is always consolation for the sorrowing relatives to be derived from it, even if the patient has gone beyond the need of stimulants.

I knew an old farmer who was a doctor himself in a small way; for instance, he had his finger crushed; and it was so treated (not by me) that the bone projected from the stump. This he took away by rubbing it down on the farmyard grindstone! The medical man who piloted him through his childhood's diseases must have practised about the beginning of the century, but he anticipated one point of modern practice, namely, dressing with fresh garden soil, as follows from the old man's account of his treatment of an attack of fever: 'Dr John Franks, he wur a practical man, he wur. What d'ye think he did wi I when I had the veaver? [fever]. He told my mother she wur to have a hole dug in the gæarden, and take I out of bed and put I neaked into thic there hole, cover I up, and there let I bide for zoo [so] long. Well, I got better, you know.' And this being *post hoc* (treatment), was, of course, *propter hoc*.

These notes have been mainly about patients. There is not much that is peculiar about country-doctors in the present day; they are very much like the rest of the faculty. But thirty years ago, many of them wore a white necktie and black clothes, such as are now considered suitable for evening dress. This did not apply to the riding doctor, who went about on horseback in buckskin breeches and topboots. One gentleman of this kind left in his wardrobe at his death twenty-four pair of these enduring garments, and he was the consultant of the neighbourhood, or, as his nickname went, the 'one-pound-one man.' Great was the consternation in a farmer's family when, at the end of an attendance through a long illness, this buckskin physician sent in a bill for three hundred guineas. A similar emotion was felt by another farmer in the following circumstances. His wife had a tumour which needed removal; his own medical man was quite competent to do the operation, but the farmer wished a 'London doctor' to officiate at the patient's home, about a hundred and twenty miles from town. When all was done and the London surgeon about to leave, the husband said: 'Please, sir, what be I in your debt?'—'Oh, let me see. Eighty guineas is the proper fee.' The farmer very ruefully went and found eighty pounds, and said: 'I suppose that will do, sir?' (His own medical man would have received five or six pounds.) Mileage may be a very convenient basis for demanding a large fee, but surely it is a most fallacious and unjust mode of estimating the value of a medical man's services. The guinea per

mile of the old consultants probably arose from the cost of posting, which would be the only available means of reaching a patient in an emergency, or of getting into out-of-the-way places at any time. But all this has been altered by the railway system, and consultants' fees have been lowered.

In the old times, the medical man was the friend of the family to such an extreme degree that when a new member was added, the doctor was expected to spend many hours with the rejoicing father and his friends. Pipes, beer, and a bowl of punch helped to swell the general cheerfulness.

A lady told me that the medical man who was in attendance at the time of her birth received from her father three guineas, half a loin of veal, and a hogshead of cider. I was once offered a pair of old silver sugar-tongs by way of a fee.

The poor have a naked directness about their remarks which would astonish sensitive people. A foolish nurse once bent over the bed of a very nervous woman and said to me in an awe-struck voice: 'Do you think she will recover, sir?'—Going up some very narrow stairs to see a young man who was seriously ill, his mother remarked to me: 'These stairs are very awkward, sir—very bad for getting a corpse down.' It may comfort the reader to know that the patient was much too dull of perception to be hurt by the unpleasant suggestion.

Cautions are given in works on nursing against talking in whispers before the patient or in an undertone just outside his door. But imagine the training and tact of a London (not west-country) nurse who said to the gentleman in her charge: 'When the change has come, would you like your face washed every morning, sir? Some gentlemen do—they say it is so refreshing.' In anticipation, I suppose. But it was a delicate attention to the lifeless form.

A little boy's leg had been broken by a kick from a cow. While I was setting the fracture, the father, standing at the bottom of the bed, remarked sympathetically: 'He allays wur a caddling [clumsy] little toöad.'

But this is not the rule. Sympathy with suffering, kindness to their fellows in distress, and generosity out of all proportion to their means, are often met with among the simple west-country folk. With an instance of this I will close these notes: a labourer's wife, with children of her own, bending over and caring for her neighbour when in 'nature's hour of trouble,' and at the same time suffering from diphtheria!

WHO DID IT?

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

WITH the first gleam of daylight, Dick Ottery slipped out of the house and went down to the scene of the suspected murder, to search for some clue which might lead to the detection of the crime. He found the watch, as he had expected. It was lying on the floor at some distance, shattered. It had stopped at a quarter past two, and Dick gave a sigh of relief, for he knew, as would everybody else, that at that moment he was engaged in the cricket-field, and that, therefore, whatever

suspicion might be coupled with his name would be cleared, unless it should be shown, upon examination of the watch, that its works were unbroken and that it had stopped in the usual course.

The book which the poor old gentleman had been reading, an ancient copy of Camden's *Britannia*, was still open on the table, and his spectacles lay upon it, as if he had paused in his reading to meditate. On the floor lay his hat and his stick. Dick knew the stick well—a plain cane with no knob or hook with which a deed of blood could have been committed. He examined the room, peered into the rat-holes in the flooring, scrutinised the soil outside for footmarks; but there was nothing whatever to betray the murderer. Then he examined the bushes around for traces of a hasty flight, looked for marks on the wall, all without result, so he returned to the house with the articles he had found.

The news had of course very soon spread abroad that old Jethro Seaton of Colyton Hall had been found dead in his summer-house, and that foul-play was hinted at; and, as Dick had anticipated, people at once whispered to each other, as they talked of the affair over garden gates, at cottage doors, or in groups at the roadside, that young Mr Ottery had in one of his quarrels struck his uncle over the head and killed him.

The inquest was held at the Hall. The evidence of Dr Waller was decisive—that death was not due to natural causes, such as a fit or apoplexy, but that the old gentleman had been struck violently behind the ear by some blunt instrument, certainly not by the stick produced, and not by the chair, which had fallen also. And so, in the absence of all other evidence, the jury returned a verdict of 'Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown;' the hinted suspicion of a jurymen who had once received a thrashing from Dick for cruelty to a horse, that the nephew might know something about the death of his uncle, being at once quashed by the evidence of a watchmaker who said that the mainspring of the watch found in the summer-house was broken, so that the hour indicated was exactly that at which the crime had been committed.

On the next day, the remains of old Jethro Seaton were buried in the family vault; and, small claim as he had upon the affection of the people, he was followed to his last home by all the village, far more, it was understood, out of respect and affection for Dick and Mary Ottery than for him.

It was strange that, amidst all the conjecture and sifting of evidence, no one had thought of associating Claude Shute with the crime—that is, nobody but Mary Ottery. So soon as Dick's innocence was established in her mind, the terrible suspicion had arisen within her, and had refused to be dismissed by argument or sentiment, that the man who was really dearer to her than all else in the world could alone have committed the murder. Everything pointed to the probability. He was at the Hall twenty minutes before the time indicated by the shattered watch as being that at which the deed was done. He had gone to London by the three o'clock train, and, so far as Mary could remember, he had only gone to London once or twice before during the two years of his courtship. Most convincing evi-

dence of all was the tone of the very last conversation she had held with him, the result of which had been that he had unwillingly accepted his fate of being obliged to wait until the death of her uncle should bring about a change in domestic matters.

And yet, knowing Claude Shute as Mary did, in spite of all, he seemed to her the very last man to commit such a deed in cold blood. Once, only once, had she learned that he had a temper at all, but when he left her on this fatal afternoon, she remembered that it was far more in sorrow than in anger.

On the other hand, if Claude Shute did not do it, who else could have possibly gained by such an act? Dick's temper was much more of the kind which might lead to the committal of a terrible act such as this than was Claude's, but Dick would have gained nothing which was not his already. Then an after-thought came to Mary's mind: was it possible that Claude Shute could have murdered Jethro Seaton with the idea that suspicion would at once be directed on Dick, and that by so doing not only would he gain his object and put an end to the weary waiting for Mary, but would be rid of a seemingly implacable enemy?

Impossible! Impossible! The girl scouted the thought immediately after its occurrence.

In due time Jethro Seaton's will was brought by the family lawyer. Mary watched her brother's face as he read it. It suddenly darkened, and he pointed to the clause: 'And to Claude Shute I bequeath the sum of five thousand pounds free of legacy duty.'

Mary's heart sank, and she knew what her brother was going to say.

'Mary,' he said, 'Claude Shute murdered our poor old uncle. What I have always said to you about him is true—that he was a fawning, scheming humbug. Now you can see why he was so fond of uncle, and now I can see why he got rid of him.—Where is he now?'

Mary was so overcome with emotion that she knew not what to say. Could it be, she asked herself, that her Claude, the man whose lips had so often pressed hers, whose ring was still on her finger, that he was, as it seemed, merely a desperate schemer and fortune-hunter; that his mouth had spoken what had never been in his heart; and that he had murdered this poor old man merely to hasten the acquisition of a few thousand pounds?

At that moment the servant came in with a letter. Dick snatched it from the tray; it bore a foreign stamp, and was addressed in Claude's writing. He tore it open, and read:

Hotel Royal, BOULEVARD ANSPACH, BRUSSELS.

MY DARLING MARY—If I must wait, I must do so in exile. I cannot be so near the fruit to attain which I have laboured so long, and feel that I must not touch it. Moreover, I dare not trust myself longer in the neighbourhood of the bulldog. You do not know me as an ill-tempered man; but I can be roused, and I feel that he will rouse me, and then I know that I shall say or do something which will render the gulf between him and me, wide as it already is, impassable. I do not know where I shall go from here; but if you want me,

write to this address, and wherever I am, the letter will reach me. In great haste to catch the post, with kindest love to yourself and very kind regards to your good uncle.—Believe me, ever your affectionate

CLAUDE SHUTE.

'Sly blackguard!' was Dick's comment upon this epistle.—'I'm the bulldog, I suppose, and he dares to threaten me! And pretending not to know anything about what has happened. Penh! It's sickening.'

'Dick,' said Mary quietly, after she had read the letter two or three times, 'in spite of all you say, that is not the letter of a guilty man. Nor do I think the fact of his going abroad condemns him.'

'Don't it? By Jove, I think it does, though!' exclaimed Dick. 'He's gone, so that he can plead an alibi, should suspicion be directed against him. He's a clever fellow; but he wasn't clever enough to calculate upon the evidence which could be got out of a broken watch.'

Mary had spoken from her heart and in firm belief when she gave her opinion that there was nothing suspicious either in the fact of Claude's going away or in the tone of the letter. She could not believe him guilty, although appearances were so terribly against him that she admitted to herself that had he not been her lover she would have condemned him.

'That was why he got away,' continued Dick, who was striding up and down the room with a brow as black as night. 'He knew that suspicion would immediately be fixed on me; and it was just his game to get me out of the way, and to marry you with all poor old uncle's money.—But what's the use of wasting time in discussion? We must act, and that immediately.'

'What are you going to do, Dick?' asked Mary in an agonised voice.

'What am I going to do? Why, put this letter in the hands of the Scotland Yard fellows, have a warrant drawn up, get him arrested, and—hanged!' replied her brother bitterly.

'Don't, Dick—for my sake, don't,' implored the girl.

Dick stopped short and looked at her. 'For your sake, don't!' he repeated. 'Then you know him to be guilty, and you are trying to screen him. If he is innocent, as you say he is, let him come and prove it in fair trial.'

'But appearances are so much against him,' urged the girl. 'Consider, Dick, if that watch had not been found, appearances would equally have been against you.'

'Very well; then I should have asked to be tried,' replied her brother. 'If the man's innocent, it will be proved.'

'Stop! stop! only for a few moments,' cried Mary. 'I can't think he did it! And yet—O my God, my heart will break!' And, utterly overcome by her emotions, she sank to the ground, weeping bitterly. Her brother, having a wholesome contempt for feminine grief in general, and for his sister's ebullition upon this occasion in particular, did not offer to raise her, but left the room.

Mary remained for some minutes prostrate. Suddenly she sprang to her feet. 'I must save him!' she said to herself. 'No one knows yet that he is suspected. If I telegraph to him, he

will have time to get away before the detectives can reach him. I may be doing wrong; pray God I am not; but I am sure he is innocent, although I am as sure that he would stand no chance before a jury.' She ran up-stairs, put on her hat and cloak, and rushed through the gardens by a path which led to a gate in the wall opening on to the village street. What people thought to see her flying along dishevelled and wild-looking, she cared not, but, as if she was the criminal, crept swiftly by back lanes until she reached the railway station. Three times did she write the telegram: three times she tore it up as being absolutely illegible. The fourth time she succeeded better, and handed in:

'From Ottery, Colyton, to Shute, Hotel Royal, Boulevard Anspach, Brussels.—Fly for your life immediately on receiving this.' The clerk looked at her after he had read it.

'It's—it's a cipher,' she stammered; 'Mr Shute will understand it.'

She placed a sovereign down, and rushed away, for the up-train would be due in a few minutes, and she guessed that Dick would go by it.

'Poor Miss Ottery,' said the station-clerk. 'If that there affair at the 'All ain't touched her 'ead, I'm mistook; she's been an' left her change behind her, an' one 'ud think there was ghosts arter her by the way she run in.'

SLEEP AND SLEEPLESSNESS.

AMONGST the peculiarities which belong to man, and man only, there is none perhaps which exercises such a widespread or important influence as sleeplessness. Advancing civilisation has so far only increased it; and science, although it has made some valuable contributions to the immediate cause of sleep—that is, the mechanism in the body by which it is produced—stands almost powerless with regard to removing sleeplessness from the category of human ills.

There is scarcely anything upon which so many dogmatic and yet varying opinions are expressed as the amount of sleep required by individuals. There are many who consider the Great Alfred's division of time into eight hours for labour, eight for amusement, and eight for sleep, as the best possible one. Others, again, cite instances of great men who have influenced the world and yet have taken very little sleep, as showing that eight hours is too much. The elder Descroilles is perhaps the most extreme example, having slept but two hours in the twenty-four; Jeremy Taylor comes next with an allowance of three hours; then Baxter and Wesley with four and six hours respectively. But it is useless to attempt to adduce any rule from isolated examples; the individual wants in each case must be considered, and nature is the surest guide in indicating how much sleep is necessary for the purpose of resting the brain and repairing the nervous system. Some, no doubt, indulge themselves too freely, as was the case with the medical student who started the strange theory that sleep was the natural condition of man, and therefore slept eighteen hours a day, until he died in consequence of apoplexy. Others, again, with an almost overpowering tendency to somnolence, have seen the

wisdom of keeping it in check, and been to some extent rewarded. Lord Hailes, when composing his *Annals of Scotland*, constantly resorted to a wheel-chair he kept in his study, that he might be driven rapidly about by a servant, to dispel his disposition to slumber, and in church could only keep himself awake during the sermon by crunching sweetmeats. Dr Johnson had to fight against the same tendency; and Thomson, the author of the *Seasons*, passed an undue proportion of his time in bed. There are some people, again, who can sleep or wake at will. Napoleon Bonaparte is an example, as was also Quin the actor; and another occurs in Captain Barclay, who walked a thousand miles in a thousand consecutive hours, dozing regularly off to sleep when he had completed his mile, and waking in time to renew it. Plenty of instances also abound where sleep has been indulged in under the least favourable circumstances. Sir Walter Scott has told us how the North American Indians, when at the stake of torture, will sleep on the least intermission of agony until the fire is applied to waken them. Many have slept on the rack. Poor little factory children have fallen asleep from sheer weariness, and yet continued to move their hands and fingers as if at work. Soldiers have slept during a march, as in the case of those retreating with Sir John Moore from Corunna; whilst others, again, have slept sound with the roar of artillery around them.

Still, in spite of the fact that the absence of sleep cannot long be healthfully sustained, and that we can bear the privation of fire, food, and even drink, longer than we can the want of sleep, the utmost misery from sleeplessness is a common and familiar occurrence. The remedies which have been proposed for it would fill a volume, all sometimes as impossible and as irritating to the sufferer as the Chinese recommendation, to divest the mind of all unpleasant images, painful reminiscences, retrospective sorrows, and prospective griefs. The most celebrated and perhaps the most efficacious method for procuring sleep that has been devised was originated by a Mr Gardner, who, amongst other things, had remedies for many evils, such as for allaying thirst where no liquid element could be procured, for improving the eyesight by various ingeniously contrived glasses, and for appeasing hunger. His sleeplessness, however—resulting from a severe spine injury in being thrown from a chaise—had been almost intolerable for years, until he discovered a means, which never afterwards failed him, of commanding sleep at will. The discovery caused some stir at the time, and many eminent persons adopted it, and gave testimonials as to its efficacy. Now, however, that it has dropped almost out of existence, it may be a boon to many to have its formula reproduced. The sufferer who has wooed sleep in vain is, according to Mr Gardner, to lie on his right side, with his head comfortably placed on the pillow, having the neck straight, so that respiration may not be impeded. The lips are then to be closed slightly and a rather full inspiration taken, breathing through the nostrils as much as possible. The full inspiration taken, the lungs are to be left to their own action. Attention must now be fixed upon the respiration. The person must imagine that he sees the breath passing from his nostrils in a continuous stream,

and at the instant he brings his mind to conceive this apart from all other ideas, consciousness leaves him—or at least so says the recipe—and he falls asleep. If this method does not at once succeed, it is to be persevered in, and if properly carried out, is believed to prove infallible. It is founded on the principle that monotony, or the influence on the mind of a single idea, induces slumber; and, as such, is but another form of different methods which are familiar to a great many.

Sir Thomas Brown found it a most effectual soporific to repeat some verses on which the well-known *Evening Hymn* was founded. Rabelais tells us of some monks who, when wakeful, resolutely set themselves to prayer, and who, before they had concluded half-a-dozen aves or paternosters, fell asleep. Franklin took his air-bath; Sir John Sinclair counted; whilst Sir John Rennie, when engaged on public works, never went to sleep without previously having his hair combed at the back of his head with a fine tooth-comb and rubbed gently with the palm of the hand. Combing the hair, brushing the forehead with a soft shaving-brush, or fanning, all are good as sleep-inducers, and might well be tried on sleepless children, although perhaps the Spanish practice of getting babies off to sleep by rubbing the space between the cervical and lumbar vertebrae—that is, between the neck and the waist—with the hand, as it is reputed never to have failed, would be a shorter road to the same goal.

We are considering the question, it must be understood, without taking such potent remedies as narcotics into account, for their administration requires the skill and the supervision of a medical attendant. One or two remarks, therefore, as regards the reason of Mr Gardner's formula may induce some to have more faith in what at least can be nothing but a harmless and easy plan. The direction to lie on the right side is supported by the knowledge that the heart, being more towards the left side of the thorax, has freer action when the body rests on the right. The advice to breathe through the nostrils as much as possible, although scientifically approved, is one which civilised people rarely adopt. The wild Indian's mother makes a practice of closing her babe's lips when asleep, and thus induces the habit of breathing through the nose, which nature has provided with a special apparatus whereby the air is warmed before it passes to the lungs. But so much have we deviated from this healthful and natural practice, that Mr Gardner qualifies his advice to breathe through the nostrils by saying, 'as much as possible.'

One of the most effectual means of preventing wakefulness is, however, to remove the cause. It may be said that none but the patient can minister to 'a mind diseased,' that no one can at all times fly from or avoid great mental pain, or, in fact, an amount of physical pain sufficient to keep a person awake. But sleeplessness is often the result of far simpler causes. A bright light in the room, an unaccustomed noise, an uncomfortable bed, are causes which suffice to keep some people awake. Any strong intellectual effort, such as an exciting game of chess just before retiring to rest, will keep the circulation in the brain at such an unnatural tension that sleep is impossible. Tea and coffee cause

wakefulness also, by the increased activity in the circulation, just as much as cold, which produces a derangement in the circulation and a certain amount of discomfort. Remedies for all these are, as a rule, in every person's power, and only require the exercise of a little thought. A sensation of dry burning heat in the soles of the feet and palms of the hand, which accompanies certain diseases in some people, is another cause of sleeplessness; but that will give way if sponging the parts with vinegar and water is resorted to. Where wakefulness is the result of exhaustion from want of food, a glass of cold water or pale ale, or the eating of a sandwich, will, by setting up activity in the abdominal organs, divert the superabundant blood from the head, and thus draw off the source by which the unnatural activity of the brain was sustained. Another cause of sleeplessness, which is, however, too little recognised, is the taking of stimulating drinks; and in this, an effort of the will to forsake the habit is all that is necessary in the way of a cure.

The effects of protracted wakefulness are such that the strongest constitution cannot resist them, and it therefore becomes all to try to overcome a habit which may have very serious consequences. Newton's mind was impaired by the privation of sleep in his old age, and the mental stupor which darkened the closing years of Southey's life was preceded by it. But perhaps one reason why the most gifted minds have been afflicted by wakefulness is, that bodily exercise is too often neglected by people devoted to intellectual pursuits. There is no better soporific than plenty of outdoor exercise, carried even, in extreme cases of wakefulness, to a sense of fatigue. Horace, in his *Satires*, recommended the swimming of the Tiber three times as a means of procuring deep repose; and the science of the present day, with all its array of facts, has little better advice to give.

THE DEADWOOD COACH.

ITS EARLY HISTORY—ATTACKS BY INDIANS AND HIGHWAYMEN.

THE late performances of the 'Wild West' at the American Exhibition, and the introduction of the Deadwood Coach, have suggested that useful, though by no means ornamental or comfortable, conveyance to me as the subject of this sketch. As my acquaintance with it extended over a period of eight years, I feel competent to give its history, and can at the same time vouch for the facts.

As early as 1876, the Deadwood Coach made its first appearance on the streets of Cheyenne, a frontier city on the Union Pacific Railroad, distant about three hundred and twenty miles from the metropolis of the Black Hills. This route was stocked and equipped by Gilmer, Salisbury, & Co., a stage Company well known throughout the West, who afterwards also stocked the Sidney route, with the town of that name as its southern terminus, also on the Union Pacific Road, but east of Cheyenne, and a shorter distance to Deadwood. The first named accommodated passengers

and mails from the west, and entered the Hills from the south and on the west side; while the latter accommodated travel from the east, and entered the Hills from the south and on the east side. Early in 1877 the North-western Stage Company stocked and equipped a route from the north-east, with Bismarck—situated on the Missouri River at the point where the Northern Pacific Railroad crossed that stream—for their eastern terminus, distant also about three hundred miles. This route accommodated the travel from the north-west and steamboat passengers. In 1881 this last-named route was abandoned, and the stock transferred to the Pierre route, the shortest of all, being only two hundred and ten miles, when the Chicago and North-western Railroad Company extended their road to Pierre on the Missouri River, and afforded the most direct road from Chicago to Deadwood.

Besides these routes, one from Kearney Junction, Nebraska, the western terminus of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, a point two hundred miles east of Sidney, and over four hundred miles to Deadwood, was established in the early spring of 1877, and operated by a banker named Dake. This stage-line, though, had a short life; the road was necessarily located through the great Sioux Reservation; and although the treaty with the Sioux provided for such a highway, yet the Indians themselves, while not objecting very strongly to the Sidney route, were very much enraged at both the Bismarck and Kearney; and a few months after the latter was first located, and while it was still in its infancy, the Indians murdered one of the drivers, and acted in such a threatening manner that the proprietor made an appeal to the government for military protection. This, however, was refused, and he withdrew his coaches and stock.

The Indians then turned their attention to the Bismarck Road; they stole a good many of the Stage Companies' horses, and, despite the fact that each coach was accompanied by an armed outrider and guard besides the driver, they succeeded in 1877 in taking possession of one, rifling the mail-pouches, and attempting to break open the steel safe in which valuable express packages were carried; but their efforts proving futile in this, they left the coach in disgust, taking the horses with them. The passengers, driver, and guard were fortunately enabled to escape by hiding in a dense thicket at the side of the road; and the Indians perceiving a large mule-train a short distance off, left without making any attack on the thicket, which otherwise they would undoubtedly have done. In the face of a larger force, the redskins are very discreet and cowardly, especially if that force is made up of frontiersmen, their mode of attack being always in the shape of a surprise unless their numbers far exceed that of the opposing party. Again, in '77 a party of Sioux chased another coach on the same route, and made life very uncomfortable for the passengers, driver, and guard by a continual shower of arrows and bullets; but this time the only escape for the occupants was in flight. The four-horse team, however, proved their mettle by distancing the ponies ridden by the Indians, and carried their load safely to the stage station, where plenty of

help was at hand to withstand an attack. After this, the Indians gave up bothering the coaches, and satisfied themselves by attacking small emigrant outfits and stealing horses.

But if the Sidney and Cheyenne coaches escaped molestation by the Indians, the highwaymen (called road-agents) made up for it. On these roads, in '77 and '78, it was almost the rule for the passenger coaches to be 'held up' somewhere *en route* by these modern Dick Turpins, who would spring from the earth as it were, and notify the driver of their presence by a loud command to 'halt;' and as their appearance was so sudden, they had the 'drop,' and the command would be complied with. Then the passengers would be ordered to alight with their hands up, receiving the cheering intelligence from the leader, backed by two revolvers ready cocked, that any attempt to drop their hands would be followed by instant death. Standing in a row with hands elevated over their heads, they would have to await their turn to be searched, which was performed in a most scientific and systematic manner by members of the gang, who usually were not content with rifling the pockets of their victims, but, as a rule, made them remove their boots, socks, and outer garments. These, however, they were allowed to resume after the departure of their unwelcome guests. Ladies were treated gallantly, the leader of the road-agents often accepting a kiss as payment of the toll extorted from travellers; but in case of refusal of this favour by some belle who disliked having her lips polluted, a systematic search was the result, and her money and other valuables went to fill the coffers of the desperadoes.

The position of these passengers can be described, but must be experienced to be appreciated. One can fancy being awoke in the middle of the night on the prairie, with no shelter or assistance near, and ordered by masked men, armed with revolvers and shot-guns, held cocked in a seemingly careless manner close to your head, to undress and give up all your valuables; and most probably, too, the weather was inclement, for bright moonlight nights were rarely chosen to hold up a coach. The position, as I say, must be felt to be thoroughly appreciated. The mail-pouches were not forgotten, but were usually carried off, the contents carefully sorted out, and any letters supposed to contain money appropriated, and the pouches left somewhere on the road for the next coach to pick up. Usually, these gangs of road-agents numbered five or six; but it is on record that in many instances one man has done all the work, and most thoroughly too, assisted by a number of dummies arranged near the road, armed with long sticks, which to the frightened men and women just rudely awakened, bore a most unpleasant resemblance to rifles. Many a reader will say: 'But how is this possible? I thought every passenger would carry arms and fight.' True; mostly every one did carry weapons, and I have heard many tell beforehand the reception they would give a road-agent; but very rarely did it happen that, when the command to halt was given, any of these braves could get their weapons in readiness. In fact, a man cannot tell what he would do until the time comes, and then usually acts in just the opposite manner from that he had expected.

The two attacks which received the most attention and provoked the most determined pursuit were made on the Cheyenne road in the early spring of '77 and the autumn of '78. The first occurred on Whitewood Creek, about four miles south-west of Deadwood. The coach had a full load of passengers, who, rejoicing that their long journey from Cheyenne was nearly completed without molestation, were looking forward to the good supper and warm bed awaiting them at their journey's end. The driver, Johnny Slaughter, one of the best in the Company's employ, was handling the reins over his four spanking horses, and carefully guiding them over the rocky road while he talked with or listened to the remarks of the occupant of the box-seat; when suddenly, without the slightest warning, the report of a gun was heard, and poor Slaughter fell forward, mortally wounded. The horses took fright, and ran off in the direction of Deadwood at a break-neck speed, threatening to hurl the coach either over the rocky bank into the creek on one side, or against the large pine-trees on the other; but, more by good luck than good management, for a passenger had succeeded in getting hold of the reins, took the ill-fated coach safely into Deadwood. A determined pursuit ensued; but to this day the murderer of Johnny Slaughter has never been captured, and the mystery remains unsolved as to why any road-agent should deliberately murder the driver of the coach; for usually these men were unmolested even after refusing to obey the command to halt, the bullets in that event being directed against the horses. The road at the place of attack was very rough, the timber and bush on the side from which the shot was fired being very dense, while the steep and rocky bank of the creek on the opposite side was sure evidence that the point had been selected by an experienced hand, but by which one of the numerous gangs that infested the country at that time has never been ascertained.

The other attack was made on the ironclad treasure coach, one built expressly for conveying the gold bullion from the Hills to the railroad. It was a beautiful afternoon in the autumn of '78; the stock-tender at Canyon Spring Station, thirty miles south-west from Deadwood, was awaiting the arrival of the ironclad; his change of four horses stood in their stalls ready harnessed, and impatiently awaiting their daily drive. The station was one of the most secluded on the road, the nearest house being ten miles distant. The single log building formed shelter for the stock-tender, the only inhabitant, as well as the horses under his charge. The location on a rocky ledge at the head of a deep canyon, with a background of heavy timber and underbrush, was one of the most suitable for a tragedy, and the lonely position of the stock-tender one not to be coveted; but he appeared well contented, and happy as he sat outside the log building, smoking and reading an old illustrated paper that one of the drivers had good-naturedly supplied him with. But he starts to his feet as he hears horse's hoofs treading the rocky road just in time to salute a stranger well mounted and armed, who politely requests a drink of water.

Without hesitation the occupant turns into the stable to get a drink from a bucket set

in a cool place, and with the tin cup starts again for the open air. But the air of politeness has left his stranger visitor, and besides he has been joined by eight companions, all as well mounted and armed as the first; and as the stock-tender steps to the door with the water, he is considerably taken aback at the sight which meets his view: nine rifles are pointed directly at his head, and he is commanded to throw up his hands at once. This done, a rope is found, and his hands and legs pinioned securely, a gag placed in his mouth, and without ceremony he is tossed into a manger. His captors then knocked out the mud chinking between the logs in the front wall of the stable, and with the muzzles of their rifles inserted in these temporary portholes, awaited the arrival of the coach.

Their plans had been well matured, and they evidently know what they have come for, and are prepared to take desperate means to obtain their booty. The coach is driven to the stable without any intimation of the reception awaiting the occupants, who ought to be six or seven in number, well armed, and on the look-out for attack. But by an accident, this particular coach has a short number of guards, only three regulars, besides one volunteer in the shape of a telegraph operator named Campbell, who, being pressed for time, entreated the agent at Deadwood so earnestly to allow him to go out on this coach, that, despite their orders to the contrary, he was permitted to do so. As Gene, the driver, stopped his horses, and Gale Hill, one of the guards who rode beside him, rose to dismount, a volley was fired by the men concealed in the building, and poor Campbell, who was sitting on the middle seat in range of the porthole in the iron door of the coach, fell dead with three or four bullets in his body. Gale Hill also was wounded in several places, but managed to crawl to the rear of the building, where, through a window, he opened fire on the robbers, but in a few moments dropped from loss of blood, and was afterwards found in the grass nearly dead. The other two guards managed to scramble out of the coach on the opposite side from the stable, and took refuge behind the trees, where they were overcome by the robbers and disarmed. Gene, who had fortunately escaped, but not left his driver's seat, was ordered down, and forced to walk in front of them towards the trees behind which the guards had taken refuge. Here he, too, was disarmed, leaving the road-agents entire masters of the situation. The coach was at once relieved of its load of bullion, valued at about twenty thousand dollars; and the road-agents separating, and carrying with them the gold bricks, escaped. Gale Hill, after a long and serious illness, recovered, and resumed his occupation as guard.

Notwithstanding that a determined pursuit after the robbers was made by a large party, headed by Ed Cook, the superintendent of the Stage Company, yet only two of the gang were convicted, although all the bullion taken was recovered.

After this last attack, men suspected as road-agents were evidently of the opinion that the country was not a healthy one, especially as three of the worst had been hanged by Vigilance Committees about this time; and from that time on,

but little trouble was given by the balance of the suspected men, and the passengers to and from the Hills could travel in comfort so far as attacks from highwaymen were concerned.

THE 'BATTLE' OF BOSENDEN.

AN INCIDENT IN KENTISH HISTORY.

BOSENDEN is an old-fashioned farmstead, situated in what our American cousins would call a 'clearing,' in the picturesque woodland district known to Kentish men as the Forest of Blean, which extends from the valley of the Stour to the shores of the German Ocean. Only once in the course of its history has Bosenden Farm been aroused from the peaceful quietude which seems naturally to attend a secluded spot, nearly surrounded by the woods, with the sea rolling calmly in the distance. That one exceptional day was Thursday the 31st of May 1838, just fifty years ago, when the 'battle' occurred which we propose to describe.

The ancient city of Canterbury—from which Bosenden is distant about five miles—was startled in the autumn of 1832 by the arrival of a stranger, who took rooms at one of the principal hotels in the city, and soon contrived to make himself the centre of attraction in the neighbourhood. He announced himself as Sir William Courtenay, Knight of Malta, a member of the well-known Devonshire family bearing the name which he assumed. In dress, manners, opinions, and general style of living, it was apparently the main object in life of this gentleman to act as differently as possible from the multitude around him. He wore his hair in long locks, floating over his shoulders, with a beard and moustache, which were appendages unknown among Englishmen in those days, assimilating his appearance as far as he could to the portraits of our Saviour. He dressed in various costumes of an oriental type, often appearing in a tunic and cloak made of red velvet, adorned with embroidery, and was armed sometimes with a sword, sometimes with pistols stuck in his girdle. He was an expert horseman, and constantly rode about the neighbourhood.

Doubts were entertained from the first as to whether this personage had any claim to the name by which he called himself; but it was evident that he was a man of excellent abilities, an eloquent speaker, one who had travelled much, and mingled with the best society. Those were the days of the first Reform Bill, and Sir William Courtenay soon came before the East Kent public as the editor of a newspaper devoted to advocating the interests of the people, which was called the *British Lion*, and was headed with a representation of that animal in a most ferocious attitude. Several copies of this paper are in the writer's possession, and are well worth study as a literary curiosity. The title-page is headed with texts and mottoes, such as, 'Justice to the Poor, Justice to the Rich'; 'The British Lion will be Free'; 'Heaven is his Throne, the Earth is His Footstool'; 'The Root of all Evil is in the Church'; and others of similar character. Encouraged by the success of his journal, Sir William aspired to a place in the House of Commons; and when a vacancy occurred in the representation of Canterbury towards the close of the year 1832, he was

one of the candidates for the vacant seat. He was not successful; but he polled a large number of votes, many influential persons in the neighbourhood being among his supporters.

For several months Sir William was the greatest 'lion' in Kent. But in the following year an untoward event put a temporary stop to his public career. He was tried and condemned for perjury, in giving evidence at a trial of some local smugglers, on behalf of whom he had come forward as a witness, and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. His place of captivity, however, was shortly changed from Maidstone gaol to Barming Lunatic Asylum, as those who were in charge of him believed that he was not quite accountable for his actions. At the asylum he remained in confinement for about four years, until he was released at the solicitation of his relatives in the west of England, who were now found to be not the Devonshire family of Courtenay, but the Cornish family of Thom—the self-styled Sir William being the son of a gentleman of that name, and his proper name being John Nicholls Thom.

Soon after his release, Sir William, as he was still called in East Kent, came to revisit the scene of his former adventures, and stayed for some time at the house of Mr Francis, a country gentleman living at Boughton, on the western side of the Forest of Blean, some six miles from Canterbury. Sir William now commenced a second edition of his career as a social reformer. Resuming his old dress, he spent day after day in visiting the villages in the Blean district, making the acquaintance of the villagers, and inspiring them gradually with an intense attachment to himself. At that time, a considerable part of the 'forest' had never been formed into a parish, but was an extra-parochial district—or 'ville,' as such districts are called in Kent—without church or school or any religious or educational organisation, known as the Ville of Dunkirk. Gradually Sir William added to his character of social reformer that of an inspired prophet and religious teacher. Gifted with great natural eloquence, and possessing many of the qualities needed in a leader of men, he was quite as successful in this rôle as in the former one which he had assumed. On one or two occasions he celebrated religious rites, such as blessing little children, anointing his followers, and administering a communion of bread and water. In a short time Courtenay had gathered round him a numerous and devoted band of adherents, some looking upon him as a reformer who would redress the wrongs of the poor and oppressed; and others regarding him as a teacher and saviour sent from above. Mr Francis warned Courtenay against making any dangerous use of the influence which he had gained among the peasantry, and soon after bade good-bye to his guest, who then took up his quarters at Bosenden Farm, occupied at that time by a farmer named Culver, who was one of Courtenay's firm adherents.

Bosenden Farm now became for several months the centre of a movement which was socialistic in one aspect and religious in another. Still, nothing was done which could bring Courtenay or his followers into collision with the law of the land. Such a collision was, however, seen to be inevitable, and at last it came. For the

account of what follows the writer is indebted to a history in manuscript, penned at the time by the Rev. C. R. Handley, then vicar of Hernhill, a parish in which Courtenay had gained a large number of adherents.

On the afternoon of Sunday, May 27, 1838, Courtenay preached before a large congregation on Boughton Hill, half-way between Canterbury and Faversham. He chose as his text, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you;' and on these words he based a discourse of a very inflammatory nature. The outcome of it was seen on the following Tuesday morning, May 29, when Courtenay, mounted on horseback, and followed by a crowd of his adherents, went in procession through the villages of Hernhill, Goodnestone, and Boughton, exhorting people to join his standard, and bearing a loaf of bread carried on a pole, as an outward and visible sign of the plenty which his followers would secure. On the following day, Wednesday, a procession of a similar character was formed through Selling, Sheldwich, Throwley, and other places lying on the south side of the London and Dover Road. Meantime, the local magistrates had been in consultation, and warrants were issued for the apprehension of Courtenay and two of his followers.

Early on the morning of Thursday, May 31, John Mears, a constable, went to Bosenden Farm to execute this warrant, accompanied by his brother Nicholas and another man. That morning witnessed a scene of extraordinary excitement at the usually quiet old farm. At an early hour, Courtenay assembled his men and harangued them with even more than his usual earnestness: he told them that he had come from heaven, and that on that day he was going to usher in the millennium and put an end to all injustice and oppression. He promised those who followed him and had been anointed by him that they should be invulnerable if any troops should attack them; and asserted that even should he be slain, he would, like our Saviour, rise again on the third day. He administered a communion in bread and water, and received the homage of his followers, two of whom even fell down and worshipped him. Presently he fired his pistol, which he had loaded with tow and particles of iron, into the air, and as the bright particles descended, a strain of music was heard in the distance. This appears to have been a skilful device contrived for the occasion, the music really proceeding from a flute played by one of his adherents concealed in the wood. It is a proof of the powerful hold which Courtenay had obtained over his followers, that some of them firmly believed that he could tell all that they were doing, even when at a distance from him.

Mears, the brother of the constable, on arriving at the farm, began to remonstrate with Courtenay concerning his conduct, before getting his brother to produce the warrant. Courtenay imagining that it was the constable who was speaking to him, fired at him, and killed him on the spot; and at his command, his followers seized the body and threw it into a ditch. War was now openly declared against the constituted authorities. But the campaign was a brief one: the day that saw it open witnessed its close. After breakfasting with his followers, Courtenay

proceeded for another triumphal march through the neighbourhood, marching on this occasion to the house of his former friend, Mr Francis, where he supplied his men with refreshments at that gentleman's expense; after which, he retired again to Bosenden, and encamped in the woods near the farm.

The news that Courtenay had at last defied the law and shot the brother of the constable spread on rapid wings. One messenger had gone in haste to the nearest magistrate, and another to the barracks at Canterbury for a force of military, in case they should be needed. About mid-day, Sir Norton Knatchbull, Dr Poore, and two other magistrates, appeared, together with Major Armstrong, Lieutenant Bennett, and one hundred men of the 45th Regiment from Canterbury. According to a plan made at the time, which is in the writer's possession, the insurgents were found encamped a short distance north-west of Bosenden Farm, in a valley through which a tiny stream meanders—not far from the boundary-line between the estates of which at the present time the respective possessors are Mr E. S. Dawes and Mr G. B. Gipps.

As to the exact details of what followed, the evidence is, as might be expected, rather conflicting; but on comparing accounts, we gather that Courtenay's party were found to number rather more than a hundred men. They were all armed with heavy sticks and bludgeons, and as soon as they perceived the arrival of the soldiers, they put themselves in a defensive attitude. On coming to close quarters, Lieutenant Bennett, a young and gallant officer, stepped to the front and called upon Courtenay to surrender himself. Courtenay replied by stepping forward in his turn and instantaneously firing upon the lieutenant with such a true aim that the young officer fell dead on the spot. One of the soldiers, seeing his officer fall, at once fired, and Courtenay fell dead. Courtenay's men, nothing daunted, at once attacked the military, and a desperate conflict ensued. The insurgents fought with a courage which did credit to the training which they had received from their leader; and the fight was prolonged for some time. It was mid-day when the soldiers arrived, and they did not return to their quarters until seven o'clock in the evening. Courtenay's followers were, in spite of their efforts, overpowered by the disciplined force; and when the combat was over, it was found that on the side of the rioters eight had been killed and seven severely wounded; while on the side of the military two had been killed and six had been wounded. Add to these casualties the death of Mears in the early morning, and the results are seen to be severe for this insurrection of a day.

The bodies of the slain were carried to the nearest inn, the *Lion*, in the Ville of Dunkirk. We need not dwell on the inquests which were subsequently held; but we must linger for a moment upon the events of the day on which Sir William and his deceased followers were buried in the quiet churchyard at Hernhill, about two miles from the scene of the 'battle.' The body of Courtenay remained at the *Lion* until the morning of Tuesday, June 5, during which time it was visited by at least twenty thousand persons, many of whom seemed to be under the

impression that within a few days the dead man would fulfil his promise of rising again. But when more than a week had passed, these expectations began to subside. The funeral took place in the morning, in the presence of about one hundred and twenty persons; the usual service was read, but the body was not taken within the church, nor was the bell tolled; and when the burial was over, no mound was raised to mark the exact site of the grave, though the spot is still pointed out by old inhabitants. The entry in the parish register book is worded thus: 'William Courtenay, alias John Tom, no known residence; age unknown, supposed about 42; buried June 5th, 1838.'

In the afternoon of the same day, a more melancholy ceremony took place: the burial of six of those who had fallen at Bosenden: the oldest a man of sixty-two; and the youngest being only twenty-three years of age. The melancholy service lasted almost two hours. The village was a universal scene of mourning, and the clergyman was so overcome with emotion that it was with difficulty that he proceeded with the service. All of these persons were buried with the usual full service, which was used separately for each one.

So ended the movement which culminated in the 'Battle' of Bosenden. For many years afterwards persons still remained cherishing a lingering belief that Courtenay was in some sense a messenger from heaven; but this was gradually effaced by the lapse of time. Several of the leading rioters were tried, and condemned to death; but they were all pardoned, and their sentences commuted to transportation or imprisonment. Two beneficial effects, one of a local, and one of a national character, were the indirect outcome of the events above narrated: the forming of the district of Dunkirk into a parish, with its schools and church and other humanising influences; and the legislation on behalf of national elementary education, which received a great impetus from the discovery of the ignorance prevailing in rural districts, which was revealed by the evidence at the trial of the rioters.

ACOUSTIC VASES.

THE theatres of the ancient Romans were notable for their good acoustic properties, due to the fact of their interiors being constructed of wood, a material which by its own vibrations reinforces sound. Those of the Greeks being built chiefly of stone and marble, were wanting in this important respect; to remedy which, they were compelled to call in the aid of resonance, which they did by placing a series of hollow brazen or earthenware vessels, of carefully graduated sizes, between the rows of seats in the auditorium.

Vitruvius tells us that these harmonic vases were placed in cells or niches between the rows of seats occupied by the spectators, to which the voice of the actor had free passage, and that they enabled the actors to be heard in all parts of the gigantic theatres, some four hundred feet in diameter; that they were made of brass or earthenware, and proportioned in magnitude to the size of the building; and that in the smaller theatres they were tuned in harmonic proportions of

fourths, fifths, and eighths, with their replicates; while in those of greater magnitude there was a vase to correspond with every sound in the diapason, or great musical system, in all the genera. Unfortunately, he does not give any description of their form, which in all probability resembled that of bells. These vessels, termed *ècheia*, were found greatly to strengthen the speaker's voice, especially when the dialogue was intoned; and here we have probably the philosophy of the origin and practice of intoning our church services. Each *ècheion* selected a certain note, like the pipe of an organ, and vibrating in unison with it, responded and took up the sound by sympathetic vibration, thereby increasing its intensity. Any hollow air-space will accommodate itself more or less in the same manner, a fact that is now generally taken advantage of in our theatres and public buildings, by leaving open spaces beneath the seats and floors, between the walls and above the ceiling.

It is of very recent years that the study of acoustics has received the attention due to it, and that such rude expedients as these sonorous vessels have given way before the steady advance of science. In the year 1850, an open plastered drain about a foot square in section was discovered beneath the chancel floor of St Peter's Mancroft, Norwich, running under the stalls on either side; and built into both sides of the drains, about three feet apart, were red earthenware jars, resting on their sides, with their open ends projecting two or three inches into the drain. They measured about nine inches in height, six inches across their ends, and eight inches at their middle part, and their insides were glazed. Ten years later, the same arrangement was found at another church in the same city, St Peter's Mountergate, with the slight difference that the jars had handles; and instead of being laid opposite to each other, as in the former case, they alternated on either side of the drain. A similar discovery of acoustic pottery was also made at Fountains Abbey.

When the new Opera-house was built at Turin in the middle of last century, all the architects, mathematicians, and men learned in harmonics and the philosophy of sound, were consulted as to the form and situation of these harmonic vases; but no clear idea either of their construction or principle was arrived at. Trial vases were, however, placed in the house, as well as in others in various parts of Italy, but without the effect expected from them of augmenting the tone of the human voice, and of the instruments to which they were tuned. In a small private theatre, where it was hoped to propagate and clarify the sound of choral music by their means, the result was a resonance, like the sound produced by sea-shells when placed against the ear many times multiplied, and growing like the sound of a gong, a powerful and perpetual hum; so that whenever anything was said or sung in the building, it was necessary for the time to remove the *ècheia*.

This shows that great care and not a little knowledge is necessary in applying the principles of acoustics, another incident in confirmation of which was published in the *Philosophical Magazine* for 1830. 'A church had been erected in Sheffield in which the preacher was altogether unheard,

however great his exertion. Various unsuccessful expedients were tried, until the incumbent, happily in this case a scientific man, had a large parabolic reflector of light wood constructed and so suspended that the pulpit was in the focus of the parabola. By such an arrangement, the rays of sound issuing from the focus of the mirror would be thrown forward as a parallel beam. The consequence of this was that every word uttered in the pulpit could be distinctly heard throughout the church; indeed, the speaker was more distinctly heard at the far end than at the intermediate portions, because this parallel beam of sound was directly cast upon those in the distant gallery. Unfortunately, however, the reflector acted in both directions. If any one whispered in that distant gallery, the sound of the whisper was gathered into the focus of the reflector. The preacher placed in that focus thus heard all the remarks that happened to be made by the people sitting in the gallery, and as it was anything but pleasant to preach and listen to criticism on the sermon at the same time, the reflector after a while had to be taken down.'

The following amusing anecdote, related by Sir John Herschel, bears additional testimony to the same truth. 'In one of the cathedrals in Sicily, the confessional was so placed that the whispers of the penitents were reflected by the curved roof, and brought to a focus at a distant part of the edifice. The focus was discovered by accident, and for some time the person who discovered it took pleasure in hearing, and in bringing his friends to hear, utterances intended for the priest alone. One day, it is said, his own wife occupied the penitential stool, and both he and his friends were thus made acquainted with secrets which were the reverse of amusing to one of the party.'

Mistakes, however, are not likely to accrue from the use of *ècheia*, since their manufacture, like that of mummies and the Cremona varnish, appears to be a lost art; and fortunately for us, the limited size of modern theatres, coupled with our progress in the study of all matters connected with sound, does not call for their aid.

NOCTURNE.

In vain, O Moon, thy pensive rise;
Thou bring'st no healing beams to me:
In vain, O Stars, ye deck the skies,
Since I no more your light may see
Twin-mirrored in two liquid eyes.

In vain, O sleepless unseen Bird,
Those warblings sweet, that long low trill;
Thou wak'st in me no answering thrill,
As once, when, blent with thine, I heard
Love-lispings that were sweeter still.

I wander through the night alone—
I wander blindly like a ghost:
From sights and sounds I loved the most
The glory and the joy are flown,
Through grief for one I loved and lost.

J. S. MILLS.

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THROUGH 'THE WOODS' OF THE FAR WEST.

BY JESSIE M. E. SAXBY.

'THE WOODS' is the name given to that portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway which lies between Quebec Territory and the north-west prairie lands. The scenery is extremely varied, though woodlands form the chief feature throughout. Sometimes it is sublime in mountain outlines and mighty lakes; sometimes it is savage in aspect, rearing naked scaurs from depressions of swamp; frequently you emerge from a cloud of sand, over tracts of which the train has slowly dragged itself, to look on uplands as green, tender, and smiling as the dimpled lawns of England. Then, before you have done feasting your eyes upon that delicate verdure and restful beauty, the scene changes, and the cars are oscillating along crags which overhang lakes that remind one of Scottish lochs and northern seas. Here islands of fantastic form, clothed in loveliness, rise from great sheets of pellucid water; there an impetuous torrent comes rushing down a hillside; next a ravine appears holding fragments of the winter snows. Anon you hear a hissing and squelching, and you find your wheels are splashing through a marsh where tall reeds quiver, and bull-frogs continuously shriek the terrors of malaria. Next appears a streamlet meandering among homesteads; and presently the little blue beck expands into a majestic river, over some necks of which you are carried by bridges more substantial and safe than they either look or feel. Then, it may be, you pass along a level plain of rich soil, sparsely cultivated, thinly peopled, till your train—screaming, panting, full of its own importance—rushes into a bustling town, where '*After time*' is posted up on a black-board for the humiliation of your laggard engine. Yet she, poor thing, has done her best; but to drag heavy cars through sand and water, along edges of precipices, around the sharpest of corners, up the steepest of inclines, is no easy task, and may well excuse her for coming into the

station overdue. 'All aboard! All aboard! Go ahead!' and—screaming, panting as before—away rushes the land-ship along her iron road and into the solitudes of nature. And always along that line, whether it go by lake or swamp, by hill or plain, by city or farm, 'The Woods' interfuse, giving a certain sameness of character to the various landscapes which spread over thousands of miles.

Some of those forests are altogether, or in part, composed of dead trees, blasted by fire or killed by one another. Earth is so fruitful in those regions, life so eager to assert itself individually, that every little seed which finds rest within the smallest morsel of soil springs up at once and insists upon becoming a tree. In so insisting, it commits murder and suicide. Out of the mud of a stream, from the crevice of a rock, from sand wafted hither and thither by the winds, from a floating spar, from the prostrate forms of kindred, do the young trees lift their green crowns, while shoving their roots around in search of a foothold. They jostle and trample each other like human beings, and end in killing each other—very much as men do with their fellows in an overcrowded country.

The 'forest kings' who survive that fierce struggle for existence are attenuated, but grow to a great height. Their dead brethren, too, are tall. When they all began life, their supreme desire was to look upon the sun, for without him they could not flourish; so they pressed up and up, pushing ahead, in hope of rising above their fellows to behold their god; and died, striving for that end. It is a pathetic sight—those slim, straight trunks standing leafless, lifting naked arms, as if they had died in an agony of beseeching prayer, their bark stained russet and gold, crimson and ruby, by the sun, whose rays could only reach them when Death made bare and open to his light the depths of their forest primeval. Some of these poor dead creatures lie prostrate, riven and distorted as though they had 'died hard'; others of them, the kindly mosses have covered with a verdant shroud. Those who have passed through the fire to Moloch

stand very stark and red, belting groups of living trees which have escaped the conflagration, or grown up since it passed over the spot.

The contrast between the living and the dead—the one green and graceful, the other scorched and stiff—is very striking. But when the sun slides low towards the horizon, his many-coloured rays create a wonderful transformation in those woods. Living and dead trees, fallen trunks and stately stems, gnarled roots and swaying boughs, are glorified by the setting sun. All those marvellous tints which he gives to the clouds are cast upon 'The Woods,' and blend them together, as it were, in one glowing, harmonious picture of beauty. I cannot attempt to describe that which has defied the powers of many a more facile writer. I can only say that some of those sunset scenes which I witnessed while passing through that region were more gorgeous, more lovely, more like dreams of fairyland than any transformation scene depicted on the stage.

But it was not always sunset, nor always visions of natural beauty; and when one's eyes were not filled with the picturesque, the solitude, the lack of life, the absence of human beings brought depression of spirit which produced most morbid imaginings. At rare intervals we spied a solitary log-house, or a group of shanties, and near these there might be a few cattle or other 'tame' beasts. More often we saw the deserted remains of rough-and-ready habitations standing—or rather, tumbling to bits—in the centre of a 'clearing' fast returning to its primitive state. Many a charred stump on such spots told how men had come there full of vigour and hope, ready to attack nature and redeem the wilderness. Many a fair young sapling springing into exuberant life from the ashes of its martyred kin, proclaimed how the lonely pioneer had wearied and given up the unequal fight with nature.

During long hours, the train rocked on, and little was to be seen on either hand but trees—trees dead and trees living; trees felled and trees fallen; trees of all shades of green, in all stages of progress and decay. Having just come from the teeming isles of Britain, the absence of mankind was painfully impressed upon our minds in those 'Woods.' It is true the warm winds of the west are the Providence of countless butterflies and other winged beings. If your glance rests upon the waters, you will see fishes splashing and birds playing. High over the topmost boughs soar mighty eagles; and on many a branch and by many a pool the solemn-visaged heron meditates. The ferns tremble as some stealthy-footed rodent or subtle reptile glides among their fronds. Flowers bloom, little birds sing, and a sky more clear and pure and blue than we ever look up to in the north arches over all; yet, because man is not there, all seems lifeless and melancholy.

When first those 'Woods' begin to attract your notice, you exclaim about their beauty—and indeed all the time you willingly admit

that—but by-and-by you find yourself regretting that they hide some fine view afar from your point of observation. After a while you think them just a little monotonous; then you become sure they look rather dreary and impracticable; but you retract some of these thoughts when suddenly you behold them clothing a grim mountain or fringing a stagnant lake. 'How those trees improve everything—if only they were not so dense!' you ejaculate; and shortly after that you soliloquise: 'Dear me, how it stifles one to look into the depths of those woods!' Presently, you find yourself fancying they are 'no canny'; that there is something weird and fearsome in the way those trees start up as the adjunct to every landscape. Then you begin not to reflect on or speak of 'The Woods,' but you *feel* them. They grow upon your imagination, they press upon your feelings, they exercise a most strange fascination over you. An awe-stricken sensation takes hold upon you, and you are spellbound by those mystical woods. They seem peopled by ghosts; indeed, the trees appear ghosts themselves, for, as the daylight fades and shadows gather among them, the motion of the train seems transferred to the trees, and they bend and dodge and waltz as if endowed with sentient life. Here a twisted root takes the semblance of a coiled snake strangling some victim; there a decaying stump having put out, as a last protest against death, some slender twigs, looks like an antlered creature couching among the ferns. Dusky savages in waving plumes and flowing robes, mammoth beasts, dryads, demons, seem there. You would fain not look, not imagine, when all this is repeated so often that it becomes vivid and real; but in spite of yourself 'The Woods' hold you in thrall. Even when darkness comes, you cannot forget them; you feel their power though they are no longer visible. They are *there*, around you, all the same, all the time, and at peep of day you gaze out of the car window to behold them as before.

I had a dream of those Canadian 'Woods' while travelling through them; and because I know that dream must come true in the fulness of time, I tell it now. My dream was of the future, and I was travelling along the Canadian Pacific Railway fifty years hence. Men had come to 'The Woods' again, but not singly to toil in solitude, as in the days when there was no Canadian Pacific Railway opening a way through unpeopled wastes. *These* men had come in large companies, and they were not the ne'er-do-wells of decent families, nor the shiftless scum of our cities, nor disappointed competitors for place in an old country. Every man of them had brought practical knowledge of the arts of civilised life with them, a little money in their pockets, boys and girls at their back to be reared able citizens of a new country; at their side women, to do the woman's work of a settlement, and in fulfilling those humble duties lifting high the banner of selfless morality. Some of these men had been agriculturists, some artisans, some gentlemen with a modest income which in

Britain was not enough to maintain them according to their rank, but which gave them the position of affluent landowners in Canada. They were of many nationalities, and could say in the language of Tennyson :

Saxon, Norman, and Dane are we,
Teuton and Celt.

Add to these a sprinkling of the black, and rather more of the red man, with select specimens of the Jew, and you have that new nation as I saw it in my dream.

With the pertinacity of Britons—for the majority were from our Isles—these colonists had set to work, learning success from the failures of those who had gone before them, and keeping always plain before their minds that the prosperity of the individual depends upon his first considering the benefit of the community at large. So, acting in unison, they had judiciously thinned 'The Woods,' and, with an eye to the future, had permitted no wanton destruction of the trees, but had made laws which restricted men from cutting down more than a certain average, and obliged them to keep up the supply of timber. Marsh and swamp had been drained; and where the rank reeds had quaked and frogs complained, golden grain now waved and happy children sported. Cliff and scur had been broken to rise in baronial mansions and lofty spires, in streets and churches. The hill-slopes were covered with homesteads; the plains had peopled villages; the shores of each lake were studded by human dwellings; its waters gay with many a lively craft, its islands decked as the abodes of Pleasure. The British instinct 'to kill' had not been acted upon further than was absolutely needful. 'Sport' was not in fashion. So birds, unmolested, kept the insects in their place; wild beasts of a harmless kind cropped the superabundant grasses as aforetime; mountain stream and quiet pool continued to be the haunts of 'sleek and speckled finners.' Fish, flesh, and fowl were only sacrificed *humanely* when required for the use of man, or to keep the balance of nature even. And still 'The Woods' were the feature of each landscape; but how transformed!

The sun in all his power and glory had never enhanced their beauty as the hand of man had done. Tall as of old, but of vast girth, of widely-spreading branches and more variety of species, these forest kings stood grand, sublime, in the face of day, symbols of the mighty nation risen among them to take its place beside the foremost nations of the earth. Under their shelter grazed the peaceful herds of a prosperous and pastoral community. Within their shadow nestled the homes of a happy people. Health and wealth grew and flourished in their groves. Man and his inspired machines woke joyous echoes amid their avenues. The spectres had fled from those Woods, for desolation and disjointed nature had given place to that order and beauty which so surely attend upon the carrying out of God's beneficent laws, and of His command, 'Go forth and replenish the earth.'

I had been dreaming; but the engine which had drawn me through 'The Woods' seemed to say like a voice of Fate, so monotonous, so fierce, so strong did it seem: 'All aboard! On she goes! It shall be! It shall be!'—and then, with

a wild war-whoop of victory, our train dashed into Winnipeg—the great Western city which is the key to the prairie-lands, and the termination of 'The Woods.'

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

AUTUMN and winter sped away and spring came round again, and found them still pursuing this quiet laborious life. Agnes had written twice to her lover after her arrival at Liverpool, giving him her new address and asking for a few lines in reply; but month followed month without bringing any tidings to her weary aching heart. She began to be frightened, fearing lest he had fallen a victim to the terrible African climate, or that some accident had befallen him; but then, as her aunt suggested, it was by no means unlikely that her letters had never reached him, in which case it would be vain to expect an answer, as he would be unaware they had left Ecclesfield, and would naturally address his letters to the vicarage as heretofore.

As spring advanced, Agnes's cheeks flushed oftener and her eyes grew brighter, for Wilmot himself might soon be looked for, and then everything would be explained. By-and-by, the two ladies went down to Willis and Brant's office to inquire when the *Sarah Draper* was expected home, and obtained permission to leave a note addressed to Mr Burrell, to be given to him immediately after landing. The *Sarah Draper* duly went into dock, as they saw by the newspaper, but still no Wilmot made his appearance. Agnes sat stitching the day through, leaving her aunt for the most part to attend to the scholars, her colour coming and going at every knock, till daylight faded and vanished and with it all her hopes till the morrow. This went on for about a fortnight, till Miss Maria could no longer bear to sit inactive and see her dear child suffering in silence. Some certain knowledge either one way or the other must be obtained, so one afternoon she went down to the office, unknown to Agnes, and inquired whether the note left for the young supercargo had been given to him, and also whether he was still in Liverpool. She was assured that the note in question had been duly handed to him, and was further told that having obtained a few weeks' leave of absence, he had set off for London within a couple of days after his ship had been cleared. She began to comprehend now how the matter stood, and with a grieved and bitter heart, she went back home and told Agnes the result of her errand.

'Put him out of your heart, dear,' said Miss Maria, her eyes smarting with indignant tears. 'He is unworthy of your love. He scorns us because we are poor. You are no longer an heiress, and have consequently lost all attraction in his eyes. Don't take on so, child, but try to be thankful that you have escaped becoming his wife!'

Vain words to a stricken heart, which in those first moments of its agony could only feel and comprehend one thing—that it was deserted! To Miss Maria, too, the shock was a grievous one. She had dearly loved the handsome laughing

boy, and the thought of his treachery cost her more secret tears than anything except her brother's death had ever done in her life before.

But after that first bitter outburst, when heart and brain seemed stricken alike, the girl never complained, but locked up her feelings in the deepest recesses of her being. She grew paler and spoke less and worked harder, if it were possible, than before.

That summer was a very hot one. The rooms in Tydd Street were close and stifling the day through, and but little better after nightfall, bearing, as they did, the full brunt of the afternoon sun. There was much sickness in the neighbourhood, and the number of scholars fell off to about one half of what they had been in winter. Miss Maria's face, thin and anxious-looking at the best of times, seemed to grow thinner and more anxious every day. She would often implore Agnes to lay aside her needle for a few hours and go down to the pier head, where there was nearly always a fresh breeze from the river. But Agnes would reply that she didn't want to go out, and always felt better when hard at work, which was probably the truth, seeing that when busily employed she had less time to brood over her loss. But one stifling afternoon she was fairly obliged to give in, and lie down on the hard horse-hair sofa, but with a soft cushion under her head, placed there by her aunt's solicitous fingers. She became worse during the night, and next morning was unable to rise. Miss Maria sent for a doctor in hot haste. He came and prescribed, but would venture on no opinion till he should have seen more of the case. On the third day he pronounced her illness to be a bad kind of low fever. The few scholars left were at once sent home, and all work on hand, finished and unfinished, sent back to the warehouse.

The fever ran its course. For several days Agnes wandered in her mind, and scarcely ever seemed conscious of where she was or of what had befallen her. Had it not been for kind-hearted Mrs Strake, poor Aunt Maria must have worn herself out, but the worthy landlady insisted on taking turns with her in nursing. In the poor lodging-house keeper, for all her unrefined ways and innumerable solecisms of speech and manner, she recognised a true-hearted woman, and as such she did not fail to hold her in respect.

At length the fever reached its crisis, and after a struggle, youth and a good constitution prevailed, and Agnes began slowly to mend. She would require great care and attention for a long time to come, the doctor said; meanwhile, nothing must be lacking in the way of jellies and wine and other sustaining articles of diet. Miss Maria heard his words with dismay, for her little stock of ready-money was all but exhausted, and quarter-day—which, when it came, would only bring her one-fourth of her annuity of twenty pounds, nearly the whole of which would be due to Mrs Strake—was still five weeks away. The twenty-five pounds she had brought with her from Ecclesfield had vanished piecemeal long ago; indeed, soon after the beginning of her niece's illness she had found herself so short of money that one day she had rushed out of the house in a wild flurry of spirits and had sold her watch. It was an old-fashioned affair, and had been in constant use for thirty

years, and when disposed of for about half of what it was really worth, did not do much towards enriching Miss Maria. It had been her father's present to her when a girl, and it was sad, very sad, to have to part from it after all those years.

But the money thus obtained was all gone by now, and once more the everlasting problem of the poor stared her in the face. Agnes must, of course, have everything the doctor said she needed, but how obtain them? Miss Maria sat for a long time, her brow puckered with thought; at length she sighed, and then a gentle smile irradiated her face. 'Dear Marcus!' she said softly to herself. 'He would help me, of course, if he only knew; but not till everything else has been tried and has failed can I bear to tell him how we are circumstanced. But better that than allow my child to want for anything. Perhaps Mrs Strake might be able to suggest something; but it is hard to have to lay bare one's necessities even to her.'

Mrs Strake, when the state of affairs was laid before her, proved at once equal to the occasion. This was one of those cases which appealed direct to her experience and needed no after dubitation.

'You must pop,' she said with an emphatic nod. She was standing before Miss Maria with her arms folded in her apron after a favourite fashion of hers.

'Pop!' answered Miss Maria feebly, as though ashamed of her ignorance.

'What I mean is that you must pawn.' Then seeing Miss Maria's jaw drop, as though some one had just told her something which shocked her exceedingly, she hastened to say: 'Here's Miss Agnes and you between you have a lot of silk and satin dresses, more than you'll wear out in six years, so little as you go out, letting alone their getting old-fashioned. As they're no use to you just now, why not put 'em in pawn, one at a time, and raise a bit of money that way, till things take a turn? And if you can't afford to get 'em out at the end of the year, you can pay the interest, you know, and they'll be as safe there as if they was locked up in your own drawers.' Then seeing a startled look still in Miss Maria's eyes, she went on with a bitter laugh: 'Lor bless you, Miss G., it's nothing when a body gets used to it! How us poor folk would get on without the popshop is more than I know. Often and often I shouldn't be able to make up my rent if I hadn't it to fly to.'

'Thank you, Mrs Strake, very much for your kindness. I will think over what you have told me.'

She did think it over, and the more she thought the more evident it seemed to her that in no other way would the much needed ready-money find its way into her pocket. Her soul shrank within her at the thought of having to do that which to Mrs Strake seemed so much a matter of course. Would it not be a degradation, she asked herself, if she, a gentlewoman born and bred, were to resort to such a means of raising money? Then she told herself that there could be no real degradation in doing that which was both lawful and honest, howsoever much Society, with its artificial distinctions, might choose to assume that there

was as regards that particular mode of 'raising the wind' which Miss Maria was just then debating so earnestly in her mind. Had she known more of the world, she would have been aware that many of those who flaunt themselves and their belongings most persistently in the eyes of their fellows are glad at times to claim the kind offices of 'mine uncle,' and deem it no degradation so to do—so long as they are not found out.

At length Miss Maria admitted to herself with an inward groan that no other alternative was left her. So, late that afternoon, she went to her chest of drawers and with trembling fingers took out of it her black silk gown, which was trimmed with some valuable old lace, and having carefully folded it and made a neat parcel of it, and having tied a veil over her bonnet, she stole out of the house, feeling as though she were about to commit some terrible crime.

She was not so uninformed as not to be aware that the peculiar sign of a pawnbroker's establishment is three golden balls. She walked on for some time till she had got clear of her own neighbourhood, and then she began to look out for one of the signs in question. Such things are not hard to find in any large town so long as one confines one's search to the poorer quarters. Miss Maria's heart began to beat painfully as soon as she beheld three balls in the distance glistening in the last rays of the setting sun. Fortunately for her, there were not many people about; but her courage failed her as she drew near, and she walked past the place for some distance and then back again, but was still too timorous to venture inside. A sense of criminality was still strong upon her. She, the daughter of one clergyman and the sister of another, to enter a pawnshop!

So the poor gentlewoman walked backwards and forwards for nearly an hour, arguing and reasoning with herself, stigmatising herself as a coward for not daring to do that which she had come to do, and calling to mind the poor girl at home, pining for lack of proper nourishment; but still, reason as she might, whenever she approached near enough to peep into the long narrow passage, out of which sundry doors opened, as they might be the doors of so many cells, and when she noted the class of people, women for the most part, who kept flitting in and out, she turned sick at heart and was seized with a strange trembling which did not leave her till she was once more beyond the influence of the place. At length a man came out and put up the shutters one by one; still she had not the courage to go in. Then he shut and bolted the door, and next moment all was in darkness. Her opportunity for that night was over. She crept back home jaded in body and crushed in spirit.

As she entered the house she encountered Mrs Strake in the passage. The latter glanced at her bundle and then at her, and showed by her face that she understood how matters had gone. 'I could not do it—indeed, I could not,' said Miss Maria in feeble protest.

'Leave it to me, Miss G.,' said the landlady, taking the bundle gently from her. 'I'll manage it for you in the morning. I ought to have had more sense than to think of letting you go to such a place. Why, you'd be no better than a baby in their hands; they'd do just as they liked with you.'

In the course of next forenoon Mrs Strake presented herself before Miss Granby. Putting two sovereigns and a half into the latter's hand, she said: 'There! That's all they'd give on it. Bootiful material, you know, but a bit old-fashioned, and that makes a lot of difference.' Then handing her a small square piece of pasteboard, partly printed and partly filled up with certain cabalistic characters, she added: 'And here's the ticket, of which you must please take great care. I'll take a penny from you for it, if you don't mind, which is what they charges.'

Miss Maria gazed first at the money and then at the ticket. 'You good, kind creature!' she exclaimed through her tears. 'How can I ever repay you?'

So, after all, the sick girl had her wine and jelly and grapes, in accordance with the doctor's prescription.

Shortly after this episode, Miss Maria, having some trifling purchases to make, walked down town as far as Church Street with the view of obtaining what she wanted. On her way back she extended her walk a little and went round by St George's Hall. As she drew near, she saw a crowd of people streaming out of one of the doors. There had been a fashionable concert there that afternoon, which apparently was just over. As she was making her way slowly through the crush, the sound of a once familiar voice struck on her ear. She started and turned, feeling herself grow white and cold as she did so. Next moment her eyes fell on Wilmot Burrell. He was talking and laughing in the old gay insouciant style which she remembered so well, with two ladies, whom he was evidently escorting from the concert. Both the ladies were young, both were good-looking, and both fashionably dressed. His eyes seemed as if they could not travel beyond one or the other of them, and never turned the way of Miss Maria. She stood rooted to the spot till the three were lost among the crowd, and then went sadly on her way. Should she tell her niece what she had seen? she asked herself again and again. At length she decided not to do so at present—not till Agnes should be stronger and better able to bear the revelation.

But Agnes's strength came back very slowly, all but imperceptibly indeed, as it seemed to the loving eyes anxiously watching her day after day. She seemed to have no wish of her own in the matter, to have no longer any interest in living. All her old gaiety and sweet rosy happiness had vanished, as if such things had never been, leaving nothing but a pale silent shadow behind, who sat brooding the day through over the ashes of her dead love. Then one day the doctor, who did not seem at all satisfied with the progress his patient was making, said it was imperative that she should have change of air and scene. She must go to New Brighton for a month or six weeks. Very easy talking, but where were the means for carrying out such a mandate to come from? How, indeed, was the doctor himself to be paid, when the time should arrive for a settlement of his account? Everything of value had by this time gone the way of the silk dress, and when the doctor gave utterance to his fiat, Miss Maria had just changed her last sovereign. Still, his will was law.

'I must do it,' she said to herself with a little

fluttering sigh. 'No other course is now open to me. I will write to Marcus by to-night's post. I know that he has a little sum put away towards furnishing. I must ask him for a loan of ten pounds. He would send me every penny he has in the world if I were to ask him for it. Ah, how good he is!'

Although no mention has hitherto been made of the fact, Miss Maria was engaged to the Rev. Marcus Ludford, a former curate of her brother, and had been so engaged for the last seven or eight years. Though the Rev. Marcus was now verging on his fiftieth year, promotion seemed still as far from him as when he started on his career a quarter of a century before. He was a good man, worthy in every respect to be Miss Maria's husband; but it was no wonder that to him the way seemed long and dreary, and that he often asked himself whether the time would ever come when he should be able to marry the woman who had waited for him so long and patiently.

After tea, Miss Maria sat down and wrote her letter without saying a word to Agnes about it. Just as she was folding it up, there came a tap at the door, which, next moment, was opened, displaying to view a stout, middle-aged, apple-cheeked woman, with a face that was the picture of good-temper and content.

'Gracious me!' exclaimed Miss Granby, as she started to her feet, 'can that be Peggy Myers?'

'It's me, Miss Maria—there's no mistake about that,' answered Peggy with a broad smile.

'Come in, do, and shut the door. There's always a draught in that passage.—Well, Peggy, I am glad to see you. Rather a different place this from the vicarage,' she added with a little tremor of the voice and a faint blush, as she shook the newcomer's hand heartily.

'It is indeed, Miss Maria, and sorry I am to see you in such a place. I heard that master was dead, and that you had come to live in Liverpool, and I've been trying for months to find you out, but it was quite by accident I heard of you at last.—But, dear heart alive, how pale and thin Miss Agnes do look! She must have been very ill sure-ly.'

Peggy had been cook years before at the vicarage, but had left it to get married. She stayed upwards of an hour that evening; and her talk about old times and old places enlivened Agnes so much, and seemed to do her so much good, that Miss Maria made Peggy promise that she would pay them another visit before long. Now, Peggy was a shrewd woman in her way. Her curiosity was not satisfied with the scraps of information Miss Maria had vouchsafed her, so, after leaving the house by way of the front door, she went down the area steps to the basement kitchen in search of Mrs Strake, and as that lady was only too glad to have some one to talk to who had known her lodgers in better days, Peggy soon contrived to find out all she wanted to know. The information thus acquired she revolved in her mind as she walked home.

'I'll go to Mr Esholt to-morrow morning as sure as my name's what it is, and tell him all about the poor dear ladies,' she said to herself. 'I mind me well when the other Mr Esholt, who's now dead and gone, used to come, years ago, to the vicarage, and how he and master used

to be more like brothers than friends, calling each other Ned and Dick, just as if they were two great boys together. Yes, I'll make bold to go down to the office and ask for Mr Esholt, and tell him all I've learned about Miss Maria and Miss Agnes. For his brother's sake, if for nothing else, he'll never let them starve for the want of a few pounds—and he such a good kind gentleman as he is!'

Peggy Myers's husband held the position of foreman-packer in Mr Esholt's warehouse.

(To be continued.)

A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ARMADA.

THE tercentenary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada has been duly celebrated at Plymouth, and a monument is to be erected on the Hoe to commemorate the failure of Philip of Spain's great enterprise against the religion and the liberties of England. We have most of us been refreshing our memories by reading once more the story of our great national deliverance, and some of us have perhaps recalled the fact that once only since 1588 have our shores been seriously threatened with invasion. Napoleon emulated Philip: a vast flotilla had been collected at Boulogne; Nelson had been lured away to the West Indies, and the Channel was for the moment clear for the French transports to cross. But then, as before, the winds and the waves befriended the seagirt land, and while Bonaparte was waiting for a favourable breeze, the opportunity passed never to return.

The stories of these two futile attempts to violate our shores are well known; but few save students of history know anything of the projected invasion of England by Charles VI. of France, just two hundred years before the Armada set sail; and yet the French Armada of 1386 was very near being successful, and was in its way as great and as serious an attempt as that of King Philip. It is true that had Charles succeeded in landing his troops, the invasion would have hardly been more than an episode in the great hundred years' struggle between England and France; Agincourt would perhaps have been fought on English soil; and our ancestors would have been able to put into practice the tactics which Charles the Wise had used against them. It was not a question of national life or death, as in the days of Philip and of Napoleon; neither religion nor freedom was at stake; yet the crisis was a serious one, and so all contemporary writers regarded it, if only because the success of Charles would prove that it was possible to invade England, and would destroy the halo of inviolability which encircled the island.

In the early years of Richard II.'s reign the country was in poor heart. The king had belied the promise of his parentage, and surrounded himself with advisers whom it was possible for his intriguing uncles to stigmatise as favourites. Parliament was chary of granting supplies; trade had declined; the great captains of the previous reign were dead, and the French had more than once insulted the English coast, and had even sailed up the Thames and burnt Gravesend; the Channel

swarmed with pirates; and the people, since the suppression of the peasant revolt, were at the mercy of the nobles. The opportunity seemed favourable to Charles VI., flushed with his victory over the rebellious Flemings at Roosebeke, and it is little wonder that 'the lords and the most part of the chivalry of France said, why should not we for once go to England to see the country and the people, and to learn the way thither, as they have learned it to France?' Moreover, it was imagined that John of Gaunt had taken with him the flower of English fighting-men to aid him in his wild attempt to gain the crown of Castile, and that England was well-nigh defenceless. The old plan of getting the Scotch to attack England had been tried, and had failed, with the only result that the relations between Scotland and France became highly strained, and the knights and esquires who had gone with John de Vienne to Scotland returned 'right poor and feeble,' having been pillaged by their allies, 'and cursing the day that they ever came to Scotland, wishing that the French king had peace with England one year or two, and so both kings together might go into Scotland, utterly to destroy that realm for ever; for they said they never saw so evil people, nor so false traitors, nor more foolish people in feats of war.'

The prospect of turning the tables upon the English, who had wrought so much evil to France, was so popular, that people readily paid 'such taxes and tallages as had not been imposed for a hundred years before,' and many gave more than was demanded of them. A large part of this money was laid out in the purchase of ships to keep the Channel clear and transport the invading army to England. 'From Spain,' says Froissart, 'and the port of Seville to Prussia there was no great ship on the sea that the French could lay their hands on but was retained for the king of France and his people. I trow that, since God created the world, there never were seen so many great ships together as were that year at Sluys and at Blankenburgh; for in the month of September there were numbered twelve hundred and eighty-seven ships at Sluys; their masts seemed in the sea like a great forest.' There were ships enough, it was said, to form a bridge across the Channel, along which the men-at-arms might walk. Besides this, vast quantities of stores and provisions were collected—'hay in trusses, garlic, onions, beans, cheese-bowls, barley, oats, rye, wheat, wax candles, boots, shoes, helmets, spurs, hooks, boxes of ointment, bottles of verjuice and vinegar, vases, fat pigs, kitchen and buttery utensils, and every article necessary for man and beast.'

Clisson, the Constable of France, who had acquired great influence over the weak and unstable Charles, had a great ship building in Brittany. He had also constructed a framework of timber like a town, with walls and bastions and battlements, which was to be taken over to England and set up there, 'for the lords to retreat to as a place of safety, and to keep off any danger that might arise from night attacks.' It was said to be twenty feet in height and three thousand paces long; while at every twelve paces there was a tower large enough to contain ten men, and ten feet higher than the rest. It was made to take to pieces; and many carpenters and other

workmen were engaged at very high wages to take it properly down and put it together, which could be done in about three hours.

Adventurers of all nationalities flocked to Sluys to join the expedition. Sluys, it may be remarked in passing, is a town of the Netherlands, on the Belgian frontier, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a prosperous port. To Sluys, then, these adventurers came trooping 'out of Savoy, Germany, and from the going down of the sun to the lands of the Count of Armagnac'—the majority of them for the mere love of fighting and in hopes of sharing in the plunder; for England was supposed to be the richest country in Europe, and the French had made up their minds that the English would be ruined and destroyed beyond resource, the men put to death, and the women and children carried into slavery. Altogether, there were sixty thousand men ready to set sail, and eagerly waiting for the completion of the preparations. 'The great nobles of France,' Froissart tells us, 'sent their servants to Sluys to get all things ready for them. Each lord strove to have his ship the best supplied, and the most ornamented with painting and gilding, with their coats of arms emblazoned on them and on the flags. Painters had a good time, for they were paid whatever they asked. It was told me that Sir Guy de la Tremouille expended upwards of two thousand francs in painting and ornamenting his ship.'

In England, the first idea was that these preparations were intended against Calais, which was at that time in our hands; but when it became evident that an invasion was seriously threatened, a complete panic set in. 'The Londoners,' says Walsingham, 'timid as hares, tried to discover hiding-places if their city was taken, having no confidence in their powers of resistance; and those who in times of peace had boasted that they would blow every Frenchman out of England, now thought England was lost, and, like drunken men, rushed to the walls and destroyed and threw down all the adjacent houses; in fact, they were so overcome by fear that they behaved like men in the direst necessity.' As usual, there were plenty of people ready to increase the panic by false and exaggerated reports. It was currently believed, according to Knighton, that Clisson's palisade was as big as London, and measured seven leagues in circumference. Nor was the alarm confined to the ignorant; for Sir Simon Burley, one of the royal ministers, seriously advised the Abbot of Canterbury to remove the relics of Becket, lest they should fall into the hands of the French. The king's uncles, the Earls of Buckingham and Cambridge, could think of nothing better than recalling John of Gaunt from Castile to defend England; but fortunately, there were wiser and cooler heads.

The king was summoned back from Wales; and on his arrival, a great Council of nobles, prelates, and knights was held to devise measures for repelling the invasion. The Earl of Salisbury took the lead, and in a manly and patriotic speech showed the necessity of union in the face of the great national danger. Prompt measures were taken. It being still doubtful whether Calais were not after all the real object of attack, Harry Percy, already known as Hotspur, was sent thither with reinforcements of men and pro-

visions; a truce was made with Scotland; the whole nation was summoned to arms, and diligent preparations were made for guarding the coast; 'though,' says Froissart, 'there were more than a hundred thousand who desired nothing better than the arrival of the French. "Let them come," said these light-hearted companions—"let these Frenchmen come, and not a limb of them shall return to France." Such persons as were in debt, and had no thought or means of payment, rejoiced at the intended invasion, and when pressed by their creditors would say: "Be easy; they are coining new florins in France wherewith you shall be paid." On the strength of this, they lived and spent largely, credit not being refused them; for if there were any demur, they used to say: "What would you? Is it not better that we should spend freely the goods of this land, than that they should be kept for the French to find and take?"

'The great nobles and the townsfolk, who had much to lose, appreciated the danger, and were in great doubt; but the commons and poor companions cared nought, nor did the poor knights and esquires, but they wished for the invasion either to win or to lose all. "God," said they, "hath sent a good time to us, since the king of France is coming here. What a valiant and enterprising king he is! There has not been for three hundred years a king in France of such courage. He will make his people good soldiers, and they will make him a powerful king. Blessings on him who is now coming to see us, for now shall we all be either rich or dead."

Meanwhile, the Council had completed their arrangements for protecting the coast. The Earl of Salisbury undertook the defence of the Isle of Wight, where his property lay; the Earl of Devonshire was sent to Southampton with six hundred archers and two hundred men-at-arms; the Earl of Northampton to Rye; the Earl of Cambridge to Dover; the Earl of Buckingham to Sandwich; the Earls of Pembroke and Stafford to Orwell; Sir Henry and Sir Faulx Percy to Yarmouth; and Sir Simon Burley was appointed governor of Dover Castle. Every port and harbour from the Humber to Land's End was well provided with archers and men-at-arms; and it was reckoned that there were in England a hundred thousand of the former and ten thousand of the latter. Rochester Bridge was broken down at the demand of the Londoners. On all the hills along the sea-coast watchmen were posted. The manner of posting these watchmen was, according to Froissart, as follows: 'They had large Gascony casks filled with sand, which they placed one on the other, rising like columns; on these were planks, where the watchmen remained night and day on the lookout; and their orders were, the moment they should observe the French fleet nearing the land, to light torches and make great fires to alarm the country; and the forces within sight of these fires were to hasten to the spot. It had been resolved to allow the king of France to land, and even to remain unmolested for three or four days: they intended first to attack and destroy the fleet and all the stores; and then to advance to the king, not to combat him immediately, but to harass his army, so that it might be disabled and afraid to forage. The corn-lands were all to be burnt—and England at

best is a difficult foraging country—so that the French would soon be starved and destroyed.'

All the while the French were continuing their preparations; and the middle of August 1386 was fixed upon as the time for the invasion to take place. The king heard a solemn mass at Notre-Dame, took leave of Queen Blanche, and went to Noyon, and thence, through Amiens, to Lille, taking the Duke of Bourbon with him. It was slow work travelling in those days, and it was not till the middle of September that he met the Duke of Burgundy at Arras. Gradually the seigneurs and their men-at-arms came up. The greatest care was taken in the selection of the troops; only picked men were to be embarked; and the Constable gave orders that for every two or three knights there should only be allowed one reserve horse and one 'varlet.' Still the departure was delayed while they waited for the arrival of the Duke of Berry, who was 'still loitering, having no great desire to go to England;' but the men comforted themselves by saying: 'The king will embark on Saturday, on Tuesday, or on Thursday;' and every day of the week they said: 'He will embark to-morrow, or the day after.'

While the French were thus waiting for the arrival of the Duke of Berry, a curious episode occurred. Leon, king of Armenia, a member of the House of Lusignan, who had been driven from his kingdom by the Turks, and, after various strange adventures, had settled down in France, took upon himself to mediate between the rival kings. Of his own accord he came over to England and requested an interview with Richard. He was courteously received at Dover, and granted a safe-conduct to London, where he was well regarded, because he was a stranger, and good cheer made for him. On coming before Richard, he explained the object of his mission, expressing his anxiety to make peace between England and France, 'for this war between them is not very becoming; its long continuance has greatly emboldened and raised the pride of the Turks and Saracens. No one now makes any opposition to them, and this is the reason that I have lost my crown and kingdom.'

Richard postponed giving any answer until he had assembled his Council; and four days afterwards the king of Armenia appeared at Westminster and laid his proposals before the royal Council. He was treated with all courtesy; but it was impossible to treat with a mediator who had no authority to speak on behalf of France, and Archbishop Courtenay, as spokesman of the Council, replied briefly and wisely: 'Sir king of Armenia, it is not the custom, nor has it ever been, that in such weighty matters as those now in dispute between the king of England and the king of France, that proposals of peace should be made to the king of England while an army is ready to invade his country. Our opinion is that you should return to the French army and prevail on them to retire; and when we are fully assured that they have done so, do you return hither, and we will willingly attend to any treaty you shall propose.'

So the king of Armenia returned; but it is clear that he had made a favourable impression on Richard, for a pension of a thousand pounds was granted him, and great gifts were offered

him, none of which would he accept save a ring of the value of a hundred francs. On his return to France he told Charles of the reception of his peaceful overtures by the English Council; 'but the king and his lords paid no heed, and sent him away, for they were resolved to sail for England at the first fair wind after the arrival of the Constable and the Duke of Berry.'

Clisson soon came up from Tréguier, but not without having sustained great damage on the way. He had seventy-two ships, some of them laden with the famous wooden wall; but when they were off Margate, a gale dispersed them; seven were driven to Zeeland and captured; others were taken by English cruisers; and four of the ships that fell into English hands contained portions of the wall. They were brought to London; 'the king and all the Londoners had great joy of them;' and the *ville de bois* was set up as a defence round the town of Winchelsea. The autumn was now far advanced, and it became a question with the French whether it was worth while to wait any longer for the Duke of Berry. News came that he had left Paris, and urgent messages were sent to him to hasten his troops; but still he lingered. At length, on the eve of All-Saints, the wind being very favourable, it was decided to set sail, and the Armada left Sluys. But it had not gone twenty miles before the wind again veered round, and they were driven back with such force that many of the ships were shattered. 'Thus always the time passed, and the winter was approaching, and the lords lay there in great cold and peril.' The Flemings, too, were very anxious for them to be gone, and quarrels broke out between them and the French. It was the end of November before the Duke of Berry arrived, and the wind was then most adverse, so that it was clear that the expedition must be postponed. Charles VI., deeply conscious of the humiliation of abandoning an adventure which had been so loudly vaunted, cried out: 'In God's name, if no one else go, yet will I.' The lords applauded his bravery; but decided that the invasion should be deferred till April or May, and that such stores as were not perishable should be reserved till then. The troops were disbanded; and the Counts of Armagnac and Savoy and the Dauphin of Auvergne, who had spent ten thousand francs on the expedition, returned sulkily home. In England, the news was received with mixed feelings: those who had expected to make themselves rich by the spoils of the French were chagrined; but most people rejoiced at having so easily escaped such a great peril. A grand feast was given in the city of London to those who had been appointed to guard the different harbours, and the king kept Christmas magnificently at Westminster.

Next spring, the Earl of Arundel fitted out a fleet, with which he captured nearly a hundred French and Flemish ships, and took booty which Froissart estimates at two hundred thousand francs. After this, the invasion of England was impossible, and though some show was made of preparations at Tréguier and Harfleur, the opportunity was past. A desultory naval war ensued, in which the English under Arundel, the first of our great admirals, had decidedly the better of it; and it was not until the reign of Henry

IV. that the French seriously thought of attacking our shores.

What the result of an invasion in 1386 would have been, it is impossible to say. Had Richard shown the same courage and presence of mind that he did in Wat Tyler's insurrection, he might have become a national hero, and saved both his crown and his life. As it was, security from invasion let loose all the factiousness of the nobles; and the remainder of his reign was little more than a struggle for ascendancy between rival parties, none of which seems to have been animated by the least patriotism or honesty of purpose. In this dreary reign the one bright spot is the episode of the French Armada, which for a moment silenced the strife of factions and united England against a common foe.

WHO DID IT?

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

THE events of the past few days had changed Dick Ottery from a careless, free-and-easy, pleasure-loving boy of five-and-twenty into a man. His legal training came to his aid at a crisis when it was most needed, and so quietly did he slip off to London and to Scotland Yard, and obtain the warrant for Claude Shute's arrest, and see the detectives start on their journey duly provided with photographs of their man, that not a soul outside the walls of Colyton Hall had any idea that Claude Shute was even suspected of being concerned in the murder of old Jethro Seaton. All this, however, might have leaked out through the loquacity of the telegraph clerk who had taken in Mary's message, had not the girl recovered her presence of mind quickly enough to run back for her change, and to impress secrecy on the man; and a favour asked by Miss Ottery was never refused. Little by little, however, Colyton became aware that something unusual was being enacted in its midst, with the nature of which it was not so fully acquainted as a good old-fashioned gossiping village had a right to expect.

The landlord of the *George* had been ordered by Mr Richard Ottery to have a fly ready to meet a certain night-train from London; and as the *George* fly was only requisitioned upon very special occasions, this alone was food for conjecture. Again, there was a mysterious importance about the two constables who represented the local police force, which being suddenly assumed, was unaccountable; and over their beer in the parlour of the inn they whispered and nodded and exchanged significant glances, which sufficiently proclaimed their engagement upon some 'job.' Finally, the group of curious ones who were awaiting the arrival of the particular London train for which the fly was ordered, saw Mr Claude Shute accompanied by a tall stranger, get into the vehicle, and followed it to the police station, where it was received by the constables in full uniform, and by Mr Richard Ottery.

Immediately, the bar of the *George*, which had begun to empty for the night, filled, and the conclusion arrived at, after a vast consumption of ale and tobacco and much expenditure of breath, was that 'the queer chap with the specs,' as Claude

Shute was called, had been arrested for the murder of Squire Seaton.

During this interval of four days which had elapsed between Dick's expedition to Scotland Yard and the arrival of Claude Shute at Colyton, Mary had let herself sink almost into a state of prostration. On the night of the arrival of Claude in custody, Dick came into the study where Mary was lying tortured with a racking headache, and said: 'Our gentleman has arrived.'

'Do you mean that Claude Shute is in Colyton?' exclaimed the girl, starting up.

'Yes; that he's safe in the lock-up, awaiting the next petty sessions at Shinglemouth,' replied Dick.

'Arrested—in the lock-up—here! Richard, is it true?'

'Of course it is. Why, you don't think Scotland Yard would let such a prize slip?'

'Was he arrested at Brussels?'

'Yes; calmly smoking in the courtyard of the hotel, like any honest peaceable tourist.'

Mary pressed her hands to her bursting forehead. Had he never received the telegram? Had the clerk never sent it? Could Dick have intercepted it? Why had he walked to meet his fate? What did it mean—except, joyous thought, that he was really innocent, and was prepared to face inquiry? 'Coolest Johnnie I ever saw,' continued Dick. 'When he saw me, he actually said: "I suppose I have to thank you for this, Mr Ottery?" Actually had the cheek to ask me to tell him all about it, as if he had never heard of it; answered the questions at the police station as if he was in a drawing-room.—But that sort of bluff won't do, and he'll find that out when he's hauled up before Judge Nooser at Mixeter.'

'Can I see him?' asked Mary.

'I don't know.—What do you want to see him for? At anyrate you can't see him to-night. Bless you, he's asleep and snoring now. These fellows always sleep and eat as well when they're in their cells as at their homes.'

'Cold! Cruel! Heartless!' exclaimed Mary bitterly. 'I could never have believed it of you!'

'Any more than I can believe that infatuation for a man can make a woman blind to any crimes he likes to commit, and forget justice to her own flesh and blood,' retorted her brother.

By the next morning the news of Claude Shute's arrest was generally known in the village, and from the village was being spread to the country around as rapidly as eager tongues could perform their functions. There was not much expression of feeling about the matter, for old Jethro Seaton had never mixed sufficiently with the people or spent enough money amongst them to be popular; and, as has been already said, Claude Shute was, on account of his reserved mysterious habits, regarded somewhat askance. One woman, however, did energetically defend the prisoner, and this was his landlady, Mrs Dawes, who declared that she knew him as well as did Miss Mary herself, and that he was utterly incapable of committing such a crime as that with which he was charged.

At an early hour, Mary hurried down to the police station, around which a gaping, whispering crowd was already gathered, and was permitted to speak with Claude through the grating of his cell

door. She saw that he was pale and anxious-looking, and, perhaps naturally, construed these appearances as signs of guilt. 'Claude,' she said, 'why are you here? Did you not get my telegram?'

'Of course I did, my darling,' he replied; 'and I couldn't for the life of me understand it, as I had heard nothing of your uncle's death.—But why was I to fly? I had committed no crime.'

'Really—truly—are you innocent?' Mary asked eagerly.

'Why, of course, Mary. Surely you of all people could not have believed me guilty?'

'I don't know—I don't know,' sobbed the girl. 'Appearances were so terribly against you.'

'I am sorry you could not believe in me—very sorry. But tell me all about it from beginning to end. I asked your brother last night; but he laughed and said he could tell me nothing new.'

So Mary related to him all with which we are familiar.

'I know the summer-house well,' said Claude, when she had finished. 'Many a long hour have I sat talking and discussing with your poor old uncle.—And so you think that I could have gone down there, committed the crime, and got back to my rooms in five minutes, do they?—I was with you at two you remember, Mary.'

'And poor uncle's broken watch had stopped at a quarter past,' said Mary.

'At which time I was packing up to go away, for I remember Mrs Dawes saying that it was ten minutes past two as I came in, and that I should never have time to catch the three o'clock train.—Look here, my own Mary. As you say, appearances are against me, and I must have help. I have only one friend in the world besides you and Mrs Dawes, and that's Dr Waller. Would you mind asking him to come round here as soon as he can?—Well! I never would have believed that your brother's hatred to me was so great that he could do a thing like this.'

'But appearances are against you, Claude.'

'So they are, Mary—so they are, and we must do our best to clear them.'

Mary went away, and soon returned with the worthy little doctor. To him Claude confided all that concerned himself, and requested him to use his influence to allow him, Claude, to visit the scene of the tragedy.

Accordingly, with a constable at one side, and Mary and the doctor on the other, Claude passed through the crowd towards the Hall. On their road they met Dick, who looked surprised at the unusual procession of a prisoner under arrest with his friends outside the station walls.

'You had better come with us, Mr Ottery,' said Claude. 'We are going to visit the scene of my crime, as you call it; perhaps, on the return journey I may be in a position to dispense with the somewhat rough attentions of the gentleman in uniform at my side.'

Upon which gentle rebuke the constable somewhat loosened the grasp which he kept on Claude's arm as a method of impressing the crowd with his importance, and muttered something about 'Heels not bein' so slippery as some prisoners as I knows on.'

Dick acquiesced silently, and for the first time asked himself if, after all perhaps, he had not been a little hasty in acting as he had.

'With your permission,' said Claude, 'we'll just ask Mrs Dawes a question or two before we proceed farther.' So they turned aside to the cottage of the old woman, who, at the apparition of the little procession, followed by the entire village, making straight for her door, was not quite sure if she were not in some way or other about to be implicated in the 'murder business,' and was accordingly in a state of tremor.

Mrs Dawes's evidence was conclusive as to the hour at which Claude Shute had arrived to pack up for his visit to the continent; and her little niece corroborated what she said. So they went on to the Hall and down to the summer-house, over which a couple of stout fellows were keeping guard against the intrusion of the curious, whose heads were already lining the wall by the pond.

'Now, then, Mr Ottery,' said Claude, 'have you found any weapon with which this murder could have been committed?'

'No,' replied Dick. 'But that counts for little, as it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the murderer to have thrown it away into the thickets.'

'Very well. How did you find Mr Seaton lying?'

Dick pointed out exactly the position in which he had first seen his uncle, and showed where his head had bled on to the floor.

'Yes,' said Claude; 'he always used to sit with the left side of his face towards the wall, so that he felt the warmth of the sun, yet was not interfered with by its glare; therefore, doctor, the blow must have been dealt from the direction of the wall?'

'Precisely,' replied the doctor.

'You were playing cricket that afternoon, Mr Ottery?' asked Claude.

Dick nodded in assent.

'Could you remember what you were actually doing at about the time when, according to the evidence of the watch, your uncle met his death?'

'Yes, I was batting. We had lunch at half-past one; we resumed the game at two; I going in to bat, and I was in three-quarters of an hour.—But what has that got to do with it?'

'Well, it may have a great deal, and it may have nothing. When I have been sitting here with your uncle, I have often seen balls come whistling over the wall: sometimes they pitched in the pond, sometimes in the wood; and one, I remember, pitched on the roof of this summer-house, and I told your uncle that he might meet with an accident. Was a ball hit over here during that day's game?'

'Yes—yes, of course there was,' stammered Dick, who had suddenly turned deathly pale.—'And what is more, now I come to think of it, it would have come exactly over here.'

'Let us see, to make sure,' said the doctor.

So the party crossed over to the wall, and Dick showed exactly where he was standing when he hit the ball to square leg about which he had spoken to Mary after the match.

'I suppose you haven't found the ball?' said Claude.

'No; there are dozens lying about the gardens which have been hit over at different times,' replied Dick; 'we never dream of trying to find them in such a difficult place.'

'Then your uncle was killed by the ball which you hit over,' said the doctor, leading the way back to the summer-house.

A murmur of satisfied conviction passed through the little party, and Mary in her anxiety clung to the arm which the constable had now thought fit to release.

'The ball should be in the summer-house,' said the doctor.

So they returned to the summer-house, and all were presently engaged in searching the rat-holes dotted about the walls and floor. Finally, Mary uttered a faint cry and handed a ball to the doctor. It was nearly new, and although the rats had already commenced operations on it, there was visible on it a deep patch, which the doctor pronounced unhesitatingly to be blood, and, moreover, demonstrated conclusively that it had been found at the most likely spot to which it would have rolled after having dealt the deathblow.

Of the scene which ensued—of Mary's joy that her lover had been absolved—of poor Dick's abject contrition for the humiliation he had brought on Claude Shute—of the congratulations of the doctor—of the professional disappointment of the constable, nothing need be said. Simply, we may conclude by saying that in due course Claude Shute made Mary Ottery his wife, and that the friendship between him and her brother has never since been clouded by the faintest shadow.

HUMOROUS TOASTS AND SENTIMENTS.

It was from a toasted bread or biscuit which early formed an addition to many English drinks that we acquired the word toast as applied to the act of drinking the health of any person; or to any idea or sentiment, as it is called. We have very early mention of toast-masters who arranged the amusements and promoted the conviviality of the company.

A humorous incident lately occurred, which shows that modern toast-masters are sometimes not behind their ancient prototypes in promoting the hilarity of the company. It happened at a political dinner at which several noble lords and well-known leaders of political thought were present. The toast-master, either from extreme nervousness or some equally potent cause, got considerably confused in the matter of the toast list, and a *faux pas* which he committed at the outset caused general amusement. In calling on the company to drink the toast of the Queen with all the honours, he proceeded to give the keynote; but instead of the familiar National Anthem, the company were astonished to hear the refrain of 'For he's a jolly good fellow' echoing from the head of the room. The unfortunate man never got beyond the first syllable of the last word when he discovered his mistake—as well he might—from the burst of hilarity that succeeded.

Something of the same kind of mistake happened at a fashionable wedding. The band, after the toast of 'The Bride,' struck up an orchestral version of the time-honoured glee, 'Trust her not—trust her not—she is fooling thee!' A wicked conspiracy between the leader of the band and the best-man was suspected.

The best toast of the season was, we think, given by a printer, namely, 'Woman—the fairest

work in all creation. The edition is large, and no man should be without a copy.'—A fond young lover in a little speech anent the fair sex referred to his sweetheart as a 'Delectable dear, so sweet that honey would blush in her presence, and treacle stand appalled.'

It may not be difficult to concoct a pretty speech, but true gallantry combined with wit is needed in making one which shall contain as much delicacy as flattery. 'You forget that I am an old woman,' said a lady in response to an admiring allusion in a neat speech from one of the old school.—'Madam,' was the reply, 'when my eyes are dazzled by a diamond, it never occurs to me to ask a mineralogist for its history.'

A celebrated statesman, when dining with a certain Duchess on her eightieth birthday, said, in proposing her health: 'May you live, my Lady Duchess, until you begin to grow ugly!'—Her ladyship's tongue was as ready as his own. 'I thank you, sir,' she replied; 'and may you long continue your taste for antiquities.'

Goldsmith, in alluding to 'the ladies' modest custom of excusing themselves in drinking toasts,' says:

Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Many amusing and witty allusions in giving toasts and applying sentiments are probably thus lost by ladies 'excusing themselves,' as may be instanced by the following. Among the gifts of a newly married pair was a new broom, sent to the bride by a lady-friend, the strange present being accompanied by this quatrain: 'This trifling gift accept from me; its use I would commend: in sunshine, use the brushy part; in storms, the other end.'

The sentiments of another of the gentler sex were equally humorously and tersely conveyed when she thus expressed herself regarding matrimony: 'Get married, young men, and be quick about it. Don't wait for the millennium for the girls to become angels. You'd look well beside an angel, wouldn't you? you wretches!'

Slightly ironical with regard to the fair creatures was one of the toasts drunk at a recent celebration: 'Woman! she requires no eulogy—she speaks for herself.' This reminds us that an old bachelor at a wedding feast had the heartlessness to offer the following toast: 'Marriage—the gate through which the happy lover leaves his enchanted regions and returns to earth.'—But this was somewhat atoned for by a more gallant wedding guest, who, at the marriage of a deaf and dumb couple, wittily wished them unspeakable bliss.

To talk humorously on such occasions requires thought before speech, lest one should be considered more amusing than complimentary. To quote a case in point. A gentleman was walking down the street the other day with his friend Jackson, when they met a clergyman. The reverend gentleman, though possessed of a large brain, has but a diminutive body to support it. Quite recently he had united himself, for good or ill, to a buxom widow. The minister blushed a little as they passed. 'What is the meaning of that, Jackson?' asked his companion.—'Well, you see,' was the reply, 'we had a tea-fight at the minister's shortly after he was married. I was called upon to make a speech. You know you

are expected to be humorous on such occasions; so I referred in a casual way to the minister as the widow's mite. He has acted strangely ever since.'

A farmer was at an agricultural banquet at which a round of successful generals were being toasted. Some gave one famous name and some another. When it came to his turn to add to the list, he said: 'I'll give ye Sanders Pirgивie o' Crichtondean, for he had a sair fecht wi' the world a' his life—an honest man wi' a big family!' That was a novel if homely sentiment.

Appropriate, but not very enlivening or comforting, must have appeared the toast lately said to have been proposed at a banquet given to a writer of comedies in honour of his latest work. A waggish guest rose to his feet and said: 'The author's very good health. May he live to be as old as his jokes!'

This toast was given at a recent convivial gathering: 'The bench and the bar. If it were not for the bar, there would be little use for the bench.' As pithy and, if anything, still more to the point was the following, given at a dinner of shoemakers: 'May we have all the women in the country to shoe, and all the men to boot.'

These last expressions of sentiment must, we imagine, be after the style recommended by Charles Lamb when he gave some advice about speech-making to this effect: 'A speaker should not attempt to express too much, but should leave something to the imagination of his audience;' and he tells how, being called on to return thanks for a toast to his health, he rose, bowed to his audience, and said 'Gentlemen,' and then sat down, leaving it to their imagination to supply the rest.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE meeting of the British Association at Bath, while not presenting any unusual feature, was certainly a success, and many papers read were not only of scientific but of popular interest. Indeed, we may say that the meeting was to a certain extent remarkable for the number of subjects which came before it which required no special scientific training on the part of the audience to understand them. Electric science has been so much popularised during recent years, that all relating to it was eagerly listened to; and Mr Preece, who was president of the Mechanical Section, found willing listeners to his address upon the Applications of Electricity. But the lions of the Mechanical Section were two speakers whose names are new, but who were listened to with more rapt attention than is commonly vouchsafed the most gifted orators. These were the Phonograph, and its rival the Graphophone, which, after they had made their bow before the Association, were removed to two anterooms, where streams of people visited them during the whole week.

Mr Edison's Phonograph is now well known, and we have lately pointed out how several improvements in it have removed from it the

stigma of being but a toy. Colonel Gouraud, under whose fatherly care it was presented to the British Association, explained that ordinary correspondence between himself and Mr Edison at New York had now entirely ceased. They each spoke to a Phonogram, and the sound-tracing from the instrument was sent by post across the Atlantic from one to the other; so that each of these correspondents has the great satisfaction of hearing his friend's words in the familiar voice. When this system becomes general, how eagerly shall we all look for the phonograms from absent friends! Is it too much to hope that in this novel form, letter-writing, which, in the way our forefathers understood the word, is a lost art, may be recovered, with much additional profit to us all?

The Graphophone is, like the Phonograph, of American origin, but is so like the latter instrument that they seem almost identical. In the Phonograph a cylinder of waxlike material receives and records the mechanical effects of the sound-waves; while in the Graphophone this cylinder is of paper, with a waxen surface. Mr Edison's machine, again, is driven by a small electric motor, whilst its rival is worked like a sewing-machine by a treadle. The Graphophone was invented by Mr C. S. Tainter, who claims the merit of having first introduced the waxen surface for the moving cylinder. This, it would appear from a recent telegram from Mr Edison, has been superseded in the Phonograph by a material which, while resisting all atmospheric influences, gives far better results than wax.

Electric bells are now regarded as a necessity in all well-appointed buildings, and any improvement in their arrangement or construction is therefore a matter of popular interest. Such an improvement is indicated in the magnetic system which has been designed by Messrs Cox-Walker & Swinton, and which is now being introduced commercially by the Equitable Telephone Association of London. The bell requires no battery, and is practically everlasting. The system consists of two parts, one being the generator, and the other the bell itself. The generator consists of a horseshoe magnet, between the poles of which is revolved, by means of a button easily turned by the thumb and finger, an armature, or shuttle of wire. This action arouses a current of electricity, which traverses the wire leading from the generator to the bell, and rings the latter. The principle is of course not new, but has been carried out in a manner which at once presents it in a practical form. Previous attempts in the same direction have resulted in the production of instruments which are in comparison both bulky and clumsy.

It is stated that in Norway the telegraph poles are preserved from decay in a thoroughly effectual manner by boring an inch-hole in the wood about two feet from the ground, and filling the orifice with crystals of copper sulphate (bluestone), afterwards plugging the hole with wood. The crystals gradually melt and permeate the wood, so that it turns a greenish colour. We are not aware that this plan has been tried in Britain, where it might also be adopted by farmers and others for the preservation of gate-posts and similar

structures, more especially as bluestone is already a familiar substance on the farm.

Mr Inverarity, who is an enthusiastic hunter of large game, has been reading a paper before the Bombay Natural History Society in which he discusses the habits of the tiger, and more especially the mode in which it kills and eats its prey. He tells us that the awful stroke of the forepaw, of which we have heard so much in terrible tiger stories, is a fiction. The animal clutches with its claw as does a human being with his fingers, but he does not use his paw to strike a blow. The throat of the victim is generally seized from below, and death ensues from pressure of the windpipe rather than from any actual wound. Mr Inverarity believes that the victim suffers little or no pain, the sudden shock of attack producing a stupor and dreaminess in which there is no sense of pain or terror. Incidentally, he quotes the inquest Report upon a native who was killed in Salsette by a tiger, from which it seems that extraordinary verdicts are by no means confined to more civilised countries. The Report stated 'that Pandoo died of the tiger eating him; there was no other cause of death. Nothing was left but some fingers, which probably belonged to the right or left hand.'

A novel kind of sailing-vessel called the *Seafarer* has recently been tried at Southampton, with such success as to lead to the belief that it may cause some revolution in boat-building. Its new features are confined to the hull, which presents many peculiarities. The vessel is thirty feet long with a beam of seven feet; while her submerged part or draught is only twenty inches, including the keels, and this with a ton of lead on board to serve as ballast. At first sight the *Seafarer* does not seem to differ from other boats, and it is only when her submerged parts are examined that the novel points are apparent. Instead of having a section of U or V shape, as have other vessels, the *Seafarer* is shaped more like a W, with the angles well rounded off. As before indicated, she possesses two keels, and these are of brass, and are hollow, so that the water flows through them from end to end. The vessel possesses remarkable buoyancy, and is easily steered by a rudder, which also presents many new features.

The oft proposed scheme of substituting a photographic apparatus for the judge at the winning-post at horseraces has been adopted in Germany with marked success. Experiments in the same direction have also been recently carried out in America with such satisfactory results that at one well-known racecourse an official photographer has been retained. From these experiments it would seem that so-called 'dead-heats,' in which two, and in one case three horses were alleged to have reached the winning post exactly at the same moment, are impossible events. The photograph shows in such cases that there is really a difference of several inches between the horses' heads. It may be assumed that the photographic method would only be relied upon in very close races of the description just cited. There are certain difficulties in the way of its general adoption, the chief of which is the occurrence of dull weather, when a picture taken with the necessary speed, say the one-two-hundredth of a second, would be impossible.

The Manchester Ship Canal enterprise, which is

now making such good progress, seems to have had the effect of arousing other towns to the consideration of similar works. The Sheffield Chamber of Commerce has just taken up the subject of water-communication between Sheffield and the sea, their principal ground of action being the heavy railway charges which they assert are hampering the local industries. Bristol at the same time has under consideration a far more extensive scheme. Not content with easy communication with the Bristol Channel via the Avon, it is now sought to cut a canal to the English Channel from Bridgwater Bay to Seaton, in South Devon, thus separating Cornwall and Devonshire from Britain, and turning them into an island. Its adoption would mean a saving of three hundred miles to ships trading between Bristol and the English Channel, the Continent, and the Baltic ports; but whether these vessels are numerous enough to pay the expenses and interest on capital sunk in such a great enterprise is an open question. In these days of steam, three hundred miles is not a very long journey, and it may be presumed that many vessels would rather spend a little more time in rounding Land's End than pay the canal dues.

The use of compressed coal for domestic purposes seems to be rapidly increasing, a fact which we are glad to notice for the reason that what used to be regarded as a waste product is being utilised. The disposal of dust or slack had long been a problem with coal-merchants, and in many parts of the country, hundreds of tons had been allowed to accumulate. But for some time it has been known that the dust, when mixed with a certain proportion of crushed pitch and compressed in a mould can be converted into briquettes, which have a good marketable value. A new machine has recently been invented by Mr Mowll and Mr Messenger, C.E. of Dover, which will turn out these coal-bricks at the rate of five tons per day of twelve hours. The process is briefly as follows: The coal-dust, after being mixed with ten per cent. of crushed pitch and thoroughly incorporated by stirrers, meets a jet of steam, which softens the pitch and reduces the mixture to a plastic state. It now passes into a system of revolving moulds, each mould passing beneath a plunger, which thoroughly compresses the charge. An ejector pushes out the brick thus formed, and in about an hour's time it is ready for actual use.

There is a tinge of sadness in the thought that Brunel's leviathan ship, the *Great Eastern*, is after all to be broken up; and when we read of her being towed away for that purpose, we cannot help thinking of Turner's masterpiece, 'The Fighting *Téméraire* towed to her Last Berth.' The *Great Eastern* has not had a glorious career, it is true, but she did good work in laying the first Atlantic Cable; and besides this, it is impossible not to regret the destruction of a ship which, after all, was a triumph of engineering skill. It seems a pity that no better use can be found for the vessel.

All those who take an interest in scientific progress will be glad to know that the English government, after that long stage of deliberation which seems inseparable from official decisions, have consented to provide funds for the necessary instruments to take part in the projected photographic charting of the heavens. It will be

remembered that this magnificent international scheme was elaborated two years ago at an astronomical conference at Paris, and most of the principal observatories of the world had signified their consent to co-operate. Greenwich and the Cape of Good Hope observatories are now added to the number of those that will take part in the work.

A fresh advance in modes of locomotion is evidenced by the recent trial in London of an electrically driven dogcart. The vehicle will accommodate four persons, the accumulators or secondary batteries being placed beneath the seats. These batteries actuate a motor which is connected by chain-gearing with one of the hind-wheels. A speed of ten miles an hour upon an ordinary road can be maintained for five hours, the motor making at that speed about fourteen hundred revolutions per minute, and developing three-quarter horse-power. The complete weight of the carriage and its fittings is a little over eleven hundredweight. The movement is under ready control by the driver, who is able to regulate the speed to any required velocity. This new vehicle has been contrived by Messrs Immisch & Co., whose steam launches are well known on the Thames. What with air-driven tramcars, underground railways, cable haulage, and this last advance in electricity, it would seem that a time approaches when horse-traction in our metropolitan streets will be as scarce as it is—for a different reason—in Venice.

It was stated by one of the speakers at the late British Association meeting that no fewer than five million persons are dependent for their bread upon various adaptations of the electric current. We may surely assume that among these there must be many minds capable of original work who will in time blossom into inventors and aid the world's progress.

Mr L. A. Thompson of Philadelphia has secured letters-patent in all the principal countries for a new railway system for rapid transit in towns and cities, a system which depends upon gravity for its chief motive-power. Most of our readers must have seen at various exhibitions and holiday resorts the system of inclined planes and cars which constitute the so-called switchback railway. It is an elaboration of the same principle that Mr Thompson seeks to apply to the more serious business of locomotion in our streets. The general idea of the method is that of an elevated railway of light construction, having stations at frequent intervals. Between these stations the line will take a concave form, so that if a train be started from one side of the concavity it will travel by gravity to the bottom of the bow, and the impetus thus gained will carry it up the other side. But the highest point of the bow is not at the station itself but just outside it, so that a train will have to be pulled up to this point before it can start on its downward journey. This is done by a travelling cable of short length worked by a stationary engine, which the tram grips hold of when required. The system is very ingenious, and is likely to be adopted in many cities where an elevated railway of the New York pattern would not be tolerated.

In spite of all the recent controversy concerning the permanence of water-colours which led to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire

into the matter, one evil which seems to attack the very root of the question seems to have been strangely overlooked. It seems that in many kinds of drawing-paper used by artists in water-colours, chlorine is employed as a bleaching agent, the use of clean white rags which require no such chemical treatment adding enormously to the expense of manufacture. Traces of this chlorine, which should have been, but frequently are not, eliminated by after-treatment of the pulp with sulphite of soda, remain in the paper, and occupy themselves in bleaching certain of the colours placed upon it by the artist. Now that the evil has been noted, paper-makers will surely produce an article which shall be above suspicion. The sheet of paper which supports a water-colour drawing generally represents such a minute fraction of the sum for which that drawing sells, that the extra expense would not be grudged by any artist. In the case of drawings which do not command a good price, the presence of the chlorine would perhaps be an advantage.

It will be remembered that a gigantic raft of timber was launched last year at Nova Scotia, its destination being New York. The storms encountered during the voyage of seven hundred miles caused the monster structure to break up, and the timber was lost. But, nothing daunted, the promoters of the enterprise determined to build another larger raft, for they had proved that a structure of the kind could be launched and navigated. This second raft, or rather bale of timber, has not only been successfully started, but has reached its journey's end without mishap. In order that our readers may realise the gigantic scale upon which this novel structure is built, the following particulars are given. The raft is the shape of a cigar, and has a length just short of six hundred feet, its girth being one hundred and fifty feet, and its estimated weight ten thousand tons. The timber of which it is composed consists of tapering logs, which are about forty feet in length, and fourteen to sixteen inches in diameter at their larger ends. A monster chain forms the core of the structure, and this cable has smaller chains attached to it in such a way, and fastened at the outer surface of the mass of wood, that the stronger the pull upon the main cable, the closer are the timbers clutched together. The raft was towed by powerful steam-tugs, the journey occupying only eleven days. The twenty-two thousand logs of which it is composed would, under ordinary circumstances, constitute the freight of no fewer than forty-four ships.

Many housewives are now aware of the virtues of paraffin oil in saving rubbing and in cleansing clothes on washing-day; but it is not so generally known that another common product of the shale oilworks is even more powerful in its cleansing properties, while it has the additional good quality of being entirely destitute of smell. This useful product is paraffin wax, from which most of the better-class candles are now made, and which may be purchased from most drysalters or oilmen. Experience and practice will guide most people in the use of paraffin wax; but the following method has been found workable and effective: Melt half a pound of soap to about one ounce of refined paraffin wax, for every six gallons of water used. Boil the clothes in this for twenty minutes or half an hour, then rinse, and the washing is over.

No rubbing is said to be required, while the clothes are rendered beautifully sweet and clean, and entirely free from smell, which is an objection by many to the use of paraffin oil.

IN STRATHMORE.

THERE is a keenness as of coming winter this morning in the air. Heavy dew-beads as of frost lie on the tangled bramble sprays; and the southern sunshine sparkles along the forest path as if the grass there had been sown with jewels. The woods hang silent, clad in their richest robes of russet and yellow and red; while the fern fronds and grasses wait motionless below. The spot here is very quiet; not even a squirrel rustles in his hiding-place, and there is no wind stirring among the trees. Only a faint murmur of children's voices comes from behind the oak thicket in front. A brown and chubby brood these are—the children of the forester, from the little thatched cottage where the thin line of blue smoke is rising in the glade there below. They are seeking for blueberries along the edge of the plantation; and to judge by the dark purple stains on lips and fingers, the search is quite satisfactory. The banks beside the path are covered here and there with the modest shrub, its dim blue berries nestling like those of the mistletoe among the leaves; and the eager eyes of the little gleaners are quick to discover the most fruitful places.

Happy, indeed, will be the after-memories of children reared amid such surroundings. The little feet may tread many a weary mile hereafter on the rough highways of the world, and the innocent blue eyes may be dimmed with sad hot tears; but there will always be the far-off cloudless days of childhood to remember, when they gathered hazel nuts by the burn here, and wandered seeking blueberries on the skirts of these silent woods of home.

An unfrequented track down through the copse to the left serves to cut off a long bend of the road. A few acorns have fallen here among the grass tangles on the footpath, and many rich brown fir-cones lie about, already opened to scatter their close-packed seeds. A chestnut or two as well, their thick green cases split open by the fall, show here and there a knob of glossy red. The table-broad stump of an ancient monarch of the wood decaying close by upon the bank testifies silently to the degeneracy of the modern race around; while the trunk and upturned roots of a fallen ash, already covered with a wealth of green moss and fern and the delicate sprays of gray lichen, quietly demonstrate the eternal triumph of life over death.

In its channel below, the burn on its way from the lonely loch high up among the mountains, gurgles pleasantly under the narrow footbridge and between the stepping-stones as it flows through the woods to join the river. The trees and shrubs by its course bend lovingly over the water; and their wearied leaves, after coquetting all summer with the sun and wind, are dropping at last to die upon its faithful breast.

Beyond the bridge there is a steep climb up through the withering heather and brushwood by

the dry-dike side. Then the murmur of the stream is left behind, as well as the faint rumble of a cart out of sight far down the forest road ; and the snapping of a fallen twig underfoot sometimes on the mossy woodland path alone breaks the stillness that reigns in the sun-flecked solitudes. Once and again a brown leaf drifts down among the trees, and path and glade are strewn as softly and as deep, surely, as ever were the woods of old in Vallombrosa.

Well might the footsteps wander on through these solitary forest aisles, past the historic mansion silent amid its memories, and by the little kirk that once was the flaming tomb of eight score of a Highland clan, to the quiet village, six miles away, where the ground, it is said, sometimes trembles under foot ; for there will hardly be the sound even of a woodman's axe to disturb a reverie ; the rich fragrance of the red-branched pines hangs in the air, and many a nook of woodland loveliness lies by the way. Fortunate is he who can linger amid such scents and scenes ; for a pure and deep emotion is the love of them that will spring within his heart ; in falling leaf and soft-flitting wood-bird he will take again something of the simple pleasure of a child ; and it may be that amid these solitudes the gentle hand of Nature will smoothen from his brow some of the wrinkles that have been written on it by the iron pen of Care.

But see ! Down to the left, between the trees that interlace above this pathway of the fawns, a glimpse appears of the lake asleep in its hollow, heaven's own looking-glass, displaying as in an under realm the blue calm of the sky above. Only where the white swans are sailing does the long silver line of a ripple run caressingly along the grassy margin. Stately and royal birds are these swans, and as they steer far off along the lake under the shadows of the trees, they might almost be bearing away the unearthly barge of an Arthur or a northern Lohengrin.

A boat lies moored close by the level edge, and a gentle push sends it out along the unbroken surface of the water. Underneath, the leaves of bygone autumns still lie, brown and motionless, in the shallows ; and the dark back of a solitary carp or trout can be distinguished now and again gliding off among them. At long intervals, the note of a wood-bird tinkles here like a falling jewel amid the stillness ; the water, tranquil and pellucid, winds gleaming westward round wooded point and bosky islet ; while on every side, reflected in its depths, rise the burning glories of the dying forest-land. There the rich red copper of the beech, the withered yellow of the oak, and the delicate pale sprays of the fading larch, glow against the dark evergreen of the firs ; while the stems of the slender birches shine like silver among their own streaming tresses of Australian gold.

In the midst of all that splendour, quiet and gray above the lake, rises the manor-house itself. A time-enriched place it is, with the memories of other days lingering, like a faded fragrance, about it. Under its sheltering roof, in times gone by, beauty has shone, wit sparkled, and genius burned. For there it was that, just a hundred years ago, there tarried for a time that brightest son of song, the ill-starred Master-singer of Scotland, and there he was inspired to celebrate the

charms of the fair 'Flower of Strathmore.' No record remains of the words that passed between these two ; but doubtless the talk was gallant and gladsome, as the great-hearted peasant, whose soul spoke so eloquently and, alas for some, so dangerously in his eyes, wandered through these woods and, it may be, floated over these waters in that fair company. Did not he write of her as

Blithe by the banks of Erne,
And blithe in Glenturit glen ?

They have gone to their long home, poet and lady, and the leaves of many an autumn have fallen upon their distant graves ; but the place where their footsteps paused and passed is the richer by their memory ; a nameless charm lingers for their sake about the gray and still old house ; and the glades where their eyes met and their voices mingled almost seem themselves to be brooding silently over bygone days.

THE FIELDFARE.

WHEN wildly wave the poplar tops,
And scattered leaves the greensward mottle,
A worn invader seeks the copse.
She lights beneath a stunted bush,
And seems, to hasty eyes, a thrush,
But lacks the music of his throatle.

From freezing fiords has lain her way,
Where pines adorn some rock Norwegian :
There stands her home where skies are gray.
But now she seeks the English fields,
Where short November herbage yields
A refuge from that stormy region.

From year to year, when Winter's breath
Enshrouds the hills in misty sadness,
She flees as from the stroke of death ;
Yet evermore, from year to year,
As soon as earliest buds appear,
She seeks her mother-land with gladness.

Nor egg nor nursling will she leave
Within these hateful, strange dominions,
But hastes her homestead to retrieve.
Would Heaven that every human breast
With such unfailing truth were blest
As gilds the fieldfare's faithful pinions !

E. W. LUMMIS.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
- 4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL.

THE Duke of Wellington is reported to have said that the art of war largely consists in correctly guessing 'what is on the other side of the hill.' We do not know whether he was thinking of the physical conformation of the country, in valley and river and plain, or of the number and disposition of the foes concealed by the intervening elevation. Perhaps both. In either sense the saying is applicable to the warfare of life.

The art of war, then, has something to do with the art of guessing; and a guess, if a good guess, is more than a guess. We wrestle with language in so saying, and an explanation is needed. The popular notion of a guess is—a perfectly haphazard solution—a chance pebble-stone out of the scrip of possibilities, slung at the problem. Such an utterly random shot scarcely requires an intellectual effort. It is the 'pure guess.' But the intelligent guess, the guess of effort and insight, the clever guess, is the combination of acute observation and sagacious inference, assisted, perhaps, by experience and analogy. The 'hills' of life, on the other side of which lies our fate, are frequently composed of the characters, the actions, the behaviour of our fellow-men. If we can tell with reasonable certainty what A, B, or C will do upon considering the circumstances that have arisen, or upon learning what we have done or said, then we can guess 'what is on the other side of the hill,' and act with decision upon our conjecture. Take an illustration: Two men were aware that each of them was going to tender for an important contract. They were in a coffee-room together, and each believed, correctly, that the other was meditating his tender, as he sat with letter-paper and blotting-book before him. At last, one of them, as if his mind was fully made up, took his pen, rapidly wrote some figures, took the ink off on the blotting-paper, placed the paper in an envelope, directed it, and left the room as if to post it. Directly he had gone, the other stole up to the vacated seat, held the blotting-paper up to

the light, made out the figures of the tender, and with a chuckle at his own ingenuity, forthwith filled up a tender for a slightly lower sum, and duly despatched it. But he did not get the contract; and curiosity at last drove him to ask the other man how it was. 'I suppose,' was the reply, 'that you found out what you thought I had tendered?'—'Yes.'—'You found it out by spying through the blotting-paper?'—'Yes.'—'I knew you would, and I misled you.'

The successful competitor made a correct guess of 'what was on the other side of the hill.'

The Italian game of *Mora*—the same game as the English 'Odd or Even'—finds its fascination in trying to probe the workings of your adversary's mind. Agonising are the efforts of the guesser to follow the probable surmises which his adversary has formed as to the degree of the guesser's penetration. The intricacy of the mental operation resembles the bewildering repeated reflections of reflections in two opposing mirrors.

The mysterious success of some business men, and the equally mysterious failure of others as honest and industrious and capable as they, depend on this faculty of correct guessing at 'what is on the other side of the hill'—a faculty which, as we have said, resolves itself mainly into observation and inference, aided by experience. Can this be cultivated? Unquestionably. No doubt the Red Indian of our childhood was partly a manufactured article from the brain of Mr Fenimore Cooper and other story-writers; but we suppose he was partly genuine, and that his remarkable dexterity in following up trails was not the invention of the novelist. How did he succeed where the white man would fail? Simply by trained observation. Observation depends upon voluntary attention, and that depends upon the interest felt in the object. Sometimes there is a portentously rapid natural development of the faculty of observation, as in the case of falling in love. Conversation without language in the case of disembodied spirits becomes an intelligible and credible theory to those who have passed through that region of romance.

But the faculty may be cultivated in a more mechanical way, with no intoxicating fragrance in the air. Robert Houdin the conjurer used to train his little son by causing him to pass at an ordinary pace before a shop-front full of miscellaneous wares and then ascertaining how many articles he could specify. By constant practice of this kind, remarkable proficiency may be attained in rapid cognition of a promiscuous assemblage of things flashed at once on the retina. And the absence of this power in average persons is what the conjurer may safely rely on for the success of many of his experiments. By some gesture or sound he compels the attention of his observers for a second of time, and in a fraction of that second the trick is done.

Education in rapid and comprehensive observation would be absolutely essential as 'standard work,' if it were not for the discipline of life outside of school-hours. There is great educational value in many games full of sweet allurements to the faculties. The *Kindergarten* system takes full advantage of this. There are plenty of inevitable thorns in the pathway of personal evolution we are called to tread; it is well, therefore, to plant flowers, where we can, in the little learner's pathway.

'What is on the other side of the hill?' is a question which, when put by children toiling up the mount of knowledge, and the still steeper ascent of moral self-conquest, can receive a full answer, though it be not free from that solemn incertitude which besets the future of us all. We can show them, in the example of adult lives in progress around them, that 'on the other side of the hill' is the tableland of manhood; and on the gently descending slope towards old age there are men doing noble work for their families, their town, their country, their race, and generation, with tools like to those the children are fashioning and learning to wield in their classes and in their worthier sorts of games. Dear boy! let me set you on my shoulder! See the Black Knight waving his tremendous axe in semicircles of light. Listen to the crash as it falls on the oaken postern of the ruffian's castle, where Ivanhoe and Rebecca are imprisoned! The flinders fly at the mighty strokes. The brave helmet flinches not under the rain of stones from above. The postern yields. In rush the Black Knight and his followers, and the prisoners are saved.—Go back to school, my boy, fired with enthusiasm to become a doughty warrior in the battle of life against the enemies of the life-eternal, and learn to handle your battle-axe.

There is a large element of certainty in the contour of 'the other side of the hill;' but can we make any safe calculations in the uncertain region of the actions, tempers, fortunes, of the other men and women whose lives will press against our own? We may cast our own horoscope, so far as it is governed by our moral character in early life, our struggles and our conflicts, our victories and defeats; but the vast ocean of our uncertainty about the doings and failings of the crowd of other souls who will jostle us in our road seems at first glance somewhat terrifying.

Take an illustration: Here is a trustee, one of three trustees to whose care large funds are committed under settlement or will. He knows

his co-trustees are honourable and exact men; and the understanding is that he is to be a passive trustee, ready to act if required, but not bound to trouble himself till called upon to intervene. Years roll on; one of his co-trustees dies. Another, with the best intentions, through mere muddle-headedness, loses a great part of the trust money. Then rises up a new generation of the beneficiaries, without generosity, or memory of the original understanding. They turn upon the passive trustee and demand accounts, vouchers, proofs, for all the period of the trust, and cast on him the responsibility of every mistake and all the losses. It is easy to get some lawyer, who will take only a dry legal view of the case, to fight it, and then the victim becomes defendant in a Chancery action. He knows with what cold-blooded justice most of our judges investigate the transactions of trustees, and very probably, though his conduct may have been high-minded and free from blame before heaven, he suffers heavy damages and costs, or pays 'blackmail' to purchase his manumission.

Now, when that trustee made the kindly mistake of becoming a trustee at all, could he have conjectured what was on 'the other side of the hill?' Ask him; and he will possibly reply: 'I could not have guessed all; but I might have guessed much—guessed enough to have prevented my accepting the perilous responsibility.'

It is 'easy to be wise after the event;' but he would not be wrong in making that reply. Let us consider what he knew. He knew the Sinaitic rigour of the English law against trustees; he knew the large proportion of ungrateful souls among every second generation of beneficiaries; he knew that for the majority of the human race the power to get money by ungenerous and ungrateful ways gets the mastery of nobler impulses; and knowing all this, had he not the means of guessing what was on 'the other side of the hill'?

Illustrations in abundance swarm on us when we peruse the advertisements in our daily papers: large incomes to be obtained with very slight effort—enormous mineral wealth lavishly offered to the public by projectors bursting with philanthropy, and only requiring the trifling mark of confidence indicated by applying for shares and paying a deposit—money lent on mere personal security; and so forth. These nets do catch birds; those webs do entangle flies; fishes do bite at these baits. And then we have wails from the victims. But did they try, before parting with their money, to guess what was on the other side of the hill, behind which they fondly thought they saw the sunrise of their fortunes? Did they consider the extreme improbability of any one in this selfish world being so devoid of relatives and friends as to be compelled to spend money in finding recipients for his glittering benefactions? Did they inquire of experts, before they imitated the Vicar of Wakefield's son and made their final exchange for a 'gross of green spectacles?' They knew that selfishness, self-interest, cupidity, were certainly on the other side of the hill, and perhaps they admit they might have made a better guess as to the rest of the prospect.

How often, in married life, is there occasion to lament that either husband or wife, or both, did

not more correctly guess what was on the other side of the hill, before the irrevocable words were exchanged? There are many aids to good guessing—testimony of friends and relatives, known hereditary proclivities, manifest tastes and tendencies. Let us admit that the greatest sagacity cannot always foresee what is likely to happen; but very often bystanders, as they see the pair of lovers mount the hill and disappear on the other side, can hazard a not very wide conjecture as to what will be found there.

But there is one code, or index, of certainties about what is 'on the other side of the hill' which we have not yet opened—namely, the steadfastness of the moral as well as of the physical law. No one expects that on the other side of a literal hill water will flow upwards, or the law of gravitation tamely accept any insult, or light be reflected at any other angle than the angle of incidence, or sound-waves alter their velocity of vibration, or any other fundamental decree be changed. Yet there are people who seem to believe that on the other side of a metaphorical hill moral laws will be found entirely changed. Grapes will hang on thorns, and figs adorn thistles. Wild-oats are to be sown, and finest wheat reaped. If on 'this side of the hill' we firmly attach ourselves to some divine law or promise, the operation of which will not be exhausted on the journey, then we know what is on 'the other side of the hill'—namely, the working out of that law, the fulfilment of that promise.

'Across the border' is a phrase that starts many trains of meditation. How many times have we put our finger on one and another date in the calendar and said: 'On that day I shall cross the ridge; I shall look down into the valley on the other side of the hill, and enter on hitherto untried conditions of life.' There is the day when the lad leaves school 'for good.' One of the first twinges of sentiment that we can recall thrilled us when, in the dim light of seven o'clock on a December morning, we stood on the top of the hill opposite to that on which our boarding-school stood—the fly toiling up behind with luggage—and made out the obscure outlines of the house, the fir-grove behind, the fishpond in front, and well-known nooks and lanes that should know us again no more. The last view, in that winter's dawn, was so dim and ghostly, that it was more like memory than vision; and when the sun was up, we were far away. To how many horizon-lines, since our school-days, have we looked onward with the solemnity that befits the termination of an epoch, boundaries where we should take a farewell—half pitiful, half joyous—of the familiar, and clasp hands falteringly with the unknown! With what undefined misgivings, what plaintive music in the soul, as of an Æolian harp voiced by melancholy autumn winds, have we left the old and well-known scenes behind us, and gone forth to meet the new!

The words 'never more' subdue the heart like slow soft organ music in the hush of dying day. And yet we must all have noticed that however great the change of circumstance might seem as we approached it, no sooner had we actually entered its circle than it began to take upon it a familiar appearance, as a noble father's Hall

might do to the eyes of a boy stolen from it in babyhood by gypsies. That for which God intended and fitted us can never long be strange. We daresay a butterfly, the moment its wings are dry, and it has taken a flutter or two, feels as if it had been a butterfly all its life. The ransomed and purified souls that have been long imprisoned in the larva of the body and the chrysalis of the tomb, will flash into a glorious familiarity with their new and splendid conditions of existence when they rise to meet their noble destiny.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the afternoon of the day following that of Peggy Myers's visit to Tydd Street, a cab stopped at the door of Mrs Strake's house, and presently the landlady in person appeared before Miss Granby, holding a visiting-card gingerly with a thumb and finger and a corner of her apron, for she had been interrupted in the middle of her breadmaking. Miss Maria took the card wonderingly, and read the name, 'Mr Robert Esholt,' aloud. 'Gracious me!' she exclaimed, dropping the card as though it were red hot; 'how has he found us out, I wonder, and what can he have come for? Dear, dear, and I with this shabby gown on!—Agnes, my love, not a syllable about the shirt-making.' She was all in a flutter, arranging her curls and her lace collar before the dingy glass over the chimney-piece.—'Now, Mrs Strake, I think you may show the gentleman in, please,' she said with a little gasp.

Then was Mr Esholt ushered into the dingy sitting-room, and coming forward, shook hands with Miss Maria. 'My dear Miss Granby,' he exclaimed, 'how happy it makes me to see you again after so long a time. Just the same as of old, I see. It might have been only yesterday that I saw you last, instead of fourteen long years ago.' Then turning to the white-faced invalid: 'You do not remember me, Miss Agnes, I daresay; but I have by no means forgotten you. The last time I saw you was when you were not much higher than this table. It was when I accompanied my brother Richard on one of his visits to the vicarage.—You are of course aware, Miss Granby, that I lost my brother some years ago.—He was one of your father's oldest friends, Miss Agnes; they were at college together, for Richard was originally intended for the Bar. Mr Granby wrote me a most touching letter, after his death, which I have to this day, and shall always keep.—But, as I was saying, my brother and I visited at the vicarage fourteen years ago. I was but a young fellow then, while Richard's hair was turning gray.—Do you know, my dear young lady, that you were rather fond of me at that time, and many a romp we had together?—I knew you again in a moment, for all you have grown up, and have not nearly so much colour in your cheeks as you had in those days.'

He had kept on talking with a view of giving the ladies time to recover from the nervous perturbation into which his unexpected visit had evidently thrown them. He now drew up a chair,

and sat down with the air of one who was determined to make himself at home.

'Pray, Mr Esholt,' said Miss Maria, 'if I may venture to put such a question, by what means did you discover our humble retreat?'

'Oh, that's a secret,' answered Mr Esholt with a laugh, 'which I am bound under heavy pains and penalties not to divulge.—And allow me, with all respect, to remark that I think it was due to the friendship which has existed for so many years between the two families to have informed me long ago that you were in Liverpool, instead of allowing me to make the discovery through another channel.'

'Mr Esholt, sir,' replied the spinster, flushing painfully, 'you must be aware that my niece and myself are no longer in the same position that we were in two years ago—that our worldly circumstances are now greatly narrowed. We thought it only due to ourselves not to press our indigence on the notice of those who had known us under happier circumstances.'

'Fie! Miss Granby. I cannot agree with your philosophy at all. What is a friendship worth that will not help to ward off the strokes of ill-fortune? But I will lecture you on this subject some other day, and succeed in converting you, I trust, to a belief in a more charitable creed. For the present it is enough that I have found you, and you may rely upon it that I shall not readily lose sight of you again. I have been informed, how or by whom matters not, that Miss Agnes has been ordered to spend a month or two at New Brighton for the re-establishment of her health; and judging from her looks, I can well believe such to be the case.—Now, listen, please. I have a cottage at New Brighton ready furnished, with a housekeeper in charge of it. It was bought and fitted up for the use of my sister, who generally passes some weeks there every summer. At present, however, she is in North Devon, and the cottage is empty. Now, if you and Miss Agnes will go and take up your abode there for as long a period as you choose to stay, you are truly and sincerely welcome to do so, and you will be obliging me very much into the bargain.'

Miss Maria's fingers began to twitch and tremble, and for a moment or two she was unable to utter a word. Then she said: 'Really, Mr Esholt, while thanking you sincerely for your most generous offer, I am compelled to say that we shall be under the necessity of declining it. Neither my niece nor myself could think of putting ourselves under such an obligation to any one.'

'Miss Granby,' said Mr Esholt more gravely than he had yet spoken, 'it is absolutely necessary, so I am given to understand, that your niece should have the benefit of the sea-air. The means of obtaining what she requires are placed within your reach. Do you feel yourself justified, allow me to ask, in refusing those means, and thereby retarding your niece's recovery, and all for a slight question of obligation, as you choose to term it? Had your brother and mine been now alive, do you think that either of them would have hesitated to accept such a bagatelle at the hands of the other? While the memory of their friendship is with us, do not, I beg, stand on such trifling observances.'

Miss Granby was silent, if not convinced. Her mental perturbation was great. At length she

said: 'I will leave my niece to decide the question for herself.'

Mr Esholt turned to Agnes with a smile. 'What say you?' he asked.

'Oh, as for me, no one but myself knows how I long to get out of these close stifling rooms,' she replied, looking out wearily across the hot street. 'I want to sit on the sands and watch the waves and to feel the cool sea-breeze. Were I to say otherwise, I should not be speaking the truth.—Don't be angry, Aunt Maria, but I feel as if I should never get well while I remain shut up here.'

Mr Esholt had won the day.

So, before he went, it was agreed that the ladies should cross the river to New Brighton the next day but one. Meanwhile, he would arrange to have everything in readiness for their reception, and would come himself at the time appointed and see them safely to the end of their short journey.

Robert Esholt at this time was thirty-eight years old. He was tall and inclined to be thin, and had a very slight stoop of the shoulders. He had a long thin face and a prominent clear-cut nose. All the lines of his mouth and chin spoke of firmness and determination of will; but his eyes, of the darkest brown, rarely lost the kindly look which was natural to them, and lent a softness to his expression it would otherwise have lacked. His whole bearing was that of a keen clear-headed man of business, who knew his own mind and had the courage of his opinions. Few faces were better known on 'Change than that of Robert Esholt.

Mr Esholt's visit passed like a freshening breeze over the parched lives of our two ladies. Next day, Agnes felt decidedly better than she had done since the beginning of her illness. She was in a pleasant flutter of spirits, and could talk of little else than Mr Esholt's kindness and liberality and how she should enjoy herself at the seaside. Mr Esholt was there to the minute, and saw them safely across the water and duly installed in Syringa Cottage. It was small, but tastefully furnished, and had a pleasant outlook across the mouth of the Mersey. The housekeeper and a girl were there to wait upon them; and by some magic of which they were not cognisant, they found their table furnished in a style to which they had been strangers since Mr Granby's death, with all those little delicacies so tempting to an invalid's fastidious appetite, especially when coming unexpectedly. There, too, they found a well-filled bookcase, and, what to Agnes was more precious than all else, a piano. Her own instrument had gone, one among so many other cherished objects, at the sale, and ever since her arrival in Liverpool she had felt like a stranger in a thirsty land for want of it. To-day, as she touched the keys caressingly with her fingers, she could scarcely restrain her tears. But for all that, she felt happier than she had felt for several months past.

Miss Esholt being still from home, the loneliness of his bachelor establishment seemed to strike Mr Esholt in a way it had never done before during his sister's absences, so he asked permission to visit the ladies occasionally, a permission which they were only too happy to accord. So on Saturday afternoon he left his office earlier than

usual and found himself at Syringa Cottage soon after two o'clock. The ladies were out somewhere on the sands, he was told, so he went in search of them. He saw them in the distance, Agnes seated in a donkey-chaise, and Miss Maria walking by her side. He stood for a moment or two to contemplate the picture, and then went forward to meet them. The crisp salt air and the sunshine, combined, it may be, with Mr Esholt's sudden appearance, had called an evanescent wild-rose tint into Agnes's pallid cheeks. Mr Esholt was struck with her loveliness—for loveliness rather than beauty was the term to apply to her—as he had not been struck before. The ladies received him with unaffected pleasure, and they all wandered about together till Miss Maria declared that Agnes had been out quite long enough. Then they went indoors and had a cosy cup of tea, after which Agnes played for a short time, and then Mr Esholt rose to go. They pressed him to come again as soon as possible, and he was glad to promise that he would do so.

A month passed away, and found Mr Esholt at the Cottage two or three times a week. The fascination grew upon him, and he could not resist it—it may be that he made no effort to do so. It was something new to him, and he smiled when he thought of it, to find himself in the middle of the day longing for five o'clock to arrive; to find his thoughts, even when on 'Change, veering in the direction of the Cottage, while his eye would glance up unconsciously at the large clock visible thence and note the slow lapse of time. The ladies were quite as eager to see him as he was to hasten to them. He occupied their thoughts and monopolised their conversation in a way which could not but have flattered him had he been aware of it, while his more powerful mind dominated theirs and coloured their lives far more than they suspected.

The autumn days grew shorter, and Christmas was within measurable distance, but still Mr Esholt would not hear of the ladies leaving New Brighton. Whenever Miss Maria ventured to broach the subject, he put her down in a quick peremptory way which fluttered her nerves for an hour afterwards, and made her afraid to hint at such a thing for at least a week to come. His visits were still as frequent as at first; neither wind nor weather kept him away. He was regarded by both ladies with a feeling of lively friendship—a feeling which his every word and action led them to believe was reciprocated. Nothing in his speech or manner betrayed anything beyond that; but all his life he had been trained to conceal whatever feelings it did not suit him to show on the surface. He wore a mask habitually in business, and it had become so far a second nature with him to do so that he often forgot, or did not care, to lay it aside in private.

One wet Sunday evening after his usual quiet farewell, Mr Esholt held deeper commune than usual with himself on his way home. Standing near the funnel of the steamer, buttoned up in his waterproof and smoking his cigar, he pondered deeply a momentous question. 'I am decidedly in love with this girl,' he said to himself, 'and have been from that first Saturday when I saw her on the sands.' He was too sagacious and clear-headed to deceive himself in a matter about

which so many men are self-deceived. 'The question is, Shall I propose to her or shall I break the affair off?' He never for a moment doubted his ability to do the latter. 'I have no reason to believe her heart is touched in the least, so that at present it is a question which concerns myself alone. I must go abroad shortly on business. Why not make that my wedding trip also? or else take the opportunity to break through this enchanted web as harmlessly as may be? But why not marry her, provided always that she would have me, which seems somewhat problematical? For one thing, there is a great disparity in our ages; but let me only succeed in touching her heart, be it ever so slightly, and that difficulty, if it be one, will quickly vanish.—But what would Janet think and say?' That was the most awkward question of all—one which brought him, as it were, to a dead-lock.

He was still turning the point over in his mind, considering it from different points of view, when the steamer reached Liverpool. 'Come what may,' he said as he walked slowly across the landing-stage, 'this day fortnight I will either propose to Agnes, or take the express train and break the neck of my passion by flying southward for a week or two after the swallows.'

True to his self-made promise, Mr Esholt let matters go on as usual for another fortnight, showing neither by word nor sign that such things as love or marriage had any place in his thoughts. On the day fixed by himself he sought an interview with Miss Granby, and told her that he was desirous of marrying her niece, and wished to have her consent to mention the matter to Agnes. Miss Maria could hardly have been more surprised had the proposal been about to be made to herself. She held Mr Esholt in the greatest respect, and stood somewhat in awe of him as well, so that her consent was readily given, though she could not help shedding a few tears as she gave it, while thinking of all that she and Agnes had gone through during the last two years, and of the bright prospect that had now revealed itself so unexpectedly before them.

Agnes sat like one spellbound when Mr Esholt told her in a few brief impassioned words how deeply he loved her. Frost-bound, rigid as a statue, she sat, even after those strange words had ceased; while he stood before her, his elbow on the chimney-piece, waiting for her answer. Even in the midst of her surprise and dismay, it struck her as somewhat incongruous to hear this grave middle-aged man of the world discoursing in such wise to a girl like herself. It was as though some long extinct volcano had suddenly burst through the snows of centuries and revealed the fiery heart at work below; for to her youthful imagination Mr Esholt seemed far older than he really was.

Mr Esholt changed his balance from one foot to the other, and without thinking what he was doing, looked at his watch. He had not the slightest wish to hurry Agnes, but his business habits kept the upper hand of him even at a time like the present. The movement, slight as it was, brought Agnes back to actualities and helped to steady her thoughts. 'I cannot answer you at once, Mr Esholt,' she faltered. 'I must have time to think over what you have said. You have surprised me so much that I scarcely

know how to express myself. My aunt shall write to you.' And so, like a pale ghost, she flitted from the room. In her heart she thought she knew quite well what her decision would be, but just then she could not find courage to put it into words.

All the following week Mr Esholt was more assiduous at business than usual, and more silent and self-absorbed in manner; only when his letters were brought in each morning he turned them slowly over one by one, as half hoping, half dreading to find that which seemed so long in coming. It came at last, a tiny billet in Miss Granby's crooked, angular hand, containing but three lines—an invitation to tea for the following afternoon.

Mr Esholt's proposal to Agnes had opened the old wound afresh, which time was beginning to heal over. She was startled to find how dear to her heart the image of Wilmot Burrell still remained. It seemed like sacrilege to think of marrying another. The image was overthrown, never to be upheaved again; but in her eyes it was beautiful still. Mr Esholt she respected, liked, looked up to with girlish reverence; but Wilmot, alas! she loved. Burning tears of love and shame watered her pillow again and again after Mr Esholt's declaration. Whether she married him or not, the future lay bare and bleak before her, uncheered by hope, without one ray of sunlight to brighten the path which led onward into the dim and unknown future.

Supposing she were to refuse Mr Esholt, she and her aunt could no longer continue to be the recipients of those kindnesses at his hands which had hitherto been put down to the score of the friendship which had existed between her father and the elder Mr Esholt. Indeed, their long sojourn at the Cottage had of late, as she knew, been a source of silent worry to Miss Maria, and it was only for the sake of her, Agnes's, health that they had not brought their holiday to a close some time ago. Now they must perforce fall back into that hard-working, poverty-stricken life from which, by Mr Esholt's kindness, they had been temporarily rescued.

CUSTOMS' OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

It is thought that a brief description of the duties performed by a hard-working and unobtrusive body of public officials may be of interest to the readers of this *Journal*. For this purpose, it is proposed to take the case of an imaginary Customs' officer named Robinson, and to trace his progress through the various branches of his routine duties.

Entrance to the Customs, as practically to all the other departments of the Civil Service, is now obtained by means of success in a competitive examination. The subjects in which the candidate is examined are of an elementary nature; but on account of the keenness of the competition, a very high standard of proficiency is necessary to ensure success. For the purposes of this paper it is assumed that the examination has been successfully contested, that the inquiries as to age and character have been satisfactorily answered, and that the medical officer has certified

that the constitution of our friend Robinson is sufficiently strong to endure the fatigue consequent upon the performance of his duties. This being so, Robinson will in due course receive instructions to proceed to his destined port, in order to enter upon a career, which was once described to a friend of mine, by an enthusiastic but not disinterested 'coach,' as 'having all the romance of the sea with none of its hardships.'

On arriving at his destination, Robinson is allowed a day's grace in order to procure lodgings. These, as a general rule, he will share with a brother-officer; for the guinea a week with which he starts life does not admit of unnecessary expenditure, but, on the contrary, compels him at the outset to practise the most rigid economy. He will now, probably, find himself one of several officers of about the same age and placed in similar circumstances; and as it is presumed that he is not a man of unsocial habits or temperament, he will probably experience but little difficulty in the selection of a companion from among their number.

The port at which Robinson is now stationed is assumed to be neither London nor Liverpool, but what is technically known as an 'outport,' of medium size and importance. Here he will find that his duties may be roughly divided into three great sections, each of which we will briefly describe.

The day of grace having expired, Robinson has to enter upon the duties of his new vocation. Punctually at eight o'clock he presents himself at the custom-house to sign the Attendance Register, and is then instructed that his first duty will be that which is commonly known as 'Rod and Basket Duty.' Robinson hereupon proceeds to a storeroom, from which he procures his various implements of war. These consist of a covered basket containing six sample bottles, a 'fench' for extracting spirits from casks, and last, but not least, some pointed pieces of chalk. From the examining officer whom he is deputed to assist he will in addition obtain a set of gauging-rods. These rods, together with the basket, &c., Robinson has to carry from warehouse to warehouse in the wake of his superior officer. In the bonded warehouse itself his duties are of a very simple and likewise of a very monotonous character. He has to attend upon the examining officer when that official is occupied in gauging the contents of casks. With the chalk he notes down on the cask-head the various particulars and dimensions as dictated by his superior officer, and with the fench he extracts samples, in order that their strength may be tested. Occasionally, Robinson may be required to supervise the operations performed in the warehouse by the merchants themselves; but the general nature of his duty will be such as has just been described. The work is monotonous in the extreme; but as the hours are not excessively long, he will possess a fair amount of leisure for recreation or self-improvement.

At the end of three months Robinson receives instructions that he must now take his turn at 'Rummaging Duty,' which, as the name implies, consists in the examination of vessels in search of contraband goods. This duty is entrusted to various superior officers known as 'tide surveyors,' each accompanied by two subordinates, one of

the class to which Robinson is supposed to belong; the other an unestablished officer or 'extra-man.' The staff in a medium-sized port consists of four tide surveyors and their eight subordinates. The *modus operandi* is as follows: Immediately upon the arrival of a vessel from a foreign port, she is boarded by the tide surveyor and his two satellites. They at once proceed to examine the baggage of the passengers, if any, as also the stock of tobacco, &c. in the possession of the captain and crew. This having been done, the vessel itself is subjected to a minute and exhaustive search. Bunks are overhauled, sails and coils of rope displaced, tons of iron cable lifted, and every nook and cranny made the object of thorough investigation. This work is of a protracted and arduous nature; but not until it has been completed does the tide surveyor leave the vessel.

Work commences at eight o'clock in the morning, and lasts continuously for twenty-four hours until eight o'clock the next morning. An intermission of twenty-four hours then occurs before the resumption of duty. This is effected by dividing the staff of tide surveyors, &c., into two sections, each of which performs duty on alternate days.

Robinson having commenced duty at eight o'clock in the morning, is busily occupied in rummaging fresh arrivals, and in re-rummaging vessels already examined, until six o'clock in the evening, with, if circumstances will permit, a brief respite for dinner. About six o'clock the whole of the staff repair to the watch-house, where three-hour watches are set, ship-fashion, for the next twelve hours. In the watch-house, sleeping accommodation is provided of a very plain description, usually consisting of a mattress, an uncovered bolster, and a pair of blankets for each officer. It must not, however, be imagined that Robinson will be able to secure an uninterrupted night's repose. Such an event may happen, it is true, but will not be of such frequent occurrence as the occasions upon which he will be continuously employed during the whole of the twenty-four hours.

During the time that the watches are in operation, the rest of the staff remain in the watch-house yawning or sleeping; while the officer on duty is stationed at the dock or pier-head on the lookout for fresh arrivals. Upon the approach of a vessel from foreign ports it is his duty immediately to notify the fact to the tide surveyor. He then arouses the two subordinates and also the officers stationed on board the vessel. The arousing of the officers and their arrival at the scene of action does not occupy much time; for, by experience, they are accustomed to be on the alert at a moment's notice, and soon slip on the boots, coats, and hats—the only articles of clothing of which they had divested themselves.

As the rummaging of a steamer takes at the very least two hours to perform, it will be seen that anything more than a cat-nap in the way of sleep is generally impossible. At six o'clock in the morning the watches cease so far as the ordinary outdoor officer is concerned; and at eight o'clock or thereabouts he is released until the next day.

The foregoing is a brief outline of a day's work as it would occur at an outport, although at different ports the details may somewhat vary. At

most it will be necessary that Robinson should occasionally help to man the Customs' boat in cases where vessels do not come into dock, but remain at anchor in the roads or river, as the case may be.

The performance of Rummaging Duty is not only laborious but, as may be supposed, little conducive to personal elegance. Robinson will probably at the outset have provided himself with a suit of overalls to protect his ordinary clothing, and will now become practically acquainted with the unique properties of soft soap for removing tar and grease from face and hands. He has to brave the utmost inclemency of the weather, and likewise the extremes of heat and cold; for it will often be his lot, when perspiring from every pore, to emerge from the engine-room or stoke-hole of a newly arrived steamer into the cold air of a gusty and drizzly night. The occasions also will not be unfrequent when he will incur great danger of finding a premature and a watery grave.

The tools required are neither numerous nor complicated; indeed, they may be said to consist of but two articles—a combined steel wrench and hammer, and a powerful bull's-eye lantern. The former is used for various purposes, but mainly for prising open; the latter is absolutely necessary, because the greater portion of the work is performed either in total darkness or in places very dimly lighted.

When three months have expired, our friend will be again transferred, this time to what is known as Boarding Duty. Robinson is now stationed on board a vessel from the time of her entry into port until such time as she again sails or is cleared by the Customs' authorities. It will be his duty to supervise the unloading of the cargo, in order that no portion may be surreptitiously removed; and he must also keep a sharp watch that the sailors do not convey any tobacco ashore. Robinson will generally be observed standing near one of the hatches supervising the operations of the stevedore, but occasionally quitting his post for the purpose of searching a sailor who is making his way ashore. As he is required to sleep on board the vessel, he will probably, from his experience of multifarious sleeping-places, become a philosophical campaigner before the expiration of his term of office. By the Customs' regulations, the owner of a vessel is required to provide the officers with sheltered accommodation; but Robinson will find that these regulations will be construed in widely different senses. In some cases he may be allowed the use of the cabin cushions; in some he may be granted the use of the chart-room; and in some he may even be furnished with a bunk; but, on the other hand, it will often be his lot to be provided with no better accommodation than a few sails, or the top of a sailor's chest in an unsavoury fore-castle.

Boarding Duty is performed by either one, two, or three officers, when it is respectively known as Single, Double, or Treble Boarding.—Single boarding is the method adopted in the case of small vessels, or of vessels which, from the Customs' point of view, are of no great importance, and which will often remain in port for a considerable time. One officer is stationed on board, where he will remain for the whole period of her stay. A reasonable amount of time is allowed for

sleeping purposes, and, beyond the monotony of the duty, no great hardship is incurred. The officer will, however, in many cases be compelled to remain on board for a fortnight or three weeks at a stretch.—Treble boarding is the method adopted in the case of very large vessels, where it is considered that for the protection of the revenue three officers are necessary. Here the officer, although often on board for a considerable length of time, will obtain eight hours' sleep each night; but every third night this sleep will consist of two portions of four hours, with an intermediate watch of four hours on deck.—Double boarding, the method adopted in the case of vessels of medium tonnage, is at the same time the most common and the most laborious. Indeed it is probable that at an outport, Robinson will be little acquainted, if at all, with the other two methods. Two officers are stationed on board a vessel, where they remain during the whole of the time she is in port. With the exception of the periods allowed for breakfast and dinner, both must be on deck from six o'clock in the morning until six in the evening. The remaining twelve hours are divided between them for sleep; one officer being on deck while the other is below. The authorities do not permit an officer to keep the same watch on two consecutive nights, and hence each is compelled every alternate day to keep a continuous watch of twenty-four hours.

In order to explain the nature of the duty and the alternation of the watches, it is assumed that a vessel arrives in dock on Monday morning. Robinson and another officer are immediately stationed on board. Both remain on deck until six o'clock in the evening, when Robinson goes below for six hours. The probability is that during these six hours he will be unable to obtain much if any sleep. At midnight he is aroused by his mate, who then turns in for six hours. Robinson has now to remain on watch for the next twenty-four hours, until twelve o'clock on Tuesday night, when he again turns in. On Wednesday he will be on deck for twelve hours, and on Thursday again twenty-four. This alternation continues during the whole of the time (from three to ten days) that the officers are stationed on board. The time allowed for sleep is sufficiently scanty even if obtained in its entirety; but as it frequently happens that a vessel does not arrive in dock until a late hour in the evening, or, when in dock, works after hours—in which event both officers must remain on deck—even this allowance is often curtailed.

Robinson will now find that although he has been to a certain extent inured to hardship by his experience of rummaging, the fatigue entailed by the performance of boarding duty will be a serious strain upon his constitution. Eighty to ninety hours will be no uncommon week's work; and it is possible that he will in one week be on duty for one hundred and thirty-two hours, including meals, &c., out of which one hundred and eight will be occupied in actual watch.

While on boarding duty, it will be often a difficult task for Robinson even to keep his eyes open. Many will be the temptations to take a short nap; but these temptations, however strong they may be, must be strenuously resisted. The officers are visited at unfixed and uncertain periods

by the tide surveyors, and woe befall our friend if at any of these visits he be found napping! Such an event would, in the first instance, incur for him a severe reprimand, and if repeated, would entail the loss of his commission.

While employed at boarding duty, Robinson will obtain but little leisure, and of such leisure a small portion only can be devoted to purposes of recreation or self-improvement. As the hours allowed for sleep are few and irregular, our friend when relieved from duty will generally find himself so thoroughly overcome by bodily fatigue, that, probably, it will be his first care to get between the sheets as speedily as possible. He will consider himself especially fortunate if he be able to sleep at home during two nights in any one week; and cases will occur in which he will not pass a night at home for a considerable period.

At some ports the system of boarding has been superseded by what is known as Patrol Duty, the mode apparently in vogue at French and Belgian ports, and the nature of which duty is not dissimilar to that of an ordinary police constable. The various docks, &c., are divided into sections, for one of which an officer is responsible, in the same manner as a policeman for his beat. In these circumstances each officer is on duty eight hours a day.

At boarding duty, Robinson will probably be retained for a period of three months, at the expiration of which he will again be transferred to the bonded warehouses; and in the regular rotation of warehouse duty, rummaging, and boarding, he will be employed for the next four or five years. At the expiration of that time, if not previously promoted, he will probably be relieved from the performance of the latter two forms of duty, and henceforth his work will be confined to the bonded warehouses. By seniority and merit, he may then obtain brevet rank, and be employed in cases of emergency as gauger or tide surveyor.

In the foregoing sketch, the ports of London and Liverpool have been purposely excluded, more especially the former. Everything at these ports is necessarily on a larger scale than at an outport; consequently, at these ports the officer to a certain extent becomes a specialist, and is confined more or less to one class of duty. At London, for instance, Robinson would have no experience of rummaging duty, as that duty is performed by a separate class of officials; but for the first four or five years of his career he would be employed at the still more arduous and uncongenial boarding duty.

Thus far we have traced the career of the outdoor officer, and here it is proposed to leave him. He may, it is true, attain to higher positions; but the life as previously sketched is the life of the rank and file, who, as may be supposed, form the great majority.

At the expiration of three years, an outdoor officer is qualified to compete for the position of examining officer, which promotion is the reward of success in a literary competitive examination. If successful, he will be eligible thereafter for promotion to the highest positions in the service; for, like the private soldier of Bonaparte's army, the outdoor officer, figuratively speaking, carries in his knapsack the bâton of a marshal.

There would appear to be a somewhat common opinion abroad according to which a Civil Servant is regarded as a person who, for a high salary, does nothing six hours a day, and who, in order to recruit his exhausted energies, requires an annual vacation of not less than six weeks. It will be seen that the Customs' officer at least cannot with justice be included in such category. *Sinecures* in the Civil Service, if existent, should in the true interests of Civil Servants themselves be instantly abolished. Any scheme of reform, either in the Customs as a department or in the Civil Service as a whole, must ultimately benefit the rank and file; and by the rank and file such measures of reform should be not only ardently desired but eagerly sought for. Among those who would participate in the benefits of such reform, not the least worthy would be the outdoor officers of Customs, the career of one of whom has formed the subject of the preceding sketch.

A FAMILY SECRET.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

CHAPTER I.—WHO IS SHE?

JOE SUFFLING, miller, was making his way home rather late at night across a broad stretch of sand-heaps and sand-hollows, diversified with patches of green turf and low-lying clumps of gorse, locally known as the Denes. On one side, the Denes are bounded by the sea; on the other, by many miles of marshland made profitable to graziers by drainage. The moon was at its full, and there was little wind, so that the deep voice of the sea was a murmur rather than a roar.

Joe's windmill stood in a solitary position on the common, about a mile north of Great Yarmouth market-place. It was not a spot likely to be visited at that time of night by strangers for mere pleasure. Two of the long arms of the windmill rose up like black shadows in the moonlight; and as Joe advanced cheerfully towards his home, with steady steps accustomed to the uncertain nature of the ground, he was startled by an unexpected sight and halted staring. A tall woman stood motionless on one of the bits of rising ground. She was dressed in black and was gazing seaward. She stood so still that Joe thought the figure was like a black stone statue, for the wind did not stir the folds of her dress. She was standing directly in Joe's path not far from his gate, and he must pass close by her, unless he made a circuit down one of the deepest of the sand-hollows. He hesitated for a minute and then proceeded, saying 'Good-evenin' as he passed.

The woman did not respond or move, and the whiteness of her face scared the miller, with the fancy that she might be a corpse. Unpleasant as the fancy was, he could see that the face was very beautiful, and instinctively recognised her as a lady.

'Nan,' he said to his wife as he burst into the cottage, 'there be a lady standin' out yonder like one o' them stone statues in the Duke's gardens—only they be white, an' she all black, barrin' her face—that be as white as death.'

'A lady standin' out there at this time o' night!' exclaimed the buxom wife incredulously. 'Some gipsy tramp, more like.'

'Nay, none o' that sort. Yeow come an' look for yeowself; she be nigh the gate.'

'Did yeow speak to her?'

'I gave good evenin'; but there was never a word or sign in answer. Maybe she be in one o' them fits that fixes yeow so that yeow can't move.'

Nan had a warm heart for any sufferer, and at this suggestion went out at once to the gate with Joe. She saw the motionless black figure standing in the moonlight about twenty yards from the gate; and brave little woman as she was to live with her husband in such a solitary home, a thrill of superstitious awe passed over her. The hour, the place, and the hushed wind, with the deep moaning of the sea, combined to suggest that there was something uncanny in the appearance of that lone black figure. The appearance of a black dog late at night foreboded death to some one. What might not this strange visitant bode?

'Yeow go speak again, Joe,' said Nan in a low voice; 'an' if she be in trouble or have lost her way, ask her to come into ours.'

'Hadt' yeow better go?' answered the husband sheepishly. 'Likely, she'd speak to a woman more free than to a man.'

'No, go yeow; I'll be here ready to come if wanted.'

Joe hesitatingly once more advanced towards the black figure, and, as his footsteps could not be heard on the sand or turf, he coughed loudly to make his approach known. But no effect of that kind seemed to be produced. When within a few paces, he halted. 'Beggin' pardon, ma'am,' he said respectfully, 'but my missus have sent I to ask if so be as yeow have lost yeowr way?'

The head moved, and two bright dark eyes shone upon him from the white face. She answered in a tone that had no feeling in it—not the faintest note of gratitude for the evident kindness of the miller's inquiry: 'No.'

'Maybe yeow want to find some place here-about?'

'No.'

Joe pondered for a minute: if she had not lost her way and did not want to find any place thereabout, then that fixed gaze towards the sea had a terrible significance.

'Ben't there anythin' we can do to help yeow?' he said as a last attempt to understand the position.

'No.'

He looked at her pityingly and much puzzled. She was again looking fixedly seaward. He was about to turn away in order to come to consult Nan as to what had better be done next, when there was a moan, and the woman fell to the ground. The miller was on his knees beside her in a moment, lifting the inanimate form, whilst Nan scurried across to his assistance.

'I knowed the poor creature were a-thinking of drownin' herself,' said Joe; 'an' she been a trying of it already, for her skirts be drenched with water.—Lost heart, I suppose, an' turned back without havin' quite made up her mind.'

'Lord ha' mercy on us!' exclaimed Nan piously and sympathetically, 'whatever can ha' tempted her to that?'

'Lord alone know.—But yeow run on, Nan, an' get a place ready for her to lie on, an' I'll carry her in.' He lifted the stranger in his strong arms as if she had been an infant and carried her into the cottage. Nan had hastily stretched out one of those small iron chair bedsteads before a blazing fire in the kitchen, and he laid his burden upon it.

'She look like dyin',' whispered Nan, hastily unfastening everything about the lady's neck and taking off her bonnet.

'She do,' acquiesced the miller; 'an' that be awkward for we, seein' as we know nothin' about her. Maybe we ought to tell constable.'

'Constable!' ejaculated Nan indignantly, for the deathly white face had won her keenest sympathy. 'The poor thing be in dire trouble o' some sort. Take the pony an' fetch the doctor—that be what yeow are to do; an' I'll get off them wet things an' put dry ones on her.'

Joe rarely disputed any decision of his wife, especially when it was, as generally happened, on the side of kindly action. He therefore harnessed the pony to a light spring cart and drove into Yarmouth for the nearest doctor.

'Yeow see, sir,' said Joe in response to the doctor's expression of astonishment that he should have taken so much trouble about an entire stranger, 'we couldn't let her die at our very door as it might be without tryin' to do somethin'. There weren't likely anybody else to come that way to help her.'

'Very good of you; and your place is so lonely that it is most mysterious how she should come there.—You say she is a lady?'

'A born lady, I'll be bound.'

'Some family rupture, no doubt,' muttered the doctor.

They were driving back to the mill during this conversation, and the doctor was wondering if he should find in this curious case a commonplace incident of domestic quarrel and a passionate woman foolishly attempting to commit suicide, or something of a more romantic nature.

John Aynsley was only thirty-five, and he had not yet lost the speculative imagination of youth; so that the circumstances which Joe had detailed interested him and set his fancy at work.

On arriving at the mill, the patient was still insensible; but her wet things had been removed, and she was now wrapt in warm blankets, whilst Nan had a cup of tea ready for her as soon as consciousness returned.

When Dr Aynsley took the lamp which Nan offered him, and examined his patient's face, he started, and with difficulty restrained an exclamation of surprise. He looked more closely, and then mentally said: 'No—it cannot be. It is impossible—and yet the resemblance is very striking.'

When he rose from his stooping position there was professional calmness in his manner and expression. He had brought with him such restoratives as he deemed requisite—from Joe's description of the case, and he now proceeded to apply them. Nan had already tried burnt feathers sedulously, but without apparent effect. Now, however, the woman began to breathe more audibly, and by-and-by, after a long inspiration like a heavy sigh, slowly opened her eyes. They

blinked as if the light pained them, and the doctor motioned to Nan to put the lamp aside.

Whatever recognition there might have been on Aynsley's part, there was no recognition of him in the invalid's eyes. They were fixed on him with the same stony stare with which she had regarded the miller. There was no meaning in them. The expression was that of a somnambulist. Although life was restored to the body, it was evident that the mind was still vacant. Suddenly she attempted to rise; but her spasmodic effort failed to do more than slightly raise her head, which instantly fell back on the pillow. Then there was an hysterical sob, and the young doctor was not displeased to hear it, for to him it was a sign of returning sense. But to Nan it was a most distressing sound, and although not given to such weakness, she gave vent to an involuntary sob in sympathy. They were all startled by what followed, and the miller and his wife drew back a pace, as if frightened.

'My babe, my babe!' murmured the woman gaspingly; 'they say I caused your death. I!—I!—I!—But they wish me dead, and they will have their wish.—Oh, my babe!'

'This is some delusion due to severe mental distress,' hastily whispered the doctor to the horrified couple who had succoured the stranger. 'Pay no attention to anything she may say in her present state.'

'They wish me dead, and they will have their wish,' repeated the sufferer, more distinctly than before, whilst she moved nervously on the narrow couch, as if struggling to rise from it.

The doctor succeeded in administering another dose of medicine—a sedative this time—and in a little while it appeared to soothe her. She closed her eyes and seemed to sleep. Whilst giving the draught, the doctor observed a gold locket on her neck bearing initials. 'It is she!' he muttered to himself: and then turned to Nan: 'Have you a spare bed?'

'That we have, but'—

'It is impossible to remove the lady at present,' interrupted the doctor. 'I know who she is, and you will have no reason to regret any kindness you may show her.'

'We don't want nothin' for doin' as we would be done by,' answered Nan frankly; 'but it frighten me to hear what she say.'

'I have told you that she is suffering under some temporary delusion, from which she will recover with a few days' rest. I know the lady, and will be responsible for her.—You need fear no risk in sheltering her till she can be safely removed elsewhere. She has been evidently suffering severely both in mind and body.'

'That be clear enough, poor deary,' said Nan, again all sympathy; 'an' mayhap it be the loss of her little one that have upset her.'

'Not a doubt of it; and the loss of the child accounts for her being dressed in black, as your husband told me she was.'

'That be true, an' I'd never believe that such a fine-lookin' lady could ever do anythin' so dreadful as she was sayin' some un say she did.'

'I'll stake my life on that.' This was uttered with such impulsive earnestness, that Nan's quick eyes scanned John Aynsley's face, and discovered the secret he had thought long buried in his own heart, never to be revealed to mortal.

'Since yeow know the lady, doctor,' observed the good woman softly, 'what may her name be?'

At this question Aynsley looked unaccountably awkward. Recovering himself, he took the patient's left wrist gently as if to feel her pulse, but he glanced at the fingers and saw the wedding ring.

'For the present,' he said in an undertone, 'you may call her Mrs Fairfax.'

During this whispered conversation, the subject of it had remained perfectly motionless; but careful as Aynsley had been, the sound of the name he gave seemed to reach her. She started, shivering as with cold, and looked up wildly, but did not speak. He saw that he was still unrecognised, and was glad of it.

'You are better now,' he said gently, 'and you will soon be well, for there are kind friends beside you.'

'Kind friends!' she echoed feebly; 'my father is dead; my babe is dead, and I have no friends.'

'Hush! You must not speak now. You must rest.'

The strangely bright dark eyes were fixed on the man's face with an inquiring expression. She seemed to be searching her mind for some lost memory, and failing to find it, the eyelids closed again.

He turned away as if for some reason, eager to escape from that searching gaze. 'I should like to see her settled for the night before I go, Mrs Suffling. Can you manage to get her into bed?'

'Surely, for I can lift her as though she was a child, tall though she be.'

'Then your husband and I will take a turn outside until you call us.'

The miller had been all the time standing aside, alternately scratching his head and observing the speakers. He was much puzzled by what he saw and heard, but discreetly left the whole management of the strange affair to his 'missus' and the doctor. He felt it a relief to get out into the fresh air; and as a still further relief to his perplexed wits, he instantly lit his pipe.

The miller's cottage stood under the shadow of the mill and within a dozen yards of it. The dwelling was a long low one-story erection, the walls constructed of small flints deftly plastered together. There were no windows on the east side, for the cruel east wind had to be kept out by every practicable precaution. A long black wooden shed served for stable, cart-house, cow-house, and piggery.

Joe Suffling was in his way a prosperous man, and on ordinary occasions was fond of calling the attention of any visitor to the improvements he had made and intended to make about the place. The moonlight was sufficiently clear to have enabled him to indulge this harmless vanity even now; but his thoughts were otherwise occupied. They found expression in this abrupt fashion: 'I don't like this business, doctor—not that I doubt but you'll see we all right. But there ben't no manner o' question she was a-tryin' to drownd herself; an' it 'ud be awkward if she tried it again while in our hands.'

'She has not strength enough to walk a dozen yards without help.'

'I see you start when yeow look at her, sir,' continued the miller, 'an' I say to myself—That

be good. Doctor know her. Seem to me, then, that bein' so, her friends ought to be brought here at once; an' if they be anywhere about here, though it be five mile off, I'm willing to go, late as the hour be.'

'Wait till I call in the morning, Suffling. Then I expect Mrs' (a little hesitation here) 'Fairfax will be able to explain matters to me, and I shall know what to do.'

'But maybe her friends be in a way about her.'

'Her friends may be; but think what a storm there must have been to drive her from amongst them! We must think of her first, and of her friends afterwards. They must have been very cruel to her in some way.'

'If I was sure of that'—

'Never mind them at present. Let us wait to hear what she has to tell and learn what her wishes are. You and your wife have acted most generously and kindly; don't spoil it all by talking about her friends. They must be strange people to have driven her to this.' The last sentence was spoken to himself rather than to his companion, and there was a distinct tone of bitterness in it.

The miller took several long meditative whiffs and then he spoke: 'So be it, doctor: I say no more. I'd be mortal sorry to do anythin' that 'ud make the poor lady worse than she be already.'

They had been walking up and down, and at this point they were near the door of the cottage. Nan was standing at it.

'She be abed now, sir, an' quiet as a lamb.'

The doctor saw his patient again. She was sleeping calmly and breathing regularly. He gave Nan sundry instructions, and promised to be with them early in the morning. Joe offered to drive him home, but the doctor preferred to walk. Strangely, too, he preferred the longest route—that over the Denes and by the shore, instead of the highway. He had been much more agitated than his manner suggested whilst in the cottage, and he wanted to walk it off. There was something peculiarly painful, after years of absence and silence, in meeting under such strange circumstances the woman he had loved—and found he still loved.

John Aynsley's father had been a clerk in a Norwich bank—a quiet, retiring man, without any of those qualities of 'push' or 'go' which are necessary to procure promotion. No fault was ever found with his figures; he was steady and painfully industrious in the discharge of his duties. Yet, whilst he plodded faithfully on through the routine of his daily office-work, younger men passed him rapidly, and he was doomed to remain a mere book-keeping machine at a salary of one hundred pounds a year. On this income he married, and, as is generally the case with people who have small means, he was blessed with a large family—eight, seven of them being daughters. He was still further blessed, however, in having a shrewd practical wife, who was skilled in domestic economy, and could make a leg of mutton last as long as if it had been a whole sheep.

John was the eldest of the eight, and inherited his mother's abilities. He early distinguished

himself at school; he won scholarship after scholarship, so that from the age of fourteen he did not cost his parents a penny. He had decided upon entering the medical profession, and at twenty he obtained his degree of M.B. Immediately thereafter he was engaged as assistant to a country practitioner, and through the following years was able to give material aid to his parents. At twenty-four, having attained the dignity of M.D., he became assistant to Dr Fairfax, who had an extensive practice in Norwich, and an only daughter, Mina. Then commenced the sorest trial of John Aynsley's life. The girl was little more than sixteen, but she was so tall and so dignified in her bearing, that she appeared to be a full-grown woman. The gentleness and simplicity of her manner did not alter this impression, and those who saw her preside at her father's table—for he had been long a widower—were astonished when they learned her age.

John Aynsley was in love. He knew it, and bravely combated the most glorious vision of happiness he had ever known or could ever hope to know. He dare not think of it, remembering that his parents needed help with their troop of girls. He dare not think of it—at least not for years to come, when he should have won a position which would entitle him to speak. Therefore, he spoke no word; and yet sometimes Mina was so frank and kind with him that he fancied if circumstances had been different he might have won her. He put the fancy away from him as arrogant madness. But the temptation to speak was terrible. He struggled against it for a year; and then he decided that he must save himself by flight. So he announced his intention of leaving Norwich. Dr Fairfax, not suspecting the reason for Aynsley's sudden determination, and knowing his value as well as feeling deep interest in him, endeavoured to dissuade him from it. He even hinted at the prospect of arranging a partnership at an early date. But there was only one arrangement which could have altered Aynsley's resolve, and he saw no prospect of that being made, kind as his friendly chief was; so he carried out his plan. He sought and obtained an appointment as medical officer on board an emigrant vessel, and for about eight years continued to serve in that capacity on various lines. He saw much of the world, made many friends; but Mina was in his heart still—the hopeless love for her as strong and painful as ever.

Whilst at Bombay, on the last voyage he intended to make before settling down on shore, he received a letter from one of his sisters, which, amongst other items of home-news, contained the following passage: 'By the way, do you remember Mina Fairfax?' (Did he remember! As if he ever could forget!) 'She is going to be married. I believe it is a great match—some rich young county Squire. I don't know who he is, as the affair is to be conducted very privately, and I suppose there will be no cards.'

He felt a twinge of pain, and a sense of sickness for a few moments, thereby understanding that in spite of himself, in spite of time, absence, and protestations that he must not think of ever winning Mina Fairfax, there had lurked somewhere in his heart a shadowy hope that some day fortune might favour him.

He was depressed by the news, but not sur-

prised. He only wondered that she had not been married sooner—she was so beautiful and gifted. He was sorry to discover that unconsciously he had still cherished vain hopes, and now it seemed a relief to know that he must think of her only as a loved one dead. He might indulge in sweet memories of the dead, although it was denied him to think of her living.

So he made no inquiries about the marriage; and even when he returned to Norwich, some time afterwards, he never asked the name of Mina's husband. That was why he had looked awkward when the miller's wife asked the lady's name, and had answered: 'For the present we will call her Mrs Fairfax.'

TIMBER'S HIDDEN ENEMIES.

ANY one who has given the matter a thought must have been struck with the amazing length of time it takes for knowledge of any kind to filter down to the masses, and in no case is this more glaringly apparent than in the manner of treating timber in building. In spite of the voluminous warnings and admonitions that have gone forth on this head, the old mistakes and antiquated erroneous systems are repeated and perpetuated day by day. Like all else in this world of change and decay, timber must eventually yield to the inevitable 'dust to dust'; but that is no reason why we should not endeavour to postpone the evil day by every means in our power, by invoking the aid of science and the experience of former generations. The following remarks are confined exclusively to timbers that are hidden from sight, such as floor-joists and ends buried in masonry or in the earth, all of which lie within the province of the carpenter, not trespassing on that of the joiner, whose handiwork in the shape of doors and windows is fully exposed to view.

Since the quality, strength, and durability of timber are all greatly influenced by the season in which the tree is felled, we may state that winter, when but little sap is flowing, and the various fungi are dormant or dead, is the fittest season in this country; that trees which have nearly done growing afford the best timber, as there is but little sapwood in them, and their heartwood is in the best condition; and that as soon as possible after felling, the bark should be stripped, the trunk roughly cut up into the forms that it will eventually be required to serve, and the pieces stacked to season, under cover, if possible, in such a manner as to admit the greatest quantity of light and air. Timbers that have been thoroughly well seasoned and properly placed in position have been known to last without any apparent deterioration for several hundred years. In an ever-growing country like England, where the number of buildings increases year by year, it is an absolute impossibility to keep up the necessary supply of properly seasoned timber, which unfortunate fact should spur us to employ every

artifice and means to lengthen the period of its healthy existence.

Its greatest enemy in this country is undoubtedly *dry-rot*, though how the epithet 'dry' ever came to be applied to this fungus, the very essence of whose existence is moisture, has always been a puzzle. It must have arisen either from the fact of its effect in the shape of wood reduced to powder being more often witnessed than the living organism which caused it, or from the necessity of distinguishing it from *wet-rot*. Its scientific name is *Merulius lacrymans*, or *Boletus lacrymans*, so termed from the moisture that drips from it like tears. It is one of the few members of the fungus tribe that, like the mistletoe, bears leaves, which in its case resemble those of the vine. It must not be confounded with the *Polyporus hybridus*, or fungus called the agaric of the oak, with which the Druids of old played many tricks, for this is the child of the oak itself, and the direct cause of the hollow old oaks we have all seen, as well as being answerable for the decay of oak beams and planks that have been laid improperly seasoned. When once the dry-rot fungus has obtained a footing, it will in a very short time destroy all the woodwork in a house, insinuate itself into the interstices of the walls, crumbling them to pieces, play havoc with books by reducing the leaves to tinder, and in fine cause so much mischief as to render a house uninhabitable and necessitate its demolition.

There is no reason, however, why it should ever obtain a footing. We have only to bear in mind that it is a creeping plant, which cannot rise unsupported as high as two inches, and that it has no adhesive powers except in contact with wood, so, if there be no contact of wood with earth, it is harmless. Fortunately, it cannot pass over brick or mortar, else it would rise from our damp cellars and infect half the houses in the kingdom; so the first precaution is to raise all woodwork in the basement on a bed of brick or stone; and if to this condition be added a free circulation of air around the timbers, by inserting gratings in the walls or by other means, so as to prevent an accumulation of the confined and damp air so material to its growth, the chances of its appearance are nil. For the same reason, when laying wall-plates or fixing the ends of rafters a clear space of about an inch should always be left above them and on each side. We have seen an immense roof literally resting on air, the ends of its supporting timbers, owing to the neglect of this simple precaution, having entirely rotted away; the only thing that kept it from falling bodily was the cohesion of its component parts. The practice of covering our floors with oilcloths instead of carpets soon rots them, by stopping the circulation of air; and the custom of keeping tightly closed all the windows of a newly built house, whose walls are full of moisture, in place of leaving them wide open, places the woodwork in an atmosphere more charged with vapour than its own internal contents, and keeps it thereby in an imbibing, in place of an exhaling state, thus sowing the seeds of early decay. If the best seasoned stuff be shut up under such conditions, the quantity of moisture it will imbibe will defeat all the former care that has been expended on it. We pointed out in our article 'A Few Common Errors' (Jan. 7,

1887), the fallacy of attempting to dry a building with gas.

We now pass on to the consideration of those timbers which, like telegraph and hop poles, posts and palings, *must* as a rule have their ends buried in the ground. It would be a hopeless task to attempt to enumerate even a fraction of the preventive measures that have at various times been recommended, many of them patented; and even were we to do so, the reader would find himself after their perusal in a hopeless state of bewilderment as to the particular merits of one over the other, especially as in some instances they are most contradictory. In evidence of this we will cite the two following diametrically opposite opinions, from a certain publication, concerning the proper way of erecting a simple post: 'Larch-posts will last much longer when driven with the thick end into the ground than otherwise. All wood lasts longer when placed in the position in which it grows than by reversing it; which seems to be quite natural, when we consider that, as the tree tapers upwards, the cells and tissues, or veins in which the sap moves, become smaller and less calculated to admit and convey external moisture than when the position of the tree is reversed.' 'W. Howe of Alleghany Co. relates an experiment made to test the comparative durability of posts set as they grew, or top end down. He says: "Sixteen years ago I set six pair of bar-posts all split out of the same white oak log. One pair I set butts down; another pair one butt down, the other top down; all the others top down. Four years ago, those set butt down were all rotted off, and had to be replaced. This summer I had occasion to reset those that were set top down: I found all sound enough to be reset. My experiments have convinced me that the best way is to set them tops down."

Unless we are sure that the wood be thoroughly well seasoned, it is far better to leave the part above ground naked, than to tar or otherwise paint it, for by so doing we close its pores and prevent all exhalation, which occasions fermentation, and brings on a premature state of decomposition. A rotten scaffold pole or putlog, although of fir and subjected to alternations of wet and dry, and handed down for several generations from father to son, is as rare a sight as a dead donkey. The timber introduced into the outsides of old houses, as in the ancient cities of Chester and Shrewsbury, which were never painted, and are now black with age, is a further striking illustration in favour of this truth. Ends that are to be buried should be first charred and then tarred, and this is the only treatment that will really and effectually prevent their decay by the rot. The charring dries up all the fungus-juices of the wood, and reduces the surface to somewhat the state of charcoal, the incorruptibility of which is attested by undoubted historical facts. The famous temple at Ephesus at its destruction was found to have been erected on piles that had been charred; and the charcoal discovered in Herculaneum after almost two thousand years was entire and undiminished; while little more than a couple of centuries since, some oak-stakes were found in the bed of the Thames in the very spot where Tacitus says the Britons fixed a number of such stakes to prevent the passage of Caesar's army, and these stakes, which were charred to a con-

siderable depth, had completely retained their form, and were firm at the heart. The additional application of coal-tar to the charred end while it is still hot forms, by means of the resin that is left behind after the acid and oils have evaporated, an air-tight and waterproof envelope. The preservative properties of creosote, which entirely prevent the absorption of the atmosphere under all conditions, and are noxious to every form of both animal and vegetable life, are without doubt superlative; but the high cost of the treatment—from fourpence to fivepence per cubic foot—debars its application except in works of considerable magnitude, or where, as in the case of railway sleepers, very large quantities of material are employed.

But there are other enemies, in the shape of insects, to fortify against, whose powers of destruction cannot be ignored; and here again we are confused by the thousand-and-one suggested remedies, of which the following has been proved really efficient. It is well known that kerosene is repellent to worms and insects; saturating the ends to be buried with this oil has proved a safeguard; the supply is kept up by boring a small hole in the post a few feet above ground, slanting down and reaching below the centre, which requires refilling about once in three years. Nearly every kind of oil is equally efficient. In tropical climes like India, the ravages of the white ant must be seen to be credited; the rapid extension of the little earthen mounds, similar to those thrown up by the mole, only about the size of half a cedar pencil, under cover of which they carry on the siege, is astounding, eating out the heart of the stoutest scantlings in a very short time. During the last Madras famine, enormous quantities of grain were stored in the goods-sheds of the Madras Railway, which in consequence had to be secured against the depredations of these pests. This, after many attempts, was at last successfully accomplished by picking up the floors to a depth of six inches and ramming in granite chippings—the white ant, and for that matter the black ant too, will not pass over any hard gritty substance—over which was laid the following mixture to form a surface: Tar, one part; soorkhee (pounded brick), one part; lime, one part; sand, one part—laid on hot and beaten; while the feet of the posts supporting the roof were surrounded with six inches deep of ashes, great care being taken that no clay or earth of any kind got mixed with them.

In the early days of submarine cables, Dr Russel wrote: 'As a mite would in all probability never have been seen but for the invention of cheese, so it may be that there is some undeveloped creation waiting, perdu, for the first piece of gutta-percha which comes down to arouse his faculty and fulfil his functions of life—a gutta-percha boring and eating *teredo*, who has been waiting for his meal since the beginning of the world.' He may be ranked as a prophet; for ten years after, the borer appeared in the *Limnoria terebrans*. And so it is with all building materials: iron has to contend against rust; lead against the solvent and corroding properties of water; brick and stone against climate and weather; wood, as has been shown, against the ravages of rot and insects; and it is only by making known the various preventives and antidotes discovered, that

the general public is able to derive the advantages which accrue from the investigations and experience of those engaged in any particular calling or profession.

A DUBIOUS COMPLIMENT.

BOISTE, a name familiar to philologists and grammarians, was a celebrated maker of dictionaries, at which he worked with an enthusiasm almost unrivalled in that department of labour, and with a degree of success which brought him both reputation and profit. The great Napoleon gave him the post of royal grammarian; and the hard-working student received this flattering testimony to his merit just as he was concluding his grand Dictionary of the French language. Very sweet were those concluding labours, and one may imagine the pleasure with which he corrected the last proof-sheets and complied with the customary form of sending complete copies to the censor of the press. Sweet also were his dreams that night, and the anticipations of the fame and the profit that should accrue to him from the publication of the elaborate work which in a few days would see the light. But, alas! never was the adage that speaks of 'the slip 'twixt the cup and the lip' more strikingly illustrated than in the case of poor M. Boiste. He had retired to rest one night after a pleasant evening with some literary friends, when, disturbed by a movement in his chamber, he woke up to find his bed surrounded by a posse of gendarmes.

'What is it, gentlemen?' said he. 'You have assuredly made some mistake. I am Monsieur Boiste, lately appointed grammarian to the Emperor.'

'Ah!' said the brigadier in command, 'the very man we want. See, sir; here is the order for the arrest of Monsieur Boiste, grammarian.'

The order was in due form, sure enough, and it was but vain to appeal against it. The poor scholar had to turn out and dress; and in a few minutes was seated with his captors in a close carriage, driving rapidly towards the castle of Vincennes.

Having arrived at the prison, the astonished captive was not without hopes that the obstinate silence with which all his inquiries had been met during the journey would no longer be maintained. He now urgently entreated to be informed of the reason for his arrest, at the same time protesting his entire innocence and his known devotion to the Emperor. The official at first paid no attention to his entreaties; but at length, out of respect it may be for the prisoner's gray hairs, condescended to refer to the order of arrest, and after perusing it, coolly answered: 'To secure the public safety.'

Poor Boiste was no wiser than before, but only the more perplexed. He was at once led off to a room fastened with an iron door and grimly grated windows, and there he was shut in, with the prospect of spending months, it might be years, in torturing his brain to discover how it could be that he, who had passed his whole life in the harmless avocation of arranging words in alphabetical order, could possibly have compromised the public safety. 'It cannot be,' he said to himself, 'that I am arrested on account of my book; for it was examined three several

times, was corrected and altered both by the chiefs and the subordinates of the imperial censorship, and everything to which they objected was struck out.'

It was little use spending his days in conjectures that led to nothing, and nothing was to be got by indulging in lamentations; so he began to exert himself. He drew up memorials containing the strongest appeals, and addressed them to all the persons of influence with whom he was acquainted, reminding them all that he had really committed no offence, and that he only required to know the charge against him that he might clear himself.

But week after week rolled away and not one of his letters was answered. At length one of the unfortunate prisoner's memorials fell into the hands of Fontanes, the head of the University of Paris, who knew the blameless character of the lexicographer, and had long held him in esteem. Fully convinced of the innocence of the man, who he knew had devoted a long life to the completion of dry and arduous labours, he watched for an opportunity of mentioning him to the Emperor. The great Napoleon happened to be in one of his gracious moods; he took from Fontanes the captive's written plea, read it over, and agreeing with him that there must be some mistake, summoned the Duke of Otranto to his presence and demanded an explanation.

The Duke knew no more of the matter than they did, and professed himself quite as much surprised at the arrest of Boiste as Boiste could have been to be arrested. True, there was his signature to the order; but then, as often happened, he had probably signed the paper when it was laid before him without reading it. He could give no explanation, and now in his turn he summoned the prefect. The prefect had no explanation to give, really knew nothing of the business, and he sent for his deputy. The deputy, after a search of some days, did contrive to rummage up the original of the fatal document. He hastened with it to the Tuileries, and then it was discovered that it had been drawn up upon the denunciation of the censor, who had actually accused Boiste of having characterised Buonaparte as a *Spoliateur*. The document afforded no information as to how, when, or where the offence was committed. The censor was immediately ordered to put in an appearance; but he happened to be three hundred miles off, engaged in his periodical tour of inspection and supervision of the provincial press.

'Let the prisoner himself be examined,' said Napoleon. 'It must be a blunder of some one's; for, not to mention that Boiste is incapable of such an act, it really would not be common-sense to insert calumnies in a dictionary.'

Next morning, Boiste was permitted to emerge from his prison, and was driven off to the Duke of Otranto's office, where he found M. Fontanes also awaiting him.

'Sir,' said the Duke, 'you are accused of libelling the august sovereign who rules over this mighty empire.'

'Me accused of a libel! I, my lord! Surely you cannot be serious? A libel comes from *libellus*, a little book—never made one in my life, sir.—Ask that gentleman, sir, the principal of our University; he will tell you that I know too

well the significations and the power of words, to'—

'But, nevertheless,' said M. Fontanes, showing him the accusation, but hiding the signature with his finger, 'read this.'

Boiste read it through as desired.

'Well?' cried Otranto, seeing the tranquil face quite unmoved.

'Is that all?' demanded Boiste.

'All!' said the Duke. 'Quite enough, I should think. I hope, for your sake, it is a mistake.'

'No mistake at all. It is the truth.'

'The truth!'

'Most certainly. I inserted it to do honour to the Emperor.'

'To do the Emperor honour!'

'Yes. To prove that he is as thorough a linguist as he is a warrior.'

'Sir,' said Fouché impatiently, 'we have no time for jesting, and you will find that this is no jesting matter.'

'I have no idea of jesting, I assure you; I should not dream of taking such a liberty with your Excellency.'

'Then be so good as to afford us some explanation.'

'Certainly; there is nothing more easy.' Then taking a copy of his new Dictionary, which lay on the table, he opened it, found the word *Spoliateur*, and pointed to the two words as they stood thus: '*Spoliateur*, *Buonaparte*.'

'And what,' exclaimed the indignant functionary, 'could have tempted you to such a foul libel as that?'

'Libel! I only gave His Majesty the honour that was due to him. I print his name after the word *Spoliateur* as the authority for its use. It was he who first made use of the word; he did so in the tribune, when he was General Buonaparte; he coined the word in the first instance, and it was never known in the French language until he gave it currency.'

The Duke looked at M. Fontanes, and M. Fontanes looked at the Duke, and both smiled in a rather subdued way at this simplest of all possible explanations. Boiste was immediately restored to liberty; but his artless attempt to do credit to the Emperor put him to no inconsiderable expense, as he was compelled to cancel the sheet that contained this very doubtful and certainly undesired honour to Napoleon, and print it anew for the entire edition. And indeed, considering the temper of the times, Boiste thought himself fortunate to get off so cheaply, especially as there were not wanting among his detractors those who did not scruple to insinuate that his professed tribute to the Emperor's genius as a linguist was designed for anything but a compliment.

STORY OF A WILD RABBIT.

A CORRESPONDENT writes: I have recently been reading, in some back numbers of your *Journal*, the articles by a lady, entitled 'Animals I have known and loved.' Amongst her many interesting and amusing descriptions of pets, there is no mention of a wild rabbit; and as we have never met anybody who has tamed one—people whom we have asked even saying that it cannot be done—perhaps our case is uncommon, and may be

interesting to some of your readers; for our rabbit would follow us, and eat out of our hands, and was as affectionate as a kitten. He was caught on the Downs when a few days old, and my mother undertook to try and rear him, allowing him to live for a time in her pocket, and feeding him constantly with milk from a teaspoon. He grew fast, and soon became quite friendly, being fed regularly on bran, fresh leaves, black oats, and any pieces that he could get given him; for he always knew the meal-hours, and would come and beg sweetly by the side of every one round the table. He lived loose about the room, only being put in a box when we were out. We were living in a 'flat' at the time, and he was never allowed downstairs, and no cat was ever allowed up.

Once he was missing for a long time, and we had given him up for lost, when he suddenly came scrambling down the chimney, none the worse, except for a little soot in his fur, as, luckily, no fire had been lighted. He would always come to the call of 'Bun, bun, bun!' and would jump on to our laps, and if allowed, would eat out of our plates. A favourite place for him to sit was on one of our shoulders, where he would sleep for hours, and sometimes gently nibble an ear!

We used to bring him home the red berries off brier-bushes; of these he was particularly fond, never, however, eating the seeds, but leaving them in neat little heaps on the ground. Loaf-sugar, too, he greatly relished—and when he saw it on the table, he would jump up, with the help of a chair or a lap, stand on his hind-paws, and look into the basin—and if the tongs were in his way, would take them in his mouth and lay them on the table, then look in again, take a piece of sugar, jump down with it, and crunch it up, and probably come back for more.

He took great delight in a cabinet in the room where he knew that cake was to be found, and would scratch at the door till he had opened it wide enough to get in; but soon learning that when he made a noise we heard him, and sent him away and locked the door, he took to doing it as quietly as a mouse; and more than once, thinking him unusually quiet and good, we have got up to see where he was, we have found him sitting in the cabinet greedily devouring cake!

He had a hundred pretty, clever ways; but much as we loved him, we were a good deal tried by him. His destructiveness was serious; boots and shoes or bags, if left unguarded, would be nibbled round in a very short time; and I remember well my mother's look of dismay on finding that he had eaten large holes in her petticoat, when she had only thought him asleep on her lap, under her dress for warmth.

We never left him alone for many minutes, as he was sure to be in mischief. Once, when we were going to be away all day, we gave him a large hamper and locked him in a room. When we came home and went to see him, he met us with great delight at the door, having eaten his way out of the hamper—his next amusement having been to scratch a huge hole in the carpet; but he was such a general favourite that even the landlady didn't object very much.

He was now about six months old; and as we were leaving the place, and could not take

him with us, much against our will we gave him away to some friends in town. His fate we have never heard—we have not liked to ask. We know that he was kept for some time; and we have heard of a visit to the store cupboard, where a quantity of scented soap and wax candles was found eaten or destroyed; and since then we have thought it better not to inquire, fearing to hear of a sad end, such as comes in one way or another to most pets.

We had a great love for this little rabbit, and I am sure he had for us; he certainly never seemed to pine for his natural wild life, but always appeared bright and happy. In memory of our affection for him, we feel sorry for his Australian cousins, who, however much they may deserve it, are having a very rough time just now, even without M. Pasteur's treatment coming into force. The interesting article on 'Rabbit Crusading in New Zealand,' in a recent issue of your *Journal*, proves that there at least the life of the wild rabbit is by no means all happiness.

YOU AND I.

We stood by the shining summer sea,
You and I;
And you whispered some old sweet words to me,
'Neath the opal sky.
Red sunset tints crept over the sand
As we lingered together, hand in hand,
Loth to part,
For 'the light that was never on sea or land'
Shone in each heart.

You sailed away o'er the silver sea,
You, not I;
And the tender message you left for me
Was: 'Love, good-bye!'
You traced that message upon the sand.
The proud cliffs towered on either hand,
Strong and sure;
And I said: 'Thus firm our love will stand,
And aye endure.'

So you in the busy haunts of men,
Far from the sea,
Took up the thread of your life again
Away from me.
The blossoms died in the woodland ways,
The roses dropped from their fading sprays
At my feet;
But I said: 'There will be golden days
When we meet.'

We stood once more by the shining sea,
You and I;
But you whispered no old sweet words to me
'Neath the cloudy sky.
The wind went sobbing along the sand;
I shivered, and felt no clasping hand.
We met to part;
And the shadows that deepened on sea and land
Fell o'er my heart.

E. MATHESON.

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THE ROUNDS OF THE PRESS.

It is quite common to read that a certain paragraph is 'going the rounds of the press.' Very few persons, however, think how extended those 'rounds' are, and consider how long it takes an item of news to go round them. Thanks to various associations and agencies, much news appears coincidentally in many papers; but for special articles and exclusive information, a different plan has to be adopted. In this country there is no copyright in news; and accordingly, long before most people are out of their beds, the London morning papers have been scanned through by London editors of provincial and American newspapers, and the cream has been carefully extracted and sent off by telegraph or submarine wire. As a result of this enterprise, readers in our great commercial centres are able to digest the substance of the political leading articles and the foreign correspondence of London papers at an early hour. English newspapers attribute much of this news to its rightful owners; but some of it appears in American newspapers as original matter. With the earlier editions of the metropolitan evening newspapers, a precisely similar operation is repeated, for the benefit of provincial sheets, except that their telegraphed extracts are mostly expressions of opinion on topics of current interest; and if it be true that the number of people who think for themselves is very small, this growing plan ought to be appreciated. A striking instance of what might be done in this direction was shown when Mr Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. By previous arrangement, every morning newspaper in the United Kingdom published, only a few hours after the House of Commons rose, extracts from the leading articles of nearly all its contemporaries.

Although the system of telegraphing extracts is rarely resorted to except in the case of news, anything topical is not allowed to get stale before it is sent the rounds. Many of those gentlemen known as London correspondents, who are most

indefatigable snappers-up of unconsidered trifles, and who are wont to write so freely and carelessly of their acquaintance with cabinet ministers, make up their letters for weekly newspapers from paragraphs which have appeared in the 'society' newspapers. Whatever may be thought of the honesty of this proceeding, one thing is quite certain—that the letters are quite good enough for what is paid for them. The London letters of the provincial dailies are gathered together in a very different manner, and of course paid for on an altogether different scale.

Many paragraphs are passed from paper to paper by means of the scissors and paste-pot; this is more particularly the case with paragraphs of general interest, of which there are always a large number going the rounds. If this work be done intelligently and carefully, several columns of interesting reading matter can be gathered together with comparatively little trouble or expense. In most American newspaper offices there is a gentleman known as the 'exchange editor,' whose duty it is to look carefully through a number of papers and cull such extracts from them as are of general interest, or political information that is in accordance with the policy of his paper. But in England this work is usually done by the sub-editor or one of his assistants.

Any one in the habit of glancing through the principal American, Australian, and English newspapers must have noticed that there is a large number of miscellaneous paragraphs which have been steadily 'going the rounds' for years. Many of these paragraphs are kept out of the better class of newspapers; but the carelessly edited sheets pass them on, for, in most cases, the sole purpose of filling up a corner; and it seems probable that many years must elapse before they are given a decent burial. A wit once observed that he supposed sub-editors never heard or read any jokes, because they always 'scissored' a number of ancient witticisms, and passed by anything which was topical or presented in a new dress. The same observation

seems to hold good in the case of miscellaneous paragraphs; for extracts on such highly interesting and novel subjects as toads in stones, epitaphs, fat or tall men, and misers seem to have a peculiar and irresistible attraction for many sub-editors. In these days, it is no doubt difficult to meet with anything novel; but that there are many good paragraphs to be obtained is shown by the fact that certain widely circulated newspapers manage to get several columns of them every week.

Paragraphs are constantly being buried in the abyss of the past, and it is therefore only natural to consider whence the number is replenished. Thackeray, in one of his favourite 'bursts of confidence,' entreated the 'public newspapers which are in the habit of extracting portions of the various periodical works now published, not to reprint' the narrative of how Crawley and his wife lived without any income, of which discovery the great novelist very properly considered that he ought to have the benefit. How many editors and writers must arrive at a somewhat similar conclusion! Nowadays, some newspapers are filled with interesting quotations from books and magazines; and it is by these that most miscellaneous paragraphs are 'sent on the rounds.' If an author 'resuscitates' any curious fact or tells a good story, or if any part of his article lends itself to quotation, he may rest assured that in the course of his reading he will come across it again.

One instance of how articles and paragraphs travel about is worth quoting. About four years ago, a rather humorous article on 'Hand-shaking' appeared in one of the 'society' papers. Extracts from it, with and without the source acknowledged, were printed in certain English newspapers; and the whole of it was boldly appropriated by several American newspapers without any acknowledgment. In the course of time the article appeared in some of the Canadian and Australian newspapers, which, being more honest than their contemporaries, and thinking that the article was originally written for the paper in which they first saw it, attributed it to various newspapers of the Great Republic. After this, portions of the article were copied into English newspapers; and for a long time fragments of it travelled from paper to paper, and received slight introductory remarks from persons through whose hands they passed. The last remnant of the article that we have seen was introduced by a London newspaper as a 'characteristic example of American humour!' In all probability, every trace of this article will soon be lost; but many miscellaneous paragraphs, like the brook, 'go on for ever.' The *Pall Mall Gazette* once traced one of its 'Occasional Notes' through an extraordinary series of adventures, until at last its career was ended by its being embodied in a government Report. Another of its smartly written Notes, which, apropos of a strike in a certain industry, contained facts not generally known, was passed on by sub-editors long after the strike was settled—as careless a method of filling up space as that adopted in the newspaper office where Mark Twain served his apprenticeship. We had, says the great humorist, a quantity of 'deep philosophical stuff, which we judged nobody ever read; so we kept a "galley" of it standing, and kept on slapping the same old batches of it in, every now

and then, until it got dangerous.' It is a popular impression that many newspapers have a quantity of general matter which they use over and over again; but this is a delusion.

Lamartine predicted that in the course of time the daily press would be our only literature. At present, a man can keep pretty well in touch with what is going on in the world, and become acquainted with much solid literature, by reading his daily and weekly newspapers, for the simple reason that most newspapers quote largely from the magazines. But it is devoutly to be hoped that newspapers will never be the only means by which mankind can obtain advice on medical and hygienic subjects, unless more care, with a decent regard for consistency, is exercised. At present, all that some papers seem to trouble about is that two conflicting paragraphs shall not immediately follow each other; and, all things considered, those misguided persons who are wont to follow newspaper advice must frequently be somewhat puzzled. In turning over some files of newspapers, we read, for example, that night-air is injurious, and that to sleep with the window open is a great mistake. Two or three weeks afterwards there appears a paragraph in the same journal to the effect that 'heaviness' in the morning is caused by want of fresh air; and a little later we come across the solemn statement that to keep in good health every one should sleep with the bedroom window open. There is not a word of reference to the former paragraph. Many journalists can be numbered among dyspepsia's numerous martyrs, and as a 'fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind,' they are very fond of publishing paragraphs on diet and dyspepsia. A collection of paragraphs on these subjects, culled from a widely circulated American newspaper, shows an endless diversity of opinion. Many of them start with the personal pronoun, instead of the delicious plural; but there is nothing to say who the author is. Having regard to the fact that doctors cannot agree, it is perhaps too much to expect anonymous newspaper paragraphs to do so; but one would think that reasonable care ought to be exercised that contradictory paragraphs should not appear within at least a month of each other, so that unfortunate sufferers who will follow newspaper advice should not have their faith in newspaper infallibility shaken by being warned against a system of cure, by their own adviser, too soon after they have commenced following it.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V.

AGNES was now in a mood which caused her to feel that whatever might happen could not matter greatly. And yet she shuddered involuntarily when she called to mind all that going back to Tydd Street implied. But as regarded her aunt the case was altogether different. Up to the time of her brother's death, Miss Maria had been used to the comfortable affluence of middle-class life; and notwithstanding her high spirit and that reticence of speech which hid from others whatever cares might be consuming her, Agnes knew

how deeply she felt the change in their circumstances, and how the bitter tooth of poverty was gradually eating away the sweetness of her life. Moreover, she had been engaged for seven long years, but circumstances had hitherto been adverse to her marriage. Now, however, the chief barrier was removed. Since their arrival at Syringa Cottage, Mr Ludford had written to announce that he had received the offer of an incumbency the stipend of which was two hundred pounds a year. Modest as this income was, Agnes knew that both her aunt and Mr Ludford would look upon it as sufficient to allow of their embarking together on the sea of matrimony, so that now she, and she alone, stood in the way of their long-deferred happiness. Agnes knew her aunt sufficiently well to feel sure that she was too proud—with the pride of a poor gentlewoman—to burden her husband with the maintenance of her brother's child, still less would she leave that brother's child to battle alone with the world, not even if her marriage should have to be deferred indefinitely.

It was a hard strait for one so young to find herself placed in. Strive as she might, her heart still clung to her lost lover. What must she do? Where turn for comfort? Not many times had she need to ask herself that question. She went to the one who had been to her both mother and aunt in one, and kneeling by her side, opened her heart to her with many blushes and tears. Then it was that Miss Maria told the girl something about which she had hitherto kept silence—how she had seen Wilmot Burrell, in the company of two ladies, coming out of St George's Hall on the afternoon of the concert. There might be much in such a circumstance, or there might be nothing. Agnes listened with a chill at her heart; but when her aunt had ceased speaking, she said: 'After all, Wilmot must know a great number of people who are totally unknown to us. Probably the two ladies were some ordinary acquaintances whom he met at the concert, and to whom he was merely paying those little attentions which ladies look for under such circumstances.'

'Such might be the case undoubtedly,' answered Miss Maria. 'It proves, however, that he was in Liverpool at that time, and that he could scarcely have troubled himself greatly to find us out.'

'But how was he to know we were in Liverpool, aunt? If my letters never reached him, of which there seems some doubt, he would naturally write to the vicarage, in which case his letters would be returned by the post-office people.'

'Mr Burrell knew Mr Ludford's address,' said Miss Maria coldly. 'Had he chosen to write to him, any information he might ask for would have been furnished him at once.'

This was a state of the case which had never struck Agnes, but it was one which she could not gainsay. It was another stab to her love, which was slowly but surely bleeding to death.

Poor Miss Maria was at a loss in what terms to set about telling Mr Esholt that which she had promised Agnes she would tell him. The duty was a disagreeable one, but it must be got through somehow.

'Mr Esholt,' she began in a voice which was by no means so steady as usual, 'I must ask you to excuse my niece's absence this afternoon.

Feeling herself unequal to the interview, she has delegated me in her stead.'

Mr Esholt bowed gravely: he began to forebode what was coming.

'With reference to the offer you have made her, she wishes me to say how sincerely she thanks you for the honour you have done her; but that, while she respects and esteems you as much as it is possible to respect and esteem any one, she does not feel towards you that warmth of sentiment which would justify her in accepting your offer to make her your wife.'

'Give her time, Miss Granby—give her time. She may learn to like me better by-and-by. Time and opportunity often work wonders.'

'That is very true, Mr Esholt,' answered Miss Maria with a faint smile, which he took as a token of encouragement. 'Young people don't always know their own minds, not even when they think they know them best.—There is one circumstance,' she went on after a moment's silence, 'which, as matters now stand, I deem it only right that you should be made acquainted with. My niece has been engaged once already; but the change in our fortunes was the cause of a change in the young gentleman's feelings, and—— But there is no need for me to explain further.'

'He must have been a scoundrel, whoever he was,' said Mr Esholt emphatically. 'Your niece, madam, ought to think herself fortunate that she escaped becoming the wife of such a man.'

'We cannot expect girls in love to be philosophers, Mr Esholt.'

The merchant bent his brows for a few moments, then looking up with a frank smile, he said: 'What you have just told me, my dear Miss Granby, has been a great relief to me. So long as my only rival is the memory of her love for one who has proved himself utterly unworthy of it, I will not despair. I believe you to be my friend in this matter. Go to your niece, then, I entreat, and ask her permission for me to continue my visits as heretofore, if not as an accepted suitor, still less as a rejected one, but as one who, while never pressing his suit unduly, will still live, ay, and wait for years if need be, in the hope of one day winning her consent to become his wife.'

So Mr Esholt's visits went on as before, not at Syringa Cottage, however, but at the lodgings in Tydd Street, to which Miss Granby had insisted on their returning. Agnes was pleased to think that matters had been arranged as they had. Unknown to herself, she had come to trust in Mr Esholt so implicitly, to lean on him as a very tower of strength, that his absence would have left a void in her life far larger than she was aware of. He was so kind and patient, never speaking of his love, but betraying by a hundred little tokens how dear she was to him, that her feelings towards him began imperceptibly to assume a warmer tinge, so that, if he were unavoidably delayed and did not arrive at the expected time, she found herself longing and looking out for him and feeling his absence as a loss. Still, the sentiments with which she regarded him were very different from those she had felt for Wilmot Burrell.

Thus matters went on for some months longer, till one day Mr Esholt, deeming that the proper

moment had come, pressed his suit, and wrung from her a half-reluctant consent to become his wife. She felt relieved and thankful, now the matter was finally settled, but beyond that strangely indifferent. She did not care to think much about her approaching marriage; the prospect had few charms for her; but for all that she was glad—very glad, as she told herself, not once, but a thousand times—that it was to be so. She would do her best to make Mr Esholt a faithful and affectionate wife, while poor Mr Ludford would be made happy at last.

Mr Esholt and his sister lived in a large house on the heights of Everton, from the windows of which there was at that time a wide prospect across the Mersey to the villa-studded sandhills on the opposite shore. Mr Esholt's father had lived there before him; and the house was furnished in that massive but sombre style so prevalent in those days among the well-to-do middle classes. Everything in it seemed made to last a hundred years at the least. Thick Brussels carpets, considerably the worse for wear; heavy straight-backed chairs, that required both hands to lift them; a few oil-paintings, so dim with age that it was difficult to make out what they were supposed to represent; here and there an oval mirror in a tarnished frame; the windows shaded by red damask curtains, which hung in heavy folds from ceiling to floor, shutting out half the daylight, so that on the sunniest noon the rooms had a dull, twilight appearance—who that can go back in memory forty years does not recognise the kind of house, which even in these days is not wholly extinct! Such as it was, Mr Esholt had lived in it all his life, and no thought came to him that it was capable of improvement. Long habit and old associations had made it very dear to him.

It was a chill spring evening. Miss Esholt had reached home that day after an absence of several weeks. Dinner was just over, the curtains drawn and the lamp lighted. On one side the fire sat Mr Esholt, a decanter of wine at his elbow and the *Times* newspaper in his hands, which latter he was turning restlessly over, glancing at it here and there, but never appearing to read more than a paragraph at a time. This was so different from his usual steady adherence to one page before beginning another, that the attention of his sister was awakened thereby; besides which, the continual crackling of the crisp paper was a source of annoyance to her excitable nerves. She was seated in her own special easy-chair on the opposite side of the fire, her shoulders slightly raised, her head thrust forward a little, an elbow resting on either arm of the chair, slowly rubbing her thin transparent hands one within the other, while regarding her brother with a steadfast, unwavering gaze which seemed as if it would fain probe whatever secrets might perchance be locked up in his breast. She was wearing a dark-gray homespun dress, with small linen wristbands turned up towards her elbows; round her neck were a black ribbon and a plain white collar. She wore no jewelry or ornament of any kind: nothing could have been more simple and nun-like. Her long thin face was perfectly colourless, and bore evident traces of ill-health. Her black wavy hair was combed straight back from her forehead, after a fashion rather uncommon in those days, and

fastened in a heavy knot at the back of her head. She was probably about five-and-thirty years old.

Restlessly Mr Esholt continued to turn over his newspaper. It was quite evident to the observant eyes which noted his slightest movement that his thoughts were busy with far other subjects than those about which he was making-believe to read.

'Robert, you have something on your mind,' said Miss Esholt at length.

He gave a little start, and looked at her over his paper. 'I don't understand you, Janet,' he said in colder tones than he generally used when addressing his sister.

'You have something on your mind about which you want to tell me, only you don't seem to know how to set about it.'

Mr Esholt only coughed and raised his paper so that she could no longer see his face.

Nothing more was said for some time. At length Mr Esholt threw down the paper, filled himself another glass of wine, and then abruptly pushing back his chair, buried his hands in his pockets and began to pace slowly from one end of the room to the other, jingling his keys, and taking especial care to place his feet exactly in the centre of each square of the carpet as he did so. Miss Esholt, with a fan in one hand to shield her face from the fire, sat with an expectant air, as one who implied: 'I know you have something to say to me, and I can wait patiently till you have found out the best way of telling it.'

By-and-by Mr Esholt stopped abruptly in front of her. 'Janet, I am going to be married,' he said. He might as well have told his news at first, for any way of breaking it to his sister that he had been able to discover.

The fan stopped its restless fluttering, her teeth came sharply together, and she seemed to shrink visibly in her chair, as though struck by an unseen hand. There was silence while one might have counted six; then she said in her usual composed tones: 'Are you, brother? I hope you will be happy.'

'Thank you, Janet. I have little doubt on that score.'

'Handsome of course?' with the slightest shade of contempt in her voice.

'Lovable rather than handsome—at least that is how she strikes me. But I don't consider myself much of a judge in such matters.'

'Much younger than yourself?'

'Hum—well—yes. She will be of age in a few weeks, I believe.'

'And you, Robert—let me think—are five years older than I, and on my last birthday I was'—

'What can that matter, Janet?' he said a little sharply. 'You don't call me an old man, surely?'

'It is no concern of mine, of course. You are old enough to know your own mind, and have only yourself to please.'

'But I want to please you also, Janet. I want you and Agnes to know each other, and to love each other, as I am sure you cannot fail to do when you come together.'

A curious expression flitted across Miss Esholt's face. 'You are very kind,' she said in her iciest tones. 'But I am tired. Will you oblige me by ringing for Davvy?'

Mr Esholt bit his lip as he rang the bell. He knew that for the present the subject must be dropped; but at anyrate he had broken the ice.

Next minute, Davry entered. 'Up-stairs,' said Miss Esholt.

Her brother held the door open, and Davry, pushing behind the easy-chair, wheeled her mistress out of the room.

'Good-night, sister,' said Mr Esholt as he stooped to kiss her outside the door.

'Good-night, brother,' she replied; but he missed the smile which had never before been wanting when he bade her good-night. He went back into the room and sighed as he shut the door.

REMARKABLE DISORDERS OF SPEECH.

THE field of medical science, studded as it is with strange sights, exhibits nothing more curious than certain disorders of speech found in connection with brain disease. We do not refer to the ravings of the insane, or the hallucinations of the monomaniac, or the imperfect utterances of the congenital idiot, in all of which the thinking process is out of gear. Neither do we allude to cases of simple *mutism*, where the mechanism of articulation is fatally deranged. We refer rather to cases where there is almost unimpaired capacity for forming ideas, and also of pronouncing words, but with a strange inability to fit the word to the idea. To medical authorities this peculiarity is known as *Aphasia*, and it presents many features of great interest. In some of these cases the individual speaks with tolerable correctness, but slowly and laboriously, as if recalling the words with great effort. He seems to be speaking a foreign tongue, and to be obliged to dive deep into the recesses of memory before he can succeed in finding the desired phrase. Other aphasic patients speak in spasmodic jerks, pronouncing only one syllable at a time, much as the schoolboy scans his hexameters. Others, again, succeed with short sentences, but fail entirely on attempting longer ones. The most characteristic defect is where the sufferer, on being asked the name of an article, is speechless; but a moment afterwards, on the name being mentioned, he repeats it with intelligence, showing thereby that he both knows the word and can pronounce it, although immediately before he failed to do so. Thus, a conversation like the following may be carried on with an aphasic patient.

Holding up a pen, the questioner asks, 'What is this?'

The eyes of the patient show intelligence, his lips move spasmodically, but the required word will not come.

'Is it a sword?' asks the questioner.

The patient makes a gesture of impatience and contempt, clearly implying that the suggestion is ridiculously wide of the mark.

'Is it a pencil?' asks the questioner again.

The patient still shakes his head, but his look implies that this guess is much nearer the truth than the former one.

'Is it a pen?' is then asked.

'Yes—a pen,' answers the patient readily and with evident relief.

A moment afterwards the questioner again holds up the same object and demands its name;

but the patient is dumb as at first. He has just pronounced the word 'pen;' his whole demeanour shows clearly that he understands what it is, but by some inscrutable impediment he is hindered from connecting the idea with the word. Some link has dropped out of the mysterious chain which connects the thought formed in the brain with its articulate expression in speech.

Sometimes the tendency of the aphasic patient is to substitute for the correct words others resembling them either in sense or sound. 'Give me my little *chapel*,' said an aphasic patient once, when demanding his prayer-book. 'Are those the pipes for laying on the *light*?' was the mode of another's inquiry about the gas. 'My friend has become a Plymouth Brother' was what an aphasic once intended to say. What he *did* say was: 'My friend has become a Yarmouth Bloater!' In the two former cases the analogy in sense, in the last, the similarity in sound, explains the curious confusion.

An aphasic patient is sometimes in the position of a talking parrot, and possesses some half-dozen phrases which he employs inaccurately, and perhaps indifferently. To every question he may answer: 'Good-morning,' 'Quite ready,' 'Can't afford it,' 'List complete'—just as the parrot says 'Pretty Poll.' Sometimes he is limited to a few monosyllables, such as 'Yes,' 'No,' 'Nurse,' yet repeats the alphabet quite correctly, and may even say the Lord's Prayer without a slip. The explanation of this curious anomaly is that these last have become from long usage perfectly automatic, and are therefore readily repeated without conscious effort. Somewhat parallel to this is the case of the German long resident in England, who, on recovering from a brain attack, was found to have entirely lost his knowledge of English, while he retained unimpaired his command of his mother-tongue. The explanation is that we speak our native language quite automatically, but a foreign language with more or less conscious purpose and effort. The more automatic speech has become, the more is it likely to be left untouched in aphasia; while words or sentences demanding thought and deliberation suffer most. A patient who seems perfectly speechless will sometimes pronounce his name readily and audibly, if asked to do so in a peremptory tone of command. The nervous current flows readily along the well-worn channel, but fails to make its way by less familiar tracks.

In harmony with the principle already laid down, that, in Aphasia, automatic expressions escape the paralysis which overtakes voluntary and deliberate speech, we often find that patients who are unable to answer the simplest question retain unimpaired the power of swearing. The explanation is, that oaths are mere exclamations or interjections, uttered automatically and conveying no definite idea. The man who pronounces anathemas upon his tight boots or his tough beefsteak may be using conscious intelligent speech just as little as the snarling dog or the hissing snake. The *Donner und Blitzen* of the German is no more an intelligible appeal to atmospheric forces than the 'By Jove!' of the Englishman implies any conscious acknowledgment of Jupiter. The aphasic, therefore, retains the power of swearing because his oath is automatic, and not originated by any conscious idea. If he said to

himself, 'I will shock the doctor by profanity,' and tried to swear, he would be utterly unable to do so; yet a moment afterwards, under the influence of some sudden emotion, he might pour forth a profusion of oaths. Very strangely, yet in strict accordance with principles already enunciated, if the patient be asked to repeat one of the oaths which he has just uttered, he fails to do so. He cannot do voluntarily what he has just done automatically. This is the leading feature and the great mystery of Aphasia.

Sometimes an aphasic who has not spoken an articulate word for weeks will cry out quite intelligibly, under the influence of fear or surprise, just as an hysterical paralytic who had not moved a limb for many a day has been known to leap out of bed on hearing a cry of 'Fire!'

Occasionally, a patient who has lost all power of voluntary conversation can nevertheless read fluently and correctly from printed matter. The case is on record of an aphasic who kept a slate on which he wrote down all the common words and phrases which he was likely to need. When addressed, he referred to his slate, and if the vocabulary necessary for giving a correct answer was found written there, he replied readily and correctly, but was totally incapable of employing a single word which was not included upon his list. Here the explanation seems to be that the sense of sight helped the nervous impulses which were too weak to originate speech without this extraneous aid. A parallel to this curious condition is afforded by some patients who, on being asked to put out their tongue, are unable to do so, although their efforts show that they understand perfectly what is wanted. But if the doctor now puts out his own tongue, and repeats his command, they obey with perfect ease and readiness. Thus, the language of gesture gives the stimulus which articulate speech has lost the power of affording.

More frequently, the power of reading is more or less impaired *pari passu* with the power of speech. The patient pores over his book or paper with great apparent interest, but if questioned, he often exhibits an imperfect knowledge of its contents. Sometimes he picks out a word here and there, which he pronounces correctly and evidently understands; but he does not seem to grasp the drift of the whole passage. Very curiously, a patient may understand perfectly what is read to him, but stumble and blunder when he himself attempts to read. Here is a sort of reversion to the childish condition before the power of reading has been acquired.

Writing is usually more or less interfered with in the aphasic patient, and generally the degree of interference bears some proportion to the damage to speech. The aphasic may have lost entirely the power of writing, and make nothing but unmeaning strokes. He may form letters correctly, but be unable to group them into words. He may write down correctly his name and his residence; but there his capacity may end. He may write short monosyllables, but fail in attempting longer words. He may write single words correctly, but be unable to group them into sentences. Lastly, he may copy long passages from print with perfect correctness, and yet be totally unable to write a single word if the printed matter be withdrawn. A patient in this last condition may spell and pronounce correctly, yet be incapable of

writing a single letter unless written or printed matter be placed before him, when he copies with ease and accuracy.

Enough has been said to show the variety of symptoms present in aphasia and their truly marvellous character. The human body, like a complex and delicate instrument out of tune, may give rise to strange phenomena under the disturbing influence of disease, but none stranger or more impressive than those under consideration. These phenomena admit of a more or less probable theoretical explanation, based on our knowledge of the functions of that most complex and wonderful organ, the human brain; but this explanation requires for its thorough elucidation a familiarity with physiology which the general reader cannot be expected to possess.

Aphasic patients frequently present evidence of mental weakness, but they are rarely, if ever, actually insane or idiotic. Often their emotional nature seems deprived of its usual controlling force, and they laugh or cry with more than infantine readiness. The emotional sobriety of adult life seems to be lost in the return of the simplicity of childhood or the advent of premature senility. Sometimes the sufferer seems distressed by his futile efforts at speech, which he abandons with looks of disgust and despair. At other times he seems amused at his own non-success, and joins in the laugh which his ludicrous attempts draw irresistibly from the bystanders. The sense of his failure always strikes him forcibly, whether on its vexatious or its comical side. He seems anxious to give us the impression that he knows perfectly what he wants to say, and could say it, if some incomprehensible obstacle did not cruelly bar the way. The words are present in the brain, and the machinery of speech stands ready to evolve them, but somehow the usually ready wheels refuse to move.

Such cases frequently recover, sometimes completely, sometimes with the persistence of a little hesitancy or thickness of utterance. Others recover their intellectual faculties, but with this fatal *lacuna*—the memory of words is blotted out. Intellect is there, the organs of articulation are unimpaired, but the patient has forgotten his own language, and is reduced to the condition of the baby with its two or three imitative monosyllables. In some of these cases it has been found possible to teach the use of language again, and the man of forty or fifty goes back to his elementary spelling-book and laboriously re-acquires the language which he learnt at his mother's knee. It may be doubted if the field of human experience affords any more curious or more touching spectacle than this.

A FAMILY SECRET.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.—A STRANGE STORY.

DR AYNLEY had settled down in Yarmouth to cultivate a small practice he had bought into a large one, as he hoped; but it did not yet tax his strength overmuch. It was therefore little of a sacrifice for him to determine that the first visit of the day should be to the mill, although he would have been glad if it had involved some sacrifice.

On going down to breakfast, his pale worried look was instantly observed by his sister, who kept house for him. 'Good gracious, John!' she exclaimed, 'you look ill. What is the matter?'

'I am all right, Jane; but I have rather a peculiar case on hand.'

'A new one!' was the sister's response, delighted to think that he was making progress, but without the slightest consciousness of an uncharitable wish that people should get ill for the purpose.

'Yes; but we won't talk about it at present. —Another cup of tea, please, and I'm off.—By the way, what was the name of the man Dr Fairfax's daughter married?'

'What!—don't you know? He is Mr Chisholm, son of the Honourable Mrs Chisholm of Broadmarsh, who is, I am told, the most pompous old tyrant that ever was known. She rarely comes into Yarmouth, for she prefers to do all her shopping in Norwich, when she doesn't go to London. I have seen her often—a stout, frowsy-looking creature, with a puffy red face. She would be called horridly vulgar, if it were not for her carriage and flunkies.'

'You are certainly not complimentary to the lady,' said the brother, smiling at Jane's frank criticism of the head of one of 'the County Families.' Jane had a habit of speaking frankly as impulse dictated.

'I disliked her at first sight, when she was pointed out to me. I positively hated her when we were told that she made no end of a fuss about the marriage of her son to the daughter of a common provincial apothecary—that is what she called Dr Fairfax!'

'She must have a poor appreciation of our profession,' said Aynsley, amused by his sister's indignation, and thinking of Mina's possible trials with such a mother-in-law.

'She is an awful woman, I believe. They say that she badgered her husband into his grave long before his time, but after having induced him to leave all his fortune under her control. Maybe she will do the same for Mina. I have only seen her two or three times since the wedding, as she sat beside Mrs Chisholm in the carriage. She did not look happy, poor thing.'

He could stand no more. 'There, there, Jane —you have given me enough gossip and scandal for one meal. I cannot tell you when to expect me back, for everything will depend on what it may be necessary to do in this special case.'

He could not afford to keep a carriage of his own yet; but he had an arrangement with a livery-stable keeper by which he could obtain any kind of vehicle on reduced terms when required. A smart trap was now waiting for him at the door, and he was driven rapidly away in the direction of the mill. He was glad now that he had never before made inquiries about Mina and her position; for if even half of what Jane had told him and suggested were true, he would have been maddened and distracted out of all capacity for work by thinking of the torture the woman who was so precious in his eyes must be enduring. The experience of the previous night gave him good reason to believe that there was much more truth in what he had heard than there is usually in current gossip. She must have endured tor-

ment far beyond anything that scandal-loving minds could have invented before she could have been driven to attempt suicide.

Alighting at the door of the mill cottage, bustling Nan was out to meet him before his foot touched the ground. He saw at once by the smile on her good-natured face that she had no bad news for him. 'She have slept beautiful, sir, an' have just taken a cup o' tea; but she won't eat an' she won't speak,' was the report.

Joe was busy in the mill, and only for a moment appeared at the top of the long flight of white steps which led to the first floor, to shout 'Good-mornin', sir.'

The doctor found his patient quiet as he had been led to expect; but when he saw the large dark eyes still unnaturally bright and staring at the ceiling—felt how hot and dry the hand was, how quick yet feeble the pulse—he knew that she was by no means out of danger. To his professional inquiries she responded in monosyllables and in a weary lethargic manner. She seemed to have no interest in her own condition, and this absolute indifference was to him the worst sign of all.

Then came the really difficult part of his duty. He could not allow her to remain there without communicating if possible with her husband, now that he knew where to seek for him. And yet he did not like to do this without first informing Mina of his intention. He stood looking at her in sad silence for a few moments, uncertain how to begin; for he feared what might be the effect of telling her that he was about to make known her condition and whereabouts to the people from whom she had fled, and to escape whom she had even meditated self-destruction. At length he determined on his line of action.

'You do not recognise me, Mrs Chisholm,' he said softly.

She started at the sound of her name, gave him a quick scared glance, and shrank back in the bed. 'How do you know my name?' she asked huskily.

'I was a friend of your father's, and, years ago, a friend of yours too,' he answered; and being endowed with one of the most valuable gifts which those who attend the sick can possess—a pleasing voice—the sound and the words reassured her.

'My poor father! I am glad he has not lived to see this day,' she murmured and almost sobbed. Aynsley hoped that tears would come to her relief. They did not come yet, and she continued coldly: 'No; I do not recollect you.'

'I was with your father as his assistant for some time. My name is Aynsley.'

'John Aynsley?—I remember now. My father was very fond of you. But I thought you were drowned at sea three or four years ago.'

'Ah, then, you have never spoken to any of my sisters about me, or you would have learned that although shipwrecked in the *Hesperides*, I escaped with others.'

'I am glad of that,' she said simply.

'And I am glad too; and one of the reasons for being glad is that I am here to be of service, as I hope, to the daughter of the friend who was my guide and helper at a troublesome crisis in my

life. . . . Now, Mrs Chisholm, you know who I am, and you know you can trust me. I ask you for your own sake, and as your father's friend, to explain to me as far as you can the circumstances which have brought you into this position.'

He spoke earnestly, and Mina felt that she could give him her whole confidence. But she shuddered to think of what had passed, and was silent. She could not tell even her father's friend that the husband who should have protected her had, for his own selfish enjoyments, left her at the mercy of the woman who hated her and wished her dead—his mother.

'Will you not trust me, so that it may be in my power to help you?' Aynsley pleaded.

She still hesitated, although she was beginning to feel how precious was the sympathy of a true friend, and she realised that John Aynsley was one. Lying silent under his gaze, she recalled the days when he had been constantly in the house, and recalled, too, the often repeated regrets of her father that he had gone away.

'I can do nothing unless you tell me how this has come about, and I want to help you back to health and happiness,' Aynsley urged again.

She put out her hand and touched his gratefully. This was the first sign of emotion she had betrayed, and it gave him much satisfaction.

'I can tell you nothing more than this,' she began falteringly. 'Mr Chisholm's mother never liked me. He concealed from me and from my father how much she was opposed to our marriage. She was not at our wedding, but he told us that she was too ill to leave her room. When I went to Broadmarsh, I did not see her for several days. She was still in her room. When we did meet, she treated me as a stranger. Her cruelty began from that moment.'

'But did Mr Chisholm endeavour to bring about an understanding between you?'

'He did not comprehend or know what was going on,' she answered, still trying to shield the husband. 'He was much occupied in hunting, shooting, and—and with his friends, so that he was very little at home, and could not see or guess the petty tortures to which I was subjected.'

'Why did you not take your proper place as mistress of the household?' ejaculated Aynsley, his blood quickening with indignation.

She looked helplessly at him. 'You do not know the—the woman,' she said with a spasm of pain.

'I shall soon,' muttered he to himself.

'For a whole year her system of torture went on; but after my boy was born, she became worse—a thousand times worse—and I knew that she was trying to drive me mad—trying to drive me to death, and that she wished me dead.'

'Why did you not speak to your husband?' Aynsley repeated.

'He would, not listen to me. At the first sound of a complaint about his mother, he would leave the room—leave the house, and would not return perhaps for a week; and thus I was still more at her mercy than when he was in the house. So I held my tongue and suffered. My boy'—

At last tears came to relieve her parched eyes,

and she covered them with her hand. The doctor turned to the window and waited patiently till she should be able to resume. This was another good sign of the improvement which rest and the sense of security from her tormentor were effecting.

'He was strong, and oh!—so bright,' she went on by-and-by. 'I thought that I could endure anything, now that this treasure was given to me. I no longer heeded the frequent absence of my husband, for I was callous to anything Mrs Chisholm said or did. He throve, and day by day grew stronger. The housemaid told me that he was able to walk much sooner than children usually do. It was the housemaid who told me this, for the nurse had nothing but complaints to make about him, and I did not like her. I was proud, and, for the first time since I had entered that house, happy. But suddenly he sickened and—died.' She could not go on, and again there was silence in the little room.

'What was his illness?' inquired the doctor after an interval.

'I do not know. She said I killed him by over-indulgence, and my husband was away—not expected home for a month or more. The horror of the accusation made me think that death was my only friend. . . . Since then, all is confusion in my mind until I awakened here this morning.' She was exhausted, but evidently relieved by having told her sorrow to a sympathetic listener—one who had been her father's friend.

Aynsley had decided what he was to do: go to Broadmarsh, ascertain where Chisholm was to be found, and telegraph to him to return immediately. Then he would tell him that he must provide some fitting place for his wife, where, during her illness, she would be free from the terrorism his mother appeared to exercise over her—an influence which in her present condition would certainly prove fatal. An ugly task this—to tell a husband his duty; but he did not flinch from it.

He was, however, a little perplexed as to whether or not he should make his intention known to the wife. He concluded that it would be best not to tell her, lest, in her fear of the consequences, she might attempt to leave the cottage.

'I am going to take a great liberty, Mrs Chisholm,' he said quietly; 'I am going to act for you as nearly as may be in the way I think your father would have acted. I cannot do harm, and I may do good. Have I your permission?'

A grateful look was his answer.

'Then you will keep in bed; and Mrs Suffling will let you have everything you require. I will return in the afternoon to see what progress you are making.'

It was a decidedly bold step he was about to take—a step which under ordinary circumstances would have been inexcusable. But the circumstances were far from ordinary, and although he was no relative of the lady whose cause he espoused so warmly, her father had been his friend; whilst, as a medical man, he was bound to inform those who were her lawful guardians of the dangerous condition in which she lay,

and justified in calling on them to do their duty.

He told his man to drive to Broadmarsh, a distance of about four miles. On the way, his mind was busy going over and over again the details of the story of misery he had heard. He could understand such a woman as the Hon. Mrs Chisholm had been described to him to be, having strong objections to her son marrying any one except the lady she might have pleased to select for him. But the thing being done, he could not understand why or how the objection should develop into a fixed animosity which set in motion all the petty instruments of torture that are always at the command of the domestic tyrant. The cold look, the frown, the snappish answer, the sneer, the snarling jibe, the nagging reproach—these are poor weapons separately; but used in combination and continuously, they are potent as barbed arrows, driving the gentler-natured man or woman to madness and suicide.

Next, it was most strange that the birth of a male heir to the estate, instead of being a source of joy to the grandmother and softening her treatment of the mother, should have, as it appeared, intensified her animosity. The child died, and so far from attempting to console the bereaved mother, or of mercifully remaining silent, she had charged her with being the cause of his death. What could it mean?

Reviewing all the circumstances as they had been presented to him, John Aynsley came to the conclusion that either the Hon. Mrs Chisholm must be crazy, or must have some strong motive for desiring that there should not be an heir to the estate. Yet this seemed such an improbable idea, that he was more inclined to the alternative that there was some mental twist in the mother-in-law which would account for her extraordinary conduct.

Broadmarsh stood on a piece of slightly rising ground, which might almost be dignified with the title of an eminence, in view of the miles of perfectly flat land surrounding it. Along the edges of marsh-meadows there were, at varying intervals of fifty yards or so, stunted trees, all bending towards the west or south-west, as if running away with hair on end as fast as they could from the biting east and north-east winds. Skeleton windmills, used for pumping water in the process of drainage, rose like melancholy scarecrows dotted over the landscape. Bleak as they look when the sun is not shining, these meadows are rich in pasture, and produce much prime beef. The grounds of Broadmarsh House presented a pleasing contrast to the bare flat lands. They were dense with the foliage of trees and shrubbery, the result of cultivation during generations of the proprietors. The house was well sheltered from every wind that blew, and was scarcely visible from the main road.

As Aynsley was driven up the winding avenue, he observed that the blinds were drawn down, although the sun was not particularly strong. There was an uncomfortable silence about the place, as there is always when death is within doors. No sign of human or animal life manifested. When the trap stopped at the door, its arrival was not recognised by the appearance of any one. The bell was rung: it sounded hollow

and deep, as if the house were empty. A second summons, and after a few seconds the door was opened by an old man, who wore a white tie and a swallow-tail coat. This was the butler, Gedge.

'I wish to know if Mr Chisholm has returned yet, or if any message has been received from him?' said Aynsley, giving his card. 'My business is of the utmost importance and urgent.'

The man bowed in silence and retired. He did not ask the visitor to enter, but left the door open. He was absent long enough to make Aynsley feel somewhat impatient. He turned his back on the doorway and gazed at the well-kept lawn, the brilliant flower-beds, and the rich foliage of shrubbery and trees. The owners of such a home should have been happy. He was sure that Mina would have been so, if the malevolent influence of a foe on the hearth had not robbed her of all possibility of content.

Gedge returned so noiselessly that Aynsley was unaware of his approach until he spoke: 'Mr Chisholm has returned, sir; but he only arrived about an hour ago, and after a long journey he is too much fatigued to see any one. But the Honourable Mrs Chisholm will hear your business.'

'Did you give my message to Mr Chisholm himself?'

'All messages are first given to our mistress' (so, then, poor Mina was not even acknowledged as the mistress of her husband's house!), 'and she says Mr Chisholm is sleeping, and must not be disturbed on any account.—Come this way, please.'

Aynsley followed as requested, and hoped to find in the forthcoming interview some clue to the meaning of the curious events in which he had become so unexpectedly involved.

The room into which he was ushered was long, low, and narrow, with four windows overlooking the lawn. The closed blinds imparted a sombre aspect to the deep brown hangings and massive furniture of more than a century ago, and made a sort of twilight in the place, although it was not yet noon.

It was a few moments before his eyes became sufficiently accustomed to the subdued light to enable him to perceive a lady standing in front of a large armchair at a little distance from him. She was short and stout, as his sister had described her, but what her complexion and expression might be, he could not distinguish. He bowed; and with a slight inclination of the head, she spoke in a cold but not unpleasant voice: 'What has procured me the honour of your visit, sir?'

'Pardon me, madam,' he answered brusquely, for, prejudiced as he was already against her, his prejudice was increased by the manner of his reception, and he did not mean to stand on ceremony; 'I did not come to see you, but Mr Chisholm.'

'Any business you may have with my son can be equally well transacted with me. You say the matter is of importance?'

'Of the utmost importance.'

'Be seated.' She pointed to a chair, but he remained standing.

'Is it quite impossible for Mr Chisholm to speak to me even for a few minutes?'

'Quite impossible,' she answered implacably.

'He is greatly fatigued, and very much disturbed in mind by a domestic calamity which has befallen us. Your card shows me that you are a medical man, and you will therefore understand from my explanation why a stranger cannot be admitted to him at present.'

'It is in reference to this calamity that I have called, and I believe the interview would be beneficial to him.'

He observed that the Hon. Mrs Chisholm started slightly when he mentioned the object of his visit; but her voice was steady and cold as before. 'Do you mean that you have come here as a messenger from that shameful woman who has dishonoured her husband and his family?'

'Madam,' he said sternly, 'I was a friend of Mrs Chisholm's father: I knew her when she was a mere girl, and I know that she is incapable of any act that could be called dishonourable.'

'Oh, a friend of the Norwich apothecary!' she exclaimed with a short cough, expressive of contempt. 'Pray, are you a relative?'

In his impetuosity he fortunately overlooked the question. 'Dr Fairfax was a medical man of high repute in our county, and of that you must be perfectly aware. However, I did not come to talk of him, but of his daughter. Since you persist in refusing to allow me to speak to Mr Chisholm, I must tell you my errand. I do not come as a messenger, but of my own motive as a friend, to say that the lady is lying in a very precarious condition in a cottage where she found shelter late last night after having been frightened out of her own house.'

'Her house!'

'I believe this house belongs to her husband.'

'You are mistaken, sir. This house belongs to me during my lifetime'—said with an evident effort to control rising passion and speaking with a courtesy which the listener felt was insincere. 'You are also mistaken in fancying that she was frightened from her home. She eloped from the house with a man who has long pretended to be my son's friend. Is not that dishonour to her husband and his family?'

The calmness with which this statement was made contrasted so strongly with her brief ebullition of temper that Aynsley was taken aback for a moment. He quickly recovered his presence of mind, however, and detected in this daring assertion the bitter nature of the woman's enmity, so desperate that it destroyed all regard for truth. She was evidently ready to say or do anything that might help to ruin poor Mina in the estimation of her husband and the world. He felt cold with horror. He had heard of fiends appearing in the shape of women, but had never expected to meet one. He believed that he had now done so; but the malignity evinced in every word and look suggested that there must be a reason for it that was unknown to Mina and, perhaps, to Mina's husband.

He must find out what that reason was, and therefore restrained the outburst of indignant remonstrance which rose to his lips. 'If that be so,' he said, seeming bewildered and hesitating what to say, 'I can understand your anger with the lady. But are you certain that this is the case? Are you sure that she eloped with your son's friend?'

The Hon. Mrs Chisholm fancied that she had

vanquished him, and became a little more gracious. 'I see, sir, that you are not perversely blind. Oh, she had a most winning way with her, and, I believe, could blind any man who was not on his guard against her.'

'I assuredly had no suspicion that the affair would take a turn of this kind. It is quite different from what her statement led me to believe.—May I ask what proof you have that she is guilty?'

'You are a stranger to me, and you are her friend. But the whole scandal will doubtless become public in a few days, and I have no hesitation in at once showing you the character of the woman in whom you appear to take so much interest.' She went to a massive desk standing on a side-table and took from it an open letter. 'This,' she said, handing it to him, 'was found under the pillow in her bedroom yesterday morning after her shameful flight was discovered.—Read it.'

The contents were brief: '*My Darling—meet me at the usual place at the hour agreed upon, and we will be happy.—Your loving* HARRY.'

Despite his conviction that the whole thing was a piece of clever deception, Aynsley was perplexed by this note, said to have been found in Mina's bedroom. There was no date, no superscription, for the paper had been enclosed in an envelope which was not forthcoming. The words of the missive clearly implied a previous understanding between the correspondents.

'Pardon me two more questions. Who found this paper, and who is Harry?'

'The note was found by the nurse under the pillow when she went to make the bed: apparently it had been forgotten in the hurry of preparation for the elopement. The person who signs himself Harry is Mr Henry Blaxland of Ormesby Park.—Are you satisfied?'

'I am still puzzled. She did not elope with Mr Blaxland, or she could not have been found as she was late last night only a few miles from her home.'

'She no doubt missed the morning train by which I have ascertained Mr Blaxland started for London; and as she had forgotten her purse, she could not follow. He is of course waiting at Liverpool Street Station, in expectation of her arrival by every train. She has had her wickedness impressed upon her by that severest of all monitors, empty pockets, and so has repented. But she has taken her course. She is as guilty in my eyes as if she had gone with the man, and she shall never enter my house again.'

'I do not think she wishes to do so; but you are bound to see her provided for.'

'I shall do nothing.'

'Then her husband must.'

'He shall do nothing either, if I can prevent him.'

The vindictiveness of the woman was invincible to any arguments, and Aynsley was forced to play his trump card. His whole manner changed to one of stern rebuke. 'You compel me to the conviction,' he said, 'that it is not your belief in Mrs Chisholm's apparently meditated guilt which moves you to this inhuman conduct towards your son's wife, but your wish that she should be considered so.' He fancied that she started at this random shot, which, as he

discovered afterwards, was much nearer the mark than he could have imagined.

'Sir!' she exclaimed, bristling up with rage.

'There could have been no intention of elopement,' he went on calmly, 'or the poor lady would not be where she is, or in her present condition. Look at that note again. Whoever it was intended for is asked to meet the writer at the usual place. The railway station would scarcely be the usual place for clandestine meetings between your son's wife and his false friend.'

'On the contrary, I should say a most convenient place of rendezvous for them.' This opinion was confirmed with a jarring little laugh.

'I see that it is useless to attempt to alter your decision, which is based on your wish, and not on any common-sense view of the case. You must, however, be aware that if Mr Chisholm does not do his duty, the law can compel him to do it. If he believes himself wronged, he has his remedy.'

'And the disgrace of having to seek it,' she commented bitterly.

'That is for him to decide, when he learns the whole of the circumstances which have led to his wife's departure from this house. If you still refuse to spare Mrs Chisholm the humiliation of being indebted to strangers for the succour which she ought to have from her husband, I go straight from here to report to the chief-constable at Yarmouth all that has happened.'

'Where is she?' was the sullen inquiry.

'That information I reserve for Mr Chisholm or the police. I would have liked to spare her the scandal which will arise; but I am confident that she will win pity from every one; whilst the shame will fall upon you and your son for the cruelty of which she has been the victim.'

'Sir!—you are insolent.'

'Madam, good-morning.' He bowed low and quitted the house, thus depriving her of the satisfaction of ordering him out.

SOME OLD TAXES.

THE British taxpayer of the present generation is apt to indulge in a good deal of 'sweet self-pity' when he casts his mind's eye over the subscriptions he is called upon to make to the national exchequer. It may be interesting to some, therefore, to take a glance at the good old times, and learn what cause the taxpayer who lived at the end of the last century had for his complaints. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the time referred to was the stirring epoch of the naval war between Great Britain and France, when the resources of the country were strained to their utmost to meet the cost of our huge navy, and to carry out the numerous defensive precautions on our coasts against Bonaparte's threatened invasion. Every session of parliament saw the increase of old taxes or the imposition of new ones, some of which latter suggest that the government must have been at its wits' end to imagine what next to raise money upon.

The additions made to the statute book when George III. was king comprise amongst others,

'An Act for granting to His Majesty certain duties on licenses to be taken out by persons vending hats by retail, and also certain duties on hats sold under such licenses, and for laying additional duties on all hats and caps imported into this kingdom' (1796). With becoming solemnity, His Majesty's faithful Commons proceed to define how the impost upon his subjects' headgear was to be levied. All persons 'uttering or vending' hats by retail who resided 'within the cities of London and Westminster, or within the distance of the bills of mortality, or within the borough of Southwark, in the county of Surrey,' were to pay for the license a sum of forty shillings. Provincial retailers, who were evidently not regarded as a very flourishing class, might procure a license to utter hats for five shillings only. Every dealer thus licensed was to have the words 'Dealer in Hats by Retail' over the door of his shop, on pain of a fine of forty shillings for each hat sold; and to prevent mistakes, the Act declares that 'any dealer selling less than a dozen of hats to any one person at one time shall be deemed a retailer of hats.' The penalty for trading in these articles without a license was to be fifty pounds.

With graphic exactness of detail, the Act goes on to explain how 'paper tickets stamped with the several duties hereby imposed' might be obtained from the Commissioners of Stamps, and how they were to be 'pasted or affixed by the utterer in the lining or inside the crown of such hats,' under a penalty of ten pounds for each omission. All headgear, whether made of 'felt or wool or beaver or any leather or japanned hats,' were subject to the following scale of duty: For a hat whose value did not exceed 4s., duty 3d.; 7s., duty 6d.; 12s., duty 1s.; and for all hats whose value exceeded 12s., duty 2s. The latter was further required to make a 'separate and distinct charge for stamps' in his bill when submitting that document to his customer for payment. And if hatters of that date had anything in common with those of the present, we may be sure that this section of the Act was universally and carefully observed. It is hardly astonishing to find that such a tax as this was frequently evaded; and from the police reports in the newspapers it seems to have been not uncommon for the defendant in a case to turn the tables on the prosecutor by laying information against him for wearing an unstamped hat. The *Edinburgh Advertiser* of the 30th January 1798 records the following instance of this, which, as the editor remarks, is 'somewhat singular in its details.' The Rev. Charles Scott, chaplain of Portsmouth Dockyard, had prosecuted a working-man for carrying a gun through a coppice near his country-house at Furbrook, and had had him fined five pounds in conformity with the game laws. Mr Scott took off his hat in court, and injudiciously laid it on a chair within his victim's reach. He, smarting under the loss of his five pounds, examined the hat and found that its lining did not bear the prescribed stamp. He promptly laid an information, and receiving half the fine Mr Scott was ordered to pay, had thus the pleasure of reducing his own penalty out of his prosecutor's pocket. 'The court was uncommonly crowded,' adds the reporter, 'and no decision ever gave

greater satisfaction.' It is doubtful if Mr Scott shared in this feeling.

On another occasion a young farmer was summoned before a magistrate and fined for shooting a hare beyond the limits of his own estate, the two men who informed upon him being duly rewarded. The sagacious farmer, whilst in court, took advantage of an opportunity to examine the informers' hats; he found the stamps wanting, so told upon the owners, who were at once mulcted in sums amounting to nearly double that which they had received for bringing him up.

It is not stated that any special facilities were provided by thoughtful officials to enable contending parties in court to examine each other's hats, but from the number of cases reported, it was evidently a favourite mode of seeking to retaliate.

Men's hats made of straw were apparently unknown in Scotland until about May 1798, when the following advertisement appears in an Edinburgh paper: '*New Straw Hats*.—By His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent. Archibald Gibson has just got to hand, in addition to his present variety of New Things, a few beautiful Straw Hats in an entirely New Stile, and quite different from anything yet seen in this country.' The material of which hats in the 'New Stile' were made exempted them from duty, for in June of the same year the Act was extended to 'all hats, caps, and bonnets made of leather or other materials.' Nightcaps, by the way, were specially mentioned in the Act as being free from the operation of this curious tax.

Finally, it may be added that under the terrible laws of the day, any one forging or counterfeiting hat stamps, and being lawfully convicted of the offence, would be adjudged a felon, and thereby suffer death without benefit of clergy. This was of course merely an extension of the existent Act for the protection of His Majesty's stamp revenues; but the legal punishment for defrauding those revenues of a sum which in this case might not exceed threepence is a startling consideration at the present time. The Act under which this tax was levied was repealed in 1811.

Another tax which would create some sensation were a ministry to hint at it to-day was that upon clocks and watches (1797). It was enacted that 'Every clock or timekeeper, by whatever name the same shall be called, which shall be used for the purpose of a clock, and placed in or upon any dwelling-house or any office or building thereunto belonging, or any other building public or private,' shall be charged an annual duty of five shillings. Church and hospital clocks were exempted from payment. In respect to watches, a gold timekeeper—or more properly its case—was to bear a yearly duty of ten shillings; whilst those of silver or any other metal were to pay two shillings and sixpence. It does not appear that this tax was often evaded; watches were not of course in very general use at the time, and those who owned them were of the better class. It was, moreover, levied through the vendors of watches, whose stocks were readily accessible for examination, and as the duty was directed to be paid quarterly, such examinations would be equally frequent. This Act remained in force for one year only; and in his speech advocating its repeal, Mr Pitt explained that it had been

found to bear hardly upon an 'industrious, useful, and valuable class of men' in a manner the ministry had not anticipated. He estimated the annual return from the duty at two hundred thousand pounds, and proposed that the loss to the revenue should be compensated by some other means.

Watches were procurable at a moderate price in 1798, as shown by a watchmaker's advertisement. Mr John White of Edinburgh announces to the public that in consequence of the repeal of the Act, he is enabled to offer his assortment of watches of every description at prices ranging from two guineas to one hundred; 'well worth the money, having been laid in since the duty was taken off the cases.'

The tax upon hair-powder, which was levied in 1795, remained in force in its original form until so recently as 1869, when it yielded the modest sum of one thousand pounds per annum, against the two hundred thousand pounds which it had sometimes returned in previous years. Every person using or wearing powder was compelled by this Act to take out an annual certificate permitting him to do so at a yearly cost of one guinea. Certain exemptions were made: Subalterns, non-commissioned officers and men of any branch of His Majesty's regular land forces. Commanders, and all officers of a lower rank in the navy, were allowed the use of powder free of duty. All officers above the ranks specified were particularly cautioned that they were liable to the tax. Dissenting preachers whose incomes did not amount to one hundred pounds a year were exempted; and, as in the case of many similar enactments, the royal family and their immediate servants were specially absolved, as a mark of respect. The legislature had some regard for the paterfamilias whose quiver was full, for provision was made whereby a parent with more than two unmarried daughters could procure a double certificate, costing two guineas, which enabled all the young ladies of the family to indulge in the use of powder. The penalty for omitting to take out a certificate was twenty pounds; and the newspapers bear witness to the frequency of prosecutions for attempts to evade the duty, wherein the defendants were convicted on the evidence of informers and duly fined.

The income tax of the present time fades into insignificance when compared with that of 1798. The following are a few extracts from the graduated scale of rates. Only incomes under £60 a year were exempt. Exceeding £60 and below £65, one-hundred-and-twentieth part of the whole. Exceeding £70 and below £75, one-seventieth part of the whole. Exceeding £95 and below £100, one-forty-fifth part of the whole. These are not startling in their exorbitance, but the amount goes on in increasing ratio, until possessors of £200 a year or more were called upon to contribute no less than *one-tenth* of their means.

Mr Gladstone's eightpence in the pound in 1885, and even the heavy Crimean tax of fourteenspence, appear moderate beside the war taxes of Mr Pitt's administration; but we seem to have inherited our dislike to this particular impost from our grandfathers, who had such excellent reason for theirs.

A people labouring under such taxes might

perhaps consider themselves justified in regarding their compulsory support to the state sufficient to absolve them from further burdens. To such a pitch of enthusiasm and excitement, however, did popular feeling rise, under the repeated brilliant exploits of our vessels and the rumours of Bonaparte's intended invasion, that voluntary subscription lists for the defence of the empire were supported with a generosity which is the best evidence of the prevalent feeling. His Majesty King George subscribed £20,000, or one-third of the sum annually voted to the privy purse. Many noblemen gave yearly sums, to be continued for so long as the war should last. Prominent amongst these were the names of Lord Fitzwilliam for £10,000, and of Earl Carrington for £7000 a year. Every class was freely represented in the lists which appeared regularly in the papers. Regiments gave a whole week's pay; the working-men of collieries and manufactories vied with each other as to whose joint collections should be the largest. School-boys subscribed to send through their masters a mite for the national cause. The local branch funds were swelled by the half-crowns and shillings of domestic servants and farm labourers, whose knowledge of the object of their donations must have been of the very vaguest. In Scotland, money poured in with a freedom that in less than twelve months placed the enormous sum of £1,618,000 in the hands of government.

The old forgotten taxes referred to in this paper were of course small items in the grand total of our forefathers' burdens, and only deserve notice by reason of the nature of the articles upon which they were laid.

THE STORY OF A MILLIONAIRE'S GRAVE.

IN a former number of this *Journal* (June 17, 1876) was briefly told the story of the life and death of Alexander Turney Stewart, who, starting without special business training and with the modest capital of one thousand pounds, left behind him, at his death in April 1876, a fortune of six millions sterling—a fortune gained not by fraud or by speculation in the gambling sense, but by untiring industry, strict honesty, and an unwavering adherence to the grand principle of ready money, which Stewart was among the first to appreciate at its true value.

With most men, even millionaires, death closes the story. In Stewart's case it was not so; the most romantic chapter of his eventful history was yet to be told.

His place of burial was the graveyard of old St Mark's Church, situated between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, Second Avenue, New York; an unassuming place of sepulture, owing nothing to sculptured effigies or marble monuments, but noteworthy as the resting-place of Governor Peter Stuyvesant and other historic worthies. Here, beneath a plain marble slab, bearing the words 'No. 112. ALEX. T. STEWART, Family Vault,' was the burying-place of the Stewart family. It was already occupied by the bodies of Mr Stewart's

only two children, who had died in infancy, and of one or two relatives of Mrs Stewart. The vault was underground, with nearly three feet of earth above it. It was approached by a flight of steps, closed at the top by three stone slabs. These were covered with earth and the surface turfed over, so that nothing was ordinarily visible of the tomb save the marble slab already mentioned. Mr Stewart's body was enclosed in three coffins: an inner shell of oak, covered with rich black Lyons velvet; an intermediate covering of lead; and an outer coffin of red cedar. Attached to the lid of the innermost coffin was a massive silver plate, bearing an inscription as under:

ALEXANDER T. STEWART.

Born Oct. 12, 1803.

Died Apr. 10, 1876.

The last rites having been completed, the entrance to the vault was closed, the ground above was turfed over, and the marble slab replaced. And here the remains of the dead millionaire rested undisturbed for two years and a half. It was not, however, intended that this should be their final home. One of the latest of Mr Stewart's enterprises had been the development of a tract of land which he had purchased on Long Island, and which he proposed to transform into a model city, a town of bijou residences for the business men of New York. It was of considerable extent, being nearly ten miles in length and a mile in breadth. The whole site was in the first place laid out in streets and avenues, with pavements, sewers, and watercourses, all of the latest and most approved construction. Gas and water were laid on, and a railroad laid down for communication with New York. The ground having been thus prepared, Mr Stewart began to erect villa residences, each with an ample garden attached, and the work had made considerable progress at the time of his death. In this new township, known as Garden City, Mrs Stewart determined to erect a Cathedral to perpetuate her late husband's memory. The corner-stone was laid in June 1877, and the work was pushed rapidly on to completion. A special feature of the building was a splendid crypt, in shape a sixteen-sided polygon, twenty-two feet in diameter, and twenty feet in height. At the angles stood pillars of variegated marble with elaborately carved capitals, from which sprang the ribs of the groined roof, meeting in the centre. The space between the pillars was of white statuary marble, richly panelled and sculptured, the ceiling and tessellated floor being of the same material. This was intended to be Mr Stewart's final resting-place, and the remainder of the building was on a scale of equal magnificence. It was doubtless the knowledge of the erection of the Cathedral, and purpose for which it was intended, that prompted the daring deed we are about to chronicle. If Mrs Stewart had expended, as was currently reported, a million dollars to provide a mausoleum for her late husband's body, it was a not unreasonable inference that any one who could gain possession of the body itself might command a royal ransom for its restoration.

In the month of September 1878, the sexton of St Mark's Church received an anonymous

letter, warning him that an attempt was about to be made to steal Mr Stewart's remains. No great importance appears to have been attached to this communication; but on the morning of the 9th of October it was discovered that the stone over the grave had been disturbed during the night. It had evidently been shifted from its position and put back again; but the vault did not appear to have been opened or the grave otherwise disturbed. The discovery was communicated to Judge Hilton, Mr Stewart's executor, who caused new locks to be placed on the gates of the graveyard; and in order to mislead any future marauders, caused the gravestone to be shifted away from its proper position to a vacant spot some ten feet distant, carefully turfing over the place it had occupied. As a further precaution, the night watchman of some stables close by was instructed to visit the graveyard from hour to hour and to arrest any one who might attempt to gain an entrance.

Nearly four weeks elapsed. No further attempt had been made, and Judge Hilton, satisfied that the danger, if any, was past, dispensed with the services of the watchman. Three days later, the assistant sexton, Francis Parker, on entering the churchyard in the morning noticed a heap of fresh clay by the side of the grave, and going nearer, found that the vault had been broken into. He ran post-haste to fetch his chief, Mr Hamill, who resided close by; and the two, descending into the vault, found that the three coffins had been broken open and the body of Mr Stewart removed. The silver coffin-plate had been torn off; and a piece of velvet, in the form of an irregular triangle, had been cut from the covering of the inner coffin, and taken away. The removal of the gravestone did not seem to have caused any difficulty, for no other portion of the ground had been disturbed. It was inferred, from certain marks upon some of the posts surrounding the graveyard, that the thieves had drawn lines from point to point, the intersection of such lines indicating the precise spot under which the vault lay. The fact of their possessing such exact knowledge seemed so remarkable that suspicion not unnaturally fell upon the sextons, as being presumably the only persons who could have supplied the information. They were, however, both men of exemplary character, and were able to satisfy those concerned that they had no hand in the matter.

Judge Hilton lost no time in taking action. He at once placed the matter in the hands of the police, and the next morning a notice was issued as follows:

25,000 DOLLARS REWARD.—Whereas in the early morning of Nov. 7, 1878, the vault of the late Alexander T. Stewart, in St Mark's Churchyard, in this city, was broken into and his remains removed from thence: The above reward is offered, by direction of Mrs A. T. Stewart, and will be paid for the return of the body and information which will convict the parties who were engaged in the outrage. Or a liberal reward will be paid for information which will lead to either of these results.

HENRY HILTON.

This notice, however, produced no effect. Meanwhile, a theory was started by an expert in

criminal matters to the effect that the body had been in all probability removed at the date of the first disturbance of the grave, and that the second and greater disturbance was merely designed to call attention to its absence, and to provoke the offer of a reward for its restoration. He further maintained, basing his opinion on the height of the surrounding railings (nearly ten feet), and the fact that the gates had never been found unlocked, that the body was still in the graveyard, probably concealed in some other vault. The suggestion received due attention, and a careful search was made of the graveyard, many of the vaults being opened and examined, but without result.

The police being completely at fault, a new detective was brought on the scene in the shape of a bloodhound. Starting from the violated grave, the keen scent of the hound quickly traced the course of the robbers as far as one corner of the churchyard and a house abutting thereon. There were clear signs of some person with muddy feet having climbed up to the balcony of this house; and the theory of the police was, that the remains of the missing millionaire had been lifted over the railings at this point and on to the pavement below. Here, however, the trail was lost. It was thought by those in charge of the investigation that the two or three days which had elapsed since the outrage, and the many feet which had in the meantime passed along the street, sufficiently accounted for this. They may have been right; though it seems to us, surveying the case in cool blood from afar, that had we been the New York police, we should have wanted to know a good deal more about that corner house; and not the less so that the proprietress—said to be a highly respectable lady—repudiated the idea of her balcony having been made use of as suggested, and volunteered a statement—contradicted by the police—that street boys were in the habit of climbing there, and that the muddy footmarks probably arose from that cause. It is proverbially easy to be wise after the event, and it is possible that the experiment was actually tried, and that the dog was allowed a chance of regaining the trail from the level of that mud-besmeared balcony, but we find no record of it.

The police found in the graveyard a new dark-lantern, and a short-handled coal-shovel, which had apparently been used for digging up the earth. Their theory was, that the robbers had lain flat on the ground to do this, inasmuch as, there being no upright monuments which could afford the cover, any attempt to dig in the ordinary way must almost certainly have attracted attention. The vendor of the two articles above named was discovered, but he could give no information as to the buyer. There were found in addition, near the grave, a back number of the *New York Herald*, and an old stocking, on which muddy hands had been wiped. Up to two A.M. on the morning when the outrage was discovered there had been rain and sleet, and as the articles in question were dry, it seemed pretty clear that the crime must have been committed after that hour.

Here the police discoveries ended. The distress of Mrs Stewart, then in her seventy-sixth year, was very great, and she would willingly have offered a large reward for the mere recovery of

the body without any reference to the conviction of the offenders. This was doubtless the state of feeling which the robbers had calculated upon. But Judge Hilton took a different view. Sentiment, he held, must yield to principle in such a case. Simply to advertise a reward, 'No questions asked,' would be to offer a premium to similar outrages, and endanger the sanctity of every rich man's grave throughout the United States.

Mrs Stewart yielded. The offer of the reward remained in its original form; and the blackmailers began to perceive that if they were to make a profit of their crime, the first advance must come from themselves. Accordingly, in January of the following year, a certain General Patrick H. Jones, who, notwithstanding his high military title, was in fact a practising lawyer in New York, called at the headquarters of the police with a letter he had received from a gentleman signing himself Henry G. Romaine. The letter, which bore a Canadian postmark, stated that the remains of Mr Stewart would be delivered up on payment of the modest sum of two hundred thousand dollars, and enclosed a one hundred-dollar bill by way of retaining fee to General Jones, if he would undertake to act as go-between in the matter. As a proof that the writer was no mere impostor, but the true and original robber, the letter went on to give particulars, as follows:

'The remains were taken before twelve o'clock on the night of the 6th, and not at three o'clock on the morning of the 7th of November. They were not taken to any house near the graveyard' (Was this to divert attention from that 'eligible corner residence?'), 'but to me, near One Hundred and Sixtieth Street. They were then enclosed in a zinc-lined trunk and left on an early morning train. They went to Plattsburg, and from there to the Dominion. There they were buried. Except that the eyes have disappeared, the flesh is as firm and the features as natural as the day of the interment, and can therefore be instantly identified. The enclosed piece of paper is exactly the size of the piece of velvet taken from the coffin, while the small strip sent you will prove to be of the same piece as that on the coffin. If any additional proofs are required, the plate will be sent you upon inserting the following "personal" in the *New York Herald*: "Canada—Send P.—Counsel." If you decline to act, a friend will call for the retainer sent you. When you are satisfied that the relatives of Mrs Stewart will talk business, insert the following "personal" in the *New York Herald*: "Canada—Will do business.—Counsel." Then you will hear from me again.

HENRY G. ROMAINE.'

General Jones was too good a lawyer to 'decline to act.' He inserted the 'personal' calling for the coffin plate, which in due course came to hand, apparently from Boston, closely followed by a letter as under:

BOSTON, MASS., Jan. 31, 1879.

P. H. JONES, Counsel, New York City.

Immediately on arrival of *Herald* containing 'personal,' I decided to express the plate from this city, and thus avoid the discovery and publicity which would certainly follow the examination of the package by the Customs officials of the Dominion. Having satisfied the representatives

of Mrs Stewart of its genuineness, you will await further instructions, which will be forwarded after the insertion of the second 'personal': 'Canada—Will do business—Counsel.'

HENRY G. ROMAINE.

A second 'personal,' as indicated, was, by consent of Judge Hilton, inserted a few days later; and in due course came the further instructions to General Jones as to the terms on which alone the body would be restored. They ran as follows:

'1. The amount to be paid shall be 200,000 dollars. 2. The body will be delivered to yourself and Judge Hilton within twenty-five miles of the city of Montreal, and no other person shall be present. 3. The money to be placed in your hands or under your control until Judge Hilton is fully satisfied, when you will deliver it to my representative. 4. Both parties to maintain for ever an unbroken silence in regard to the transaction. These are the first, last, and only terms which will ever receive attention.

'Having communicated the contents of this letter to Judge Hilton, you will await his decision. You will inform me of that by a "personal" in the *Herald*: "Canada—Terms accepted." Until this appears, you will not hear from me again.'

Judge Hilton refused to agree to the terms proposed, but made an offer of 25,000 dollars. 'Henry G. Romaine' declined to accept it; and so matters stood for two years, after which the robbers made a fresh attempt at negotiation, this time with Mrs Stewart personally, without the intervention of Judge Hilton. General Jones still represented the blackmailers, who had by this time apparently become less confident of success, for they now only demanded the modest sum of 100,000 dollars, instead of 200,000 dollars, as at first. Mrs Stewart, worn out by grief and anxiety, and careless of cost so long as the object was effected, would have paid this exorbitant amount; but her representatives drove a better bargain for her, and the blackmailers at last agreed to return the body for 20,000 dollars, being a tithe of their original demand.

In making terms, however, they took good care to provide for their own safety. Everything was to be trusted to their 'honour.' The sum agreed upon was to be placed in charge of a single messenger, who was to leave New York City at ten P.M. in a one-horse buggy and drive along a lonely road—marked on a map which the robbers kindly furnished for his guidance—into an adjoining county. If he was accompanied or followed by detectives, his journey would be in vain; but if good faith was observed, he would be met at some point of the road indicated by a representative of the blackmailers, and from him receive instructions as to his further proceedings.

It was an unpleasant and might be a dangerous errand; but a young nephew of Mrs Stewart pluckily volunteered for the uncomfortable mission. He started as arranged, and drove on and on in the direction indicated by the map. At three A.M. a man wearing a mask rode up to him, gave him a sign which had been agreed upon, and directed him to turn off from the high-road at a particular point. He did so; and after travelling some distance further, found another vehicle, not

unlike his own, apparently in waiting for him. Two other masked men descended from it, bringing forward a heavy bag. Passwords were exchanged, and the needful proof of identity produced in the shape of the triangular piece of black velvet cut from the coffin lid, which the messenger compared, and found to tally with the paper pattern in his own possession.

The agreed ransom was handed over. The mortal remains of the deceased millionaire were lifted on to the buggy of Mrs Stewart's representative, and he started on his homeward journey. Twenty-four hours later, his gruesome burden was transferred at dead of night, and with a privacy in singular contrast to the pomp and circumstance of its first burial, to its permanent resting-place in the crypt of the Cathedral. The wandering bones found rest at last, never, it is hoped, to be again disturbed. Any such disturbance would indeed be hazardous, for the remains now lie in the silent guardianship of Science. If any modern ghoul should once more attempt to violate their resting-place, an electric current will flash an instant message to the tower above, and the bells will sound a tocsin such as shall rouse the heaviest sleeper from his slumbers, and call every man in Garden City to lay hands upon the rash invader.

EXTENDED APPLICATION OF REFUSE OIL FOR INDUSTRIAL HEATING PURPOSES.

Some time since (No. 107) we drew the attention of our readers to the Lucigen Light, which has been largely adopted at the Forth Bridge works, and pointed out the advantages for lighting purposes accruing from the employment of the crude oil distilled from the waste gases of the blast furnaces. A new adaptation of this method of dealing with crude oil has been recently introduced with such success as to merit the attention of all who are interested in industrial advancement.

The rivet-heating furnaces at the Forth Bridge to which we refer are similar in principle to the Lucigen, though differing in details of construction. The former is designed to yield the maximum heating efficiency of the oil; the latter, to utilise to the best advantage the illuminating properties possessed by it. When it is stated that some eight million rivets will be employed in the Forth Bridge, no surprise will be felt that every effort has been made to secure a mode of heating them at once economical and effective, and necessitating only the adoption of such apparatus and plant as are readily constructed, and easily transported from point to point, so as to follow the work.

The furnace designed to meet these requirements is as follows: A circular galvanised iron tank, having a capacity of about fifteen gallons, in which the oil is stored, this quantity being sufficient to heat the furnace four or five hours; and the furnace proper, which is rectangular in plan, rounded at one end, and built of thin iron plates lined with fireclay, and fitted with a chimney of requisite dimensions. The whole is mounted on stout legs. A slightly arched roof divides the furnace into an upper and a lower compartment, communicating with each other at one end. In the lower compartment the rivets to be heated

are placed, through small sliding doors; whilst through the upper compartment is drawn the air, the quantity being regulated by dampers, necessary for the combustion of the oil-jet, and which becomes heated in its passage over the roof of the lower chamber. The oil, drawn from the tank already indicated, is introduced into the circular end of the furnace in the form of a fine spray by means of a jet of air having a pressure of twenty pounds per square inch, the combination between air and oil being effected in a specially designed burner not unlike the well-known injector for feeding boilers. This spray, as in the case of the Lucigen, readily ignites, and yields an excellent flame for heating the rivets, more cleanly, economically, and speedily than that obtained in coal rivet-furnaces. So successful has this mode of heating been found, that it is now employed at the Forth Bridge works for heating angle bars, &c., in preference to smiths' forges.

The rapid extension of the Lucigen Light and the adaptation of oil to rivet-heating have, amongst other causes, resulted in a rise in the price of this article, formerly regarded as little else than a waste product. Notwithstanding this fact, however, considerable economy is derived from its employment in comparison with coal, in addition to the other advantages enumerated.

A LETTER.

AND so, my child, your heart is almost weary,
And life has nothing that is fair to you?
Because, you say, with exclamation dreary,
'There is so little that a girl can do!'

And yet, I think, that somewhere in your city
Many there are who need a helping hand;
Or, at the least, some word of love and pity,
That they will prize, and subtly understand.

Be not cast down because of earthly treasure:
Little you have in silver and in gold:
These, too, are good; but God hath greater pleasure
In the heart's riches, which are manifold.

Do what you can, and let the Lord's increasing
Make of it more until the harvest come;
And meanwhile, strive and labour without ceasing,
Hearing Christ's voice above the city's hum.

Never a day within the crowded city,
Never an hour from morning until eve,
But that His Voice is heard to plead for pity,
But that His Heart is known to plain and grieve.

Go, then. But if your heart is sad and broken,
And to be helpless is your heaven-sent fate,
Take comfort, and remember, 'tis well spoken
That they, too, serve who only stand and wait!

J. S. FLETCHER.

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POETRY AS A FACTOR IN EDUCATION.

PLATO thought that boys are the most untamable of wild beasts; and his opinion has had eminent supporters. Pope probably meant much the same thing when he said that schoolboys have no character. In view of this opinion, the story of Fénelon and the young Duke of Burgundy has a peculiar significance. There is, indeed, no more signal example of the immense importance of well-conceived, well-directed methods of education than the transformation which Fénelon wrought in his royal pupil. A more intractable subject probably never exercised the wits and the patience of his instructor. Before he was placed in the hands of Fénelon, the Duke was in simple truth much more of a wild beast than a rational human being. One of his chief pleasures was in kicking and biting all his attendants who approached him. At times he refused to speak a word for hours. On other occasions he would not eat, though tempted with all the triumphs of the royal cooks. His grandfather, Louis XIV., had been at infinite pains to obtain for him the most judicious attendants and tutors; but all had given up their charge as hopeless. At length Fénelon was called in. Fénelon was not without experience in dealing with young people, and he had already written a book on Education; but his peculiar fitness for the task he had undertaken was that of a character unique in charm and sympathetic insight. It is unnecessary to speak here of the marvellous skill and delicacy with which he wrought on the young Duke's nature, and how he so completely transformed him that Michelet even expresses a doubt whether in the transformation the strongest springs in the boy's character had not been broken.

In Fénelon's dealings with his pupil he had one leading idea, to which, perhaps, educationists have not given the importance it deserves. This idea was, that for every individual there is one poet who above all others appeals to the deepest instincts of his nature, and is therefore fitted

to be one of the highest forces in educating the best qualities of his mind and heart. Fénelon had not been long with his pupil before he discovered that with all his ungovernable passions he had a 'Virgilian soul'—in other words, that in the depths of the boy's nature there was that which responded to the grace and tenderness which distinguish Virgil above all other poets. Virgil accordingly was made the instrument through whom he sought to effect his ends. The result exceeded his hopes. Virgil did indeed become the Duke's favourite poet, and the chief formative influence of his brief life.

It is admitted that education at school and college as it is in these days realised is directed not so much to the formation of character as to the communication of knowledge. It is perhaps impossible that it should be otherwise. The needs of society must determine its educational code. In ancient Persia, to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth, was all that the conditions of his mature life demanded of a youth. In modern England a boy is maimed in the race of life if he has not made some acquaintance with the 'circle of the sciences.' It follows from this that poetry, since it does not supply facts that can be of any practical use in life, receives but a subordinate place in our scheme of studies. All men of science would not express themselves so harshly as Newton when he said that poetry is 'but ingenious trifling;' yet there is undoubtedly a feeling abroad that when we compare him with the worker in any department of science, the poet is after all but a frivolous personage. If we have any doubt that such is the general conviction, we have but to reflect how most people would regard such a passage as this from Wordsworth. 'It is an awful truth,' he says, 'that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves people of consideration in society. This

is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling for poetry in my sense of the word is to be without love of human nature or reverence for God.' Such a conception of poetry as is conveyed in these words would certainly appear to many people as in the highest degree strained and fantastic; yet it is the fact that the greatest of the world's thinkers from Aristotle to Stuart Mill have been of Wordsworth's opinion.

It was one of England's greatest lawyers who said that the wisdom of a country is to be searched for in its poets; and it was Aristotle's opinion that poetry deals with the highest forms of truth and conveys it most impressively. The production of poetry is certainly no trifling matter for the poet himself. There is, indeed, no form of mental exercise that puts such a strain on the whole man. Goethe, who is remarkable among poets for his self-control, declared that to write more than one tragedy a year would kill him; and Scott, who prided himself on his stoical self-repression, says in an interesting passage: 'I will avoid any occupation so laborious and agitating as poetry must be to be worth anything.' As far, therefore, as the expenditure of intellectual and emotional force is concerned, poetry demands as serious consideration as the most abstruse of the sciences.

The question has often been discussed whether or not the tendency of civilisation is to benumb the higher imaginative faculties. However this may be, it is at least certain that the influence of the poet of necessity diminishes as the interests of society grow more complex. In the simpler states of men the bard is, next to the chief, the most important personage in the nation. As poetry is almost universally the earliest form of literature, he is at once the historian, the law-giver, the prophet of the race. He originates public opinion, and he makes the tradition that gives birth to national sentiment. Even at comparatively late periods of a nation's development, it is extraordinary what a power the poet still wields over the minds of men. During the middle ages the words of the *trouvères* and the *troubadours* determined the ideals and formed the temper of the choice spirits of the time. When the revival of letters came, and the birth of the scientific spirit followed, it was no longer possible that imaginative literature could fill the place in men's minds it had hitherto done. Their thoughts were directed into a thousand other channels, calling into play other mental faculties, which gradually overthrew the paramount rule of the imagination. In this relation Sir Philip Sidney's delightful treatise, *The Defense of Poesie*, acquires a peculiar interest. Sidney was the last and noblest of the knights; and his passionate plea for the high function of the poet is but the expression of the sentiment of chivalry towards its *trouvères* and its *troubadours*. What poetry had been in the past to men of action, he conceived that it might still be in the future. It cannot be owing to the disappearance of poetical genius from the world that his hope has not been fulfilled, as we have had Milton and Wordsworth and Shelley since his day. The truth must therefore be that the poet has simply been jostled from his

high pedestal, and is now but one of a thousand other intellectual forces.

In one respect, indeed, the poet is as greatly honoured as ever he has been. It is frankly acknowledged by men of science of the best type that poetry is the highest expression of the human mind, and that the poet himself is the finest and rarest product of nature. Analysis has done its utmost in the way of explaining to us the genius of the poet and the essence of his work, yet both still remain the same incalculable elements that have bewildered and enchanted the mind of man from the beginning. The poet thus, even in those days of the all-pervading lights of science, sings like Wordsworth's lark in a 'privacy of glorious light.' Nevertheless, the reputed question of the senior wrangler regarding *Paradise Lost*, 'But what does it prove?' is doubtless the genuine expression of the general attitude towards poetry in the present day.

As has been said, it is idle to think that poetry can ever have that place in public instruction it once legitimately held. The conditions of modern life have made this impossible. An Athenian boy might have leisure to commit the twenty-four books of the *Iliad*; but though the discipline would doubtless be an excellent one, it would hardly be wise that the schoolboy of to-day should achieve the rival feat of committing *Paradise Lost* or the *Excursion*. Still, if we but keep before us the idea of Fénelon, poetry, even in the present condition of things, might surely be made a far more efficient instrument in education than it actually is. It has often been pointed out of late that as it is at present taught in our schools poetry is simply tortured into a fitting subject for examination. Poems are chosen for reading not so much because they are of a kind to appeal to the feelings and experience of childhood, but because they afford excellent material for an examination paper. What, for example, could be more absurd than to place *Paradise Regained* in the hands of pupils of fifteen or sixteen? That poem, the enjoyment of which, according to a high authority, is the last reward of consummated scholarship, is, in truth, of all poems in the world the best fitted to engender in a boy a life-long disgust for every form of poetic production. Short poems judiciously chosen and taught from the point of view of Fénelon would certainly go far to counterbalance that deadening of the emotional side of our nature which Darwin so sincerely regretted in his own case as the result of exclusively realistic studies.

But after all, if Fénelon's notion be correct, it lies with each to make the most fruitful application of it for himself. Thoroughly to master one poet and enter into his spirit is in any case a finer discipline than the cursory reading of a thousand. This is, indeed, the counsel of all the great masters of knowledge. Historians have been careful to tell us that they never really understood history till they had thoroughly mastered one period; and it used to be the earnest advice of an eminent Professor of philosophy to his students, that in his department the wisest course to follow was first to understand completely one great teacher.

An interesting question here suggests itself: Is it not the function of music to effect for the highly civilised societies of to-day what poetry

effected for the simpler societies of the past? It is undoubtedly the fact that music in its highest development is as peculiarly the art of the last three centuries as architecture was the art of the middle ages. It might seem to follow, therefore, that in music we should find the natural compensation against the excess of the scientific spirit. But great as are the achievements of modern music, it cannot be seriously maintained that it touches the springs of human conduct in the same degree as poetry. Music is, in truth, the 'least intellectual of all the arts,' and cannot, therefore, in the very nature of things, compete with poetry in influencing men's views of life and shaping the general course of their actions.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VI.

DAVRY wheeled her mistress to the other end of the corridor, where was a recess in which stood what looked like a large wicker-chair without a seat. Davry pushed the easy-chair inside the wicker one, dropped a thin iron bar in front to keep it in its place, and then touching a spring, the chair and its occupant ascended slowly and smoothly to the level of the floor on the story above, and there became stationary. Davry having ascended by way of the staircase, removed the bar, and then pushed the chair before her into Miss Esholt's room.

Owing to an accident during childhood, Miss Esholt was unable to walk more than a few halting steps at a time, and altogether incapable of getting up or down stairs, though any one who only saw her sitting calm and upright in her chair would never have suspected it. No one, not even her brother, had ever heard her give utterance to a word of complaint. She was fond of travel, and, thanks to railways and steamboats, was able to get about from place to place as she pleased. It was her nurse, Davry's mother, who, by letting her fall when a child, had been the cause of Miss Esholt's lameness; and Davry had looked upon it as a sacred duty ever since to devote her life to the service of Miss Esholt and make reparation, as far as in her lay, for her mother's carelessness. She was a woman of few words, as simple as a child, her life bound round by the silver cord of duty. Davry heeded not the frivolous changes in the world's fashions, but still dressed her gaunt person as she had been wont to do thirty years before in her native village. She wore a striped linsey-woolsey petticoat; a loose print bodice, that reached a little below her waist; a white muslin kerchief, pinned high up her throat; and on her head a muslin cap, starched to an exceeding stiffness, the border of which, tortured into shape by the Italian iron, formed an appropriate scrollwork round her rugged time-worn face. If Miss Esholt was cold by nature, Davry was stony. She was like a woman who had been for years under the influence of a dripping-well, and had come back into the world partially petrified and unable wholly to regain her lost humanity. All the affection she was capable of feeling was centred in her mistress.

The room in which Miss Esholt now was was sacred to herself and Davry. With the rare exception of Mr Esholt, no one else ever set foot in it. It was library, boudoir, and sitting-room in one, and nowhere was Miss Esholt's extreme simplicity of taste more observable. The whole place, in fact, would have reminded a stranger of a business man's office more than of anything else. Miss Esholt was wealthy, and as she cared little for money, she could afford to be, and was very charitable; but her charity was always done by proxy. She subscribed liberally to all sorts and conditions of hospitals and institutions; but as for relieving any individual case of distress which might be brought under her notice, she would have considered such a proceeding as most ill-advised, and as tending rather to the moral deterioration than the physical well-being of the recipient.

Davry wheeled her mistress's chair near the fire and then waited for further orders. Miss Esholt sat for a long time without speaking, staring intently into the glowing embers: Davry stood behind her chair, immovable as a statue.

At length Miss Esholt spoke: 'Davry, he is going to get married.'

'Who's going to get married, Miss Janet?'

'Who? My brother.'

For a little space the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece was the only sound. Davry was the first to speak.

'Then we may pack up our traps as soon as we like,' she said. 'We shan't be wanted here. Two mistresses in one house? No; that will never do.' She spoke in that tone of respectful familiarity which in days now gone used to make old domestics seem as if they were really a part of the family.

'A young thing like her to be mistress here!' said Miss Esholt with a contemptuous curl of her thin lips. 'No! his doll, his plaything, she may be, but not mistress of this house.'

'Young, is she, Miss Janet? All the worse for us, then. And pretty too, I make no doubt.'

'Pretty? Ay! My brother is no stronger-minded than other men. It's pink cheeks and bright eyes against the world with all of them.'

'We must find another home, Miss Janet,' reassured Davry in her positive way.

'Not so. No stranger shall drive me out of the house where I was born, and in which my father and mother lived and died.—Davry, I think I will go to bed.'

As soon as her mistress was in bed, Davry placed a reading-lamp on a small table by her side together with a number of books, and then, according to custom, respectfully pressed her hand and withdrew for the night.

Miss Esholt, left alone, set to work to read herself to sleep; but to-night she found the task anything but an easy one. Her thoughts would dwell on the revelation made her by her brother. She frowned, clenched her fingers, and fixed her eyes intently on her book; but by the time she had read a score of lines the words began to run one into another, and the page grew blurred before her. So she put out the lamp, and lay watching a thin shaft of moonlight that streamed in below the blind. 'O Robert, Robert!' she murmured, 'was not my love sufficient, that you must bring a

stranger into the house, who will come between us, and fling her shadow over us, and day by day push us farther apart, till at last we shall almost forget that we are the children of one mother !' Tears stood in her eyes ; but with a gesture of contempt at her weakness, she shut her lids tightly and pressed them back to their springs, and with that the bitter feeling at her heart grew still more bitter.

Mr and Mrs Esholt had been married three months. Miss Granby was also married to the curate of the faithful heart—a curate no longer, but a full-fledged incumbent with a living somewhere in the south of England.

Miss Esholt had gone to stay with some friends in London a few weeks before the marriage, and had only lately come back. She had had no wish to meet her brother and his bride in the first flush of their married happiness ; consequently, she was somewhat agreeably surprised when she found their demeanour towards each other so different from what she had expected it to be—so quiet, so commonplace, so undemonstrative. But her observant eyes soon discovered, or believed they did, the secret which lay at the bottom of this state of affairs, and the discovery only served to deepen her growing dislike to the young wife. That Robert, the best of men and dearest of brothers, the gift of whose hand and heart would have been an honour to any woman, should not be loved by her he had stooped to make his wife ! Such a possibility seemed scarcely conceivable, yet there before her was the fact, plainly observable to such as had eyes to see. Her brother's deep silent love, so unobtrusive, so delicately displayed that a stranger might have been excused for failing to notice it ; Agnes's strange caprices—for such they seemed to Miss Esholt—her long fits of coldness, of dumbness almost, and apparent indifference to everything around her, alternating with short bursts of summer-like warmth, when her whole being seemed to sun itself in her husband's love—nothing of this was unnoted by her. She saw that Agnes did not feel for her husband that deep, abiding love which, as she rightly conceived, a wife ought to feel ; but she did not understand that those very alternations which seemed to her so erratic and incomprehensible were the natural results of an affection newly born, timidly striving to put forth one shoot after another, till, by-and-by, if no untimely frost should intervene, leaves would begin to unfold themselves, and then the tender sapling would gradually grow and spread into a stately tree which no tempest would have power to uproot. Of all this Miss Esholt comprehended nothing. Her love for him gave her some gift of insight into her brother's heart, but she had no such gift in the case of Agnes.

She speedily discovered another reason for adding to the feeling with which she already began to regard the young wife. She saw that Agnes pitied her, and was full of compassion for her helplessness. This touched her pride bitterly. But she said nothing, but watched—watched incessantly, as though Agnes had some secret design on her brother's life, which it was her sisterly duty to frustrate.

Mr Esholt, reaching home each day between five and six o'clock, passed his evenings like a dutiful husband in the company of his wife and

sister, except on those few occasions when he and Agnes went to a concert or theatre together. Having dined, he would chat a little, skim the newspaper, ask Agnes to play, or to read to him half a canto of *Childe Harold*—his one favourite poem ; or sometimes he would doze a little—allowable after a busy day 'down town' and a good dinner—till eleven o'clock came, and with it the hour for retiring ; for Mr Esholt was as punctual in this as in everything else. Those long evenings tried Agnes greatly, for whether she were reading or working, or talking to her husband, Miss Esholt's cold glittering eyes were invariably fixed upon her. She felt them rather than saw them, and they discomposed her exceedingly. The love for her husband that was silently budding like a spring flower in her heart, drooped, frost-bitten and withered, in presence of that impassive, pale-faced woman, sitting propped up with cushions in her easy-chair. If, when together of an evening, she sometimes placed her hand with love's sweet familiarity in that of her husband, she felt Miss Esholt's stony gaze fixed on her with double power, and like the coward she was, she withdrew it in an instant and locked herself up again in her reserve.

Was Mr Esholt aware in his own mind of the strange undercurrents at work beneath the seeming quietude of his domestic life ? If so, he went on from day to day like one totally ignorant of their existence, and made no sign. But he was a man whom it was given to few to read or comprehend, and it may be that he saw more of the silent warfare that was being waged under his roof than either his wife or his sister had any conception of.

Summer was now here ; and when Mr Esholt one day told his wife that he had arranged for their removal to New Brighton in the course of the following week, a glad light sprang to her eyes, which he did not fail to take note of. They were not, however, going to stay at Syringa Cottage—that would be reserved for the use of Miss Esholt and such friends as she might have to visit her ; but at The Hollies, a small villa no great distance away. This was still better news for Agnes. She would not only get away for a time from the dull, heavy, sombre Everton House, but would be to some extent relieved from Miss Esholt's constant silent supervision, which began to weigh upon her more and more—a moral incubus from which there seemed no prospect of relief—but which, she sometimes felt, would in the course of time drive her to do something desperate. Now, however, she seemed to breathe again. For a little while the burden would be lightened, if not altogether removed.

Agnes felt happier and more light-hearted than she had felt for many a day, when she found herself installed in the charming little villa which Mr Esholt had rented for the season. Every morning after breakfast she walked with her husband to the landing-stage, where he took the quarter-to-nine steamer for Liverpool. After seeing him off she and Fido, her big Newfoundland, would go for a long ramble on the sands, here, there, anywhere—what did it matter where, so long as she was in the fresh air and sunshine and away from the sinister influence of those two black unwinking eyes and that white passionless face ! After luncheon, it was pleasant to sit in

the shade of the veranda, a novel in her hand, and Fido stretched out at her feet, with the great shimmering seascape basking far and wide before her, ploughed by a hundred ships and steamers inward or outward bound—a picture pregnant with suggestions and countless dramatic possibilities to the fresh vivid imagination of the girl who sat watching it by the hour together through her dreamy drooping lids.

Between five and six o'clock she and Fido would stroll down to the landing-stage again, this time to meet Mr Esholt on his return from business. Then would follow a quiet tête-à-tête dinner, after which it generally happened either that they made their way to Syringa Cottage, or that Miss Esholt and the two friends who were staying with her came to spend the evening at The Hollies. With two ladies there to break up the usual family trio, one of whom played and sang charmingly, Agnes felt that she could afford to treat Miss Esholt's silent hostility with a certain amount of disdain. The cold watchful eyes still followed her as heretofore, and seemed to note her every word and movement, as though for the purpose of recording them in some secret diary of the brain; but so long as she was in the presence of any one other than her husband, the spell which at other times was upon her seemed to lose half its force and meaning.

There came a day when Miss Esholt's friends took their departure; but as one or two others were presently coming to fill their place, the matter seemed to Agnes one of little moment. Miss Esholt came to The Hollies to dinner the first day after her friends had left, for Robert would not hear of her dining alone. Dinner was over, and they had gone back to the drawing-room—it was one of those evenings that would not admit of their going outdoors—when Mr Esholt said rather abruptly and apropos to nothing that had gone before: 'By-the-by, Agnes, I have a little surprise in store for you. You remember a young man of the name of Wilmot Burrell, I daresay?'

The sudden mention of that name which, now that she was married, she would fain have forgotten for ever, seemed to drive the blood in a sudden rush to the young wife's heart, and in a moment she turned white to her lips. She felt rather than saw Miss Esholt's lynx-like eyes full upon her. Mr Esholt saw nothing; he was cutting the pages of a new number of *Blackwood* and skimming a paragraph here and there as he did so.

There was a brief pause, which to Agnes seemed far longer than it really was. Then nerving herself by a supreme effort, she said in low clear tones: 'Oh yes; I used to know Wilmot very well indeed. His father and papa were old and dear friends, and Wilmot used to spend most of his holidays at the vicarage.'

'Then you will doubtless be pleased to see him again. It will bring old times and recollections to your memory. I have asked him to dine with us to-morrow.'

At these words, a tremor shot through Agnes from head to foot. Her heart seemed to stop beating for a moment, as if to gather the meaning of what had been said, and then hurried on in a wild tumult. She turned abruptly to the window. Fortunately, Mr Esholt had found

something in the magazine that interested him and seemed to expect no answer.

Miss Esholt rubbed her transparent hands one within the other. 'There is some secret here,' she murmured to herself—'some love secret, most likely—some little romance of the past which madam has not forgotten, maybe does not want to forget. I must be here to-morrow at the meeting of the two.'

THE CHAPEL OF THE PYX.

In the eastern cloister of the abbey of Westminster there is an antique door, admitting to a remarkable vaulted chamber, built during the time of Edward the Confessor, and known as the Chapel of the Pyx. It is called a chapel probably from the fact of there being at the eastern end the remains of a stone altar, and also a *piscina* close by. If tradition may be accepted, here lie the bones of Hugolin, treasurer to Edward the Confessor, the progenitor of our Chancellors of the Exchequer. The chamber is built in two bays, with a column in the centre, from which springs the vaulting. The aspect is gloomy and prison-like, the heavily barred window not tending to diminish that effect. Although part of the abbey buildings, this is government property, for when we stand within its walls we are in the first Treasury of the English nation, and where, in mediæval days, the hoarded wealth of royalty was kept under the eye and ecclesiastical guardianship of the abbot and monks of Westminster. Here, up to the time of the Reformation, the regalia of the Saxon monarchy, the Black Rood of St Margaret from Scotland (the Holy Cross of Holyrood), the Cross of St Neot from Wales, and all the later acquisitions of subsequent monarchs, were deposited. Large sums of money, chiefly for purposes of conquest, accumulated here, the money wrested from Jew or citizen helping to swell the amount.

The close connection with the religious house of Westminster, and the sacred character of the chamber, presumably consecrated its contents in the eyes of the people, for no very strict watch or guard seems to have been exercised. The cloisters of the monastery were the playground and place of relaxation of the monks, and here probably the lay friends would be admitted. Many would therefore know of the place and its contents. To break open and rob such a treasure-house would be treason and sacrilege; the latter in those days was punishable with death without benefit of clergy—a terrible sentence even when human life was held cheaply; but added to this, no sanctuary could be claimed by the sacrilegious. The chapel being hedged round with such pains and penalties, was not troubled by the mediæval burglar until early in the fourteenth century.

In the year 1303, Edward I. was commencing, or rather renewing war with the Scots, a war of revenge for defeats suffered at their hands recently, and for incursions made to the south of the Border. In this new campaign, a great land-force was raised and despatched north, and a numerous fleet sailed for the same destination. The Scots were to be crushed and their country

ravaged. Fortune favoured the English, and the hardy northerners retired on every side before the three divisions of Edward's army. At the height of the victory, and while the king was at Linlithgow, news reached him that the treasury in the abbey of Westminster had been forced and rifled of the vast sum laid up there for carrying on the war. The lords of His Majesty's suite must have had a bad quarter of an hour with the king after he learned this; for to lose a sum of £100,000, intended for the purpose of a sweet revenge, must have been gall to the ambitious monarch, stopping, as it must, some of his schemes of conquest. Such an outrage on the royal property had never before been committed, and accordingly strong measures were taken. The abbot and monks of the abbey were hurried off to the Tower; and a trial, which continued for nearly two years, was commenced. The chronicler and good friend of the monastery repudiates the assertion that any of the monks were engaged in the work of spoliation; but the chapter of Westminster being entrusted with the safety of the treasure, naturally was accused of connivance with the robbery. The tribunal before whom the brethren were taken released the greater number, but condemned the subprior and the sacrist; and they paid the penalty of the crime.

The history of the sacrilegious theft seems to have been, that one Richard de Podlicote audaciously robbed the refectory of the abbey, and in the course of his search for plunder noticed the insecure state of the treasury, and discovered the nature of its contents. In concert with some lay friends and some of the clerical guardians, amongst them the subprior and sacrist, a plot was elaborated for carrying off the money intended for furnishing the king with the means of war. Early in the year 1303 this plot was carried to a successful issue, and the money abstracted without at once causing attention. The plunder was not immediately removed from the precincts of the abbey, but buried in the green enclosed by the cloister. To prevent the removal of the earth being noticed, a crop of hemp was sown, partly, perhaps, to mark the spot, and also because of its rapid growth. The gardener who usually trimmed the grass was refused admission on various pretexts, the culprits fearing his scythe might strike something richer than the earth. As soon as the matter could be arranged, the money was exhumed, and conveyed across the river to the Surrey shore, concealed in two large black panniers, and from that time was lost. Where it went, no one but those concerned knew, or who profited in the possession of so vast a sum. The monk Alexander of Pershore, who carried it over, returned to his place in the abbey, and waited with the others the bursting of the inevitable storm. In consequence of rumour, or to draw out further sums, the king's officers soon after the removal came to the treasury; and what confusion met their eyes—broken boxes, jewels lying about broadcast, papers and seals strewn the floor, the whole of the contents upset, and, to crown all, the treasure gone!

The subprior and sacrist were executed; and to mark the enormity of the offence, tradition avers the bodies were flayed—let us hope after death—and the skin nailed to the door of the chapel as a warning to those who might be sacrilegiously

minded. There is no doubting that human skin was attached to the doors, for portions were submitted to a celebrated surgeon during the restoration of the abbey, and he pronounced them human. Whether the skin once covered the unfortunate subprior and sacrist remains doubtful, as some think the owners were certain Danes who troubled English peace for a time.

After the steed was stolen, the stable door was locked; double doors were put up and five or six locks added for security. Iron bars were fixed to the windows, and the chamber reduced in size by a thick wall built across it.

After the Reformation, the regalia were removed to the Tower, where they can now be seen under the guardianship of stalwart beefeaters in their quaint costumes, or the more prosaic blue-coated police. The 'relics' were probably converted into mundane coin by the reforming spirit of the time.

The name pyx is derived from the box or case in which are deposited the coins, specimens of the coinage of the realm, called trial pieces. Once in every five years certain officers, appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord Chancellor, and constituting a jury, visited the chapel, whose doors with the numerous locks were opened by attendants bearing mighty keys. The duties of the jury were to inquire into the purity and weight of the coinage by assay and weighing, and give a written verdict testifying their satisfaction with the work of the Master of the Mint. On arriving in the chapel, the coins were taken out of the pyx, placed in paper parcels, sealed, and taken possession of by the jury. Coins were selected at hazard for testing by fire and scales; and after these operations, and in the afternoon of the same day, the verdict, written out at length, was handed to the Lord Chancellor. The document became a state paper, and probably the curious-minded may see them in the Record Office, or wherever such papers are deposited.

A FAMILY SECRET.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.—WHAT IS THE SECRET?

RAGE and chagrin held entire sway over the passionate mind of the Hon. Mrs Chisholm when the door closed behind Aynsley. Rage at being rebuked in her own house by a person like this young doctor for her treatment of Mina; and chagrin because she had not only failed to win him to her way of thinking, but had betrayed the real nature of her feelings towards George Chisholm's wife. Still the man must not be allowed to carry his tale to the police until she had time to consider what was to be done to accomplish her own purposes. She touched the bell, and Gedge entered.

'Go after that'—person, she was going to say, but succeeded in using the politer designation—'gentleman. Follow till you overtake him. Say that I have changed my mind, and particularly wish him to return for a few minutes. Tell him it is most important for the object he has in view.'

The Hon. Mrs Elizabeth Chisholm, née Bal-

hooley, was the eldest of eight daughters of an impoverished Irish nobleman who maintained the dignity of his ancestors by spending every penny he could get by borrowing on mortgages or from his friends, or by selling land outright. When he had money, he kept open house, and high revels were held in Castle Blaney. But the intervals between the revels became longer and longer, and at length they ceased altogether, for the master of Castle Blaney no longer had money, credit, or anything to mortgage or sell. But before the last feast he called his daughters together. 'Now girls,' said he, 'you must marry or starve, for after this ball, unless some unexpected bit of luck turns up, we won't have a farthing to bless ourselves with for two years at anyrate.'

The Hon. Elizabeth Balhooley was thus early made acquainted with the inconveniences of chronic impecuniosity; and her character was a curious compound of worldly prudence—often to the extent of niggardliness—and ambitious extravagance. She would do anything to sustain the glories of her royal race—for of course the Balhooleys were descendants of the kings of somewhere—and then she would pinch and practise all sorts of petty economies in order to balance accounts.

One of the guests at this last revel was George Chisholm, the wealthy English squire of Broadmarsh. He was middle-aged, and not intellectually brilliant, but thoroughly good-natured. The Hon. Elizabeth pounced upon him and claimed him for her own as soon as she had obtained satisfactory information as to the extent of his possessions. In her youth she had been slim and, some people thought, pretty, although she developed into a dowdy, whose figure could not be made dignified or remotely graceful by any art of dressmakers and milliners.

She secured her prize. The generous Squire made handsome settlements upon her, and they were married. The whole thing was accomplished in six weeks; and the rapidity with which the Hon. Elizabeth secured her prize astounded as well as amused outsiders. The newly married couple went to the Continent, announcing that their absence would be prolonged. At the end of ten months it was proclaimed in the *Times* and other journals that the Hon. Mrs Chisholm had given birth in Paris to a son and heir. About two years afterwards, the family returned to Broadmarsh, young George being declared by everybody to be a wonderful child for his age.

From the day of arrival at Broadmarsh till the date of his death, three years afterwards, the Squire's quiet country home was a perfect Bedlam to him—always filled with the maiden sisters, on whose account the Hon. Mrs Chisholm kept up a constant round of picnics and garden-parties in summer, dinners and dances in winter—revels in the good old style of Castle Blaney.

Before the Squire finally closed his eyes upon this giddy scene, three of the maidens had found suitable husbands, and had been married in the parish church at Sandybeach. The remaining four were subsequently disposed of to advantage by the clever scheming sister. Then that lady thought she might give some attention to the training of her son. The boy early displayed many idiosyncrasies similar to those of his

maternal grandfather. He was genial, fond of company, reckless in his sports, careless in regard to money, and left the whole management of affairs in his mother's hands. He got what he required—latterly, not always without sharp remonstrance—and he was content. The remonstrance had no effect. In his second term at Cambridge he was rusticated on account of sundry wild exploits; but he was a hero in the hunting-field, and the most notable 'gentleman rider' in the county steeplechases. His mother did not often attempt to interfere with him in anything he chose to do; and when she did so, her wise counsel was treated with so much indifference that she saw it was useless trying to control him. He always agreed in everything she said, and then proceeded to follow his own course as if she had not spoken. He was open-handed and generous when the exercise of these virtues cost him no effort.

But when he announced the date of his marriage with Mina Fairfax, the mother made a determined stand. She would never consent.

'Very well, mother,' responded George in his lazy way: 'it's a pity; but I must try to content myself without your consent. I know that you wished me to take one of my many cousins, so that the whole of my father's property should remain in *your* family. Very sorry that I cannot fall in with your views. But such is life: our pet hopes are always disappointed.'

'Is not Rhoda Hartford a girl fitted in every way to make any man happy?' demanded the mother gloomily. Rhoda was the most favoured of all her nieces, and a frequent guest at Broadmarsh, in the expectation that George would fall in love with her and marry, as it would save him the trouble of seeking a wife when one was ready provided for him.

'I daresay she will make some man happy; but I am not the man. My arrangements are already made, and so there is no use bothering yourself about it.'

She said no more; but her conduct was strange to a degree that an observer would have called unnatural. George encountered sullen, obdurate opposition every attempt he made to interest his mother in the forthcoming event. She would not see her future daughter-in-law; she would leave the room the moment her name was mentioned.

He passed over all this lightly. He thought it stupid and ridiculous on his mother's part to sulk so long because he had chosen a wife for himself and had disappointed her in not taking the one she had chosen. He had no doubt everything would come right in the end, and had no suspicion that she had any other reason for disliking Mina than was to be found in her chagrin at the overthrow of her own pet plans.

He saw little of the persistent torture Mina had to endure. At first, she was bewildered by it, and found excuses for it without speaking to her husband. She hoped that in time she would gain the esteem of her mother-in-law; or at anyrate forbearance from undisguised insult in the presence of servants and covert sneers in the presence of visitors. But as months went on the nagging became keener instead of abating, and became intolerable when Mina's babe was born. When she did venture to ask her husband to

remonstrate with his mother, he only laughed. 'Don't mind her,' he would say, in his easy-going way; 'she is a bit eccentric, but she is all right at the core. Do as I do—laugh and pass on. She has never bothered me.'

'Ah, but you do not, you cannot see'—There Mina stopped—it seemed so fearful to be making complaints to a son about the cruelty of his mother.

He did not see. The shooting season took him to Yorkshire or the Highlands; the hunting season kept him out every day; the principal races had to be attended; and there were occasional trips to London, where he spent a week or two *en garçon*, enjoying himself with his old chums at the clubs and theatres. He was quite unconscious of neglecting any of the duties of a husband. He did as he saw other men doing, and supposed that the wife's place was at home, except on ceremonial occasions. He had taken her to Paris and Rome, and twice to London during the first eight months of their union. He was ready to take her anywhere she wished to go, if she asked him. But the Hon. Mrs Chisholm always formed one of the party, and so Mina obtained little relief from the tyranny under which she suffered in the place she was obliged to call her home.

Had Mina's father lived, she would perhaps have appealed to him; certainly, she would have done so when driven to such a state of despair that she fled from the house. He, however, had died four months after her marriage, leaving his affairs in much confusion and embarrassment, owing to the utter collapse of several Companies in which he had invested his savings. This was another lever for the Hon. Mrs Chisholm to use, and she used it unmercifully.

When Mina's boy was born, he was taken from her, and given by the grandmother into the charge of a big coarse-looking woman who had been in the service of the Balhooleys for many years, and was devoted to the family. Mina wished to nurse the child herself. She was not allowed; he was to be brought up by hand, on the plea that she was too weak to afford him sufficient nourishment. She was rarely allowed to see him, despite her appeals; and yet George Chisholm was having the statement dinned into his ears that Mina had no natural affection, and did not care for her child.

When told that her boy was dead, and charged with being the cause of his death by her neglect of him, she lost her reason, and fled from the house during her husband's absence. The note of assignation was found under her pillow; and the Hon. Mrs Chisholm congratulated herself and her son on having done with 'that wicked woman,' who had cajoled him into an utterly unsuitable union.

The young Squire, however, did not take matters precisely in the way his mother had anticipated. When she showed him the note he recognised his friend Blaxland's penmanship—he knew it too well to have the slightest doubt of the genuineness of the document. This was no forgery. Then the ugly nurse, Flaherty, told him where she had found it. But, instead of cursing Mina and his friend, he cursed himself. No words of self-condemnation strong enough for the neglect of which he had been guilty were

to be found in his vocabulary. He could see it all now, although he had been blind so long. He turned fiercely upon his mother. 'I have destroyed the happiness of the best woman that ever lived,' he said hoarsely, 'and you have had a hand in it. I should have known that she could not change from the bright intellectual girl I knew, to the frightened fawn who clung to me so despairingly every time I left her, even for a few hours. It was the terror you inspired her with that made this house a pandemonium to her. I do not wonder now that she grasped at any means of escape from it.'

'George! you are beside yourself, and forget to whom you are speaking,' exclaimed the mother indignantly. 'You are in a rage with me instead of with that woman, who has brought disgrace upon us all.'

'We have brought disgrace upon ourselves. Leave me, or I shall perhaps say things to you that I would not like to remember. But it is I—I, who am to blame.'

'I think you will be the better of a little time for reflection. You have already said more than a son has any right to say to his mother.' She left the room furious, but was careful to take the compromising note with her lest he should tear it up. In all her speculations as to how he would take the news of Mina's flight, she had not foreseen the possibility of his regarding it as a wild protest against his own neglect—unpardonable neglect, as he saw things now—and his mother's unveiled dislike. She had expected him to be furious with Mina, probably to assault Blaxland with a horsewhip, whilst he took immediate proceedings for a divorce. But he was an honest fellow at the core, although too lazily self-indulgent to take action in any disagreeable affair unless driven to extremity. Now, he realised that the blame and shame were his first of all, and his mother's next.

As she stood alone in her own room, the Hon. Mrs Chisholm was mentally repeating one bitter question: 'Shall I fail?—Shall I fail? After all I have done and endured, shall I fail? Will that woman rob me of everything, and will this fool of a fellow—my son!—help her to do it? Oh, if I dared to speak—but that is nonsense. I should gain nothing but scorn if I spoke now. No; I must be silent to the end.' She had been deep in these reflections at the time when Dr Aynsley arrived, and he had presented a new vexation to her. Mina had not eloped or disappeared long enough for George to be brought to believe that she had done so or had intended to do so. She was lying ill somewhere near, and this meddling young doctor would certainly carry out his threat of going to the police station and reporting all that had passed, if he was not prevented in some way. Should George discover that a man had sought him to demand his help for Mina, and she had turned him away without granting the desired interview, the consequences might be much more serious than any she had contemplated when she answered Aynsley so resolutely. The impudent fellow must be prevented somehow from carrying out his threat; but she would find means of making him pay dearly for his partisanship.

She waited anxiously for the return of her messenger; and in half an hour, which seemed

like a day to her, Gedge reappeared. 'Did you overtake him?' she queried eagerly, before the door was closed.

'Yes, ma'am. He was stopped at one of the cottages to see a sick child.'

'Is he coming back?'

'No, ma'am. He sends his compliments, and says he will wait at home until one o'clock—the address is on his card—and if you and Mr Chisholm will call before that hour, he will discuss the business further.'

'Tell Dent to get the carriage ready immediately. I am going out.' She swallowed the humiliation of having to submit to this fellow's dictation, and decided to go to him at once. But she would not ask George to accompany her.

On reaching John Aynsley's modest residence, she was shown into the consulting-room. It was a cold-looking apartment: linoleum on the floor, four chairs and a couch covered with brown leather, a writing-table, and a large bookcase covering one wall, comprised the furniture. 'Poor,' was the Hon. Mrs Chisholm's sniffing comment as she surveyed the place. 'I daresay matters can be arranged.'

Aynsley entered the room and bowed coldly. Before he could speak, she opened the conversation with effusive graciousness.

'I followed you at once, Dr Aynsley, in order to express my regret for being apparently so ungrateful for your kindly efforts on our behalf. But you must make allowances—I am sure a man of your experience and gifts will make allowances for the distracted state of my mind in seeing, as I believed, my son's whole life wrecked by the conduct of the woman who should have been everything good to him.'

'I can understand that the letter you showed me must have caused him the greatest pain,' responded Aynsley, with a grave look into her eyes; 'but I had hoped that Mr Chisholm would have come with you to discuss the best measures that may be devised under the circumstances. A very grave mistake has been made in regard to Mrs Chisholm's conduct.'

'It was impossible. He is perfectly prostrate with grief and shame, and a little more excitement might have fatal consequences. Consider—his child lying dead in the house, deserted by its mother! It would have been cruel to disturb him.'

'I should have thought he would have been relieved by learning that the mother had deserted neither him nor his child,' was the dry rejoinder.

She winced, but went on volubly. 'Would he have been able to accept that assurance at once? No. I have telegraphed to Norwich for the only medical man he has ever agreed to consult. When he has seen him, we can decide what is to be done. Meanwhile, I throw myself entirely on your consideration. Do whatever you think is best for Mrs Chisholm, and I will be responsible for all charges. Then, as soon as she and my son have recovered strength, we—that is, you will explain matters, and a reconciliation will follow. That is, I think, the best course for me to adopt for my son's sake, and for you to take as a friend of the unhappy wife.'

The proposal was reasonable, and if George Chisholm was in the condition she described, there was no alternative course that a sensible man

could take for the benefit of the principal persons concerned in this melancholy affair. And yet, in spite of her apparently sincere anxiety to put matters right, he felt that the woman was false, and had some ulterior motive for this entire change of humour towards Mina.

'I will do as you desire, madam,' he said gravely, after a few minutes' reflection, 'on condition that you do not ask me where Mrs Chisholm has found a refuge until I can tell you in the presence of her husband.'

'I will be guided entirely by you, Dr Aynsley,' was the almost humble answer. 'But you will of course now do what you can to prevent any publicity of this miserable affair, and there will be no application to the police—you said that you wished to spare her the scandal such a proceeding would involve.'

'And I do. My desire is to restore her to Mr Chisholm as quietly as possible.'

'Oh, I am so grateful! Thank you—again and again, thank you. I do not attempt to disguise the fact of which you are aware that my daughter-in-law and I do not get on well together; but that will not prevent me from doing my duty to my son.'

'Until I can see him, I will do nothing more than see that all Mrs Chisholm's wants are properly cared for.'

'Thank you, once more; and for the present, please use this on her account.' She placed four five-pound notes on the table, and took her leave, promising to call next day to learn how the patient was progressing.

As she was being driven away, John Aynsley was asking himself this curious question: 'What motive *can* the woman have for this determination to part Mina and her husband?'

The Hon. Mrs Chisholm's round florid face became dark as soon as she was seated in the carriage and her back turned upon the doctor's house. Her lips were closed tightly, and there was an evil light in her eyes. 'Before to-morrow morning,' she was thinking, 'I shall have discovered where that woman is hidden, in spite of the precautions of this friend of hers. Before to-morrow night, George shall leave Broad-marsh; and before he returns, it will be too late for any reconciliation.' There was a cruel smile of triumph on her face, and the evil light in the eyes became more intense.

As the carriage stopped, the hall-door was flung open by Gedge, and he descended the steps to wait on his mistress.

'Has your master asked for me?' she inquired as her feet touched the ground.

'No, ma'am; but he has gone out.'

'Gone out! When?'

'About half an hour ago. He did not call for anything; but I was on the watch, as you instructed me, and spoke to him as he put on his hat in the hall. I inquired if I could do anything for him. He said "No" quite short, and went out.'

'Did he walk or ride?'

'Walked, ma'am, down through the meadows, as if he was going over to the Denes.'

'In the direction of Mr Blaxland's?'

'I think so, ma'am.'

'Let the carriage wait, and tell Flaherty to

come to me at once.' She proceeded to her dressing-room and threw bonnet and cloak aside. The information that George had gone out was alarming; but if, as she supposed, he had gone to inquire about Harry Blaxland, he would learn—as she had already done—that his friend had gone to London on the previous day, leaving no address, and giving no date for his return. That would confirm the impression made upon George by the note which had been found under his wife's pillow. But if he should happen to meet Dr Aynsley, he would learn where Mina was; he would go to her, and there would be an end of the hope the Hon. Mrs Chisholm cherished of separating the two. She had schemed for that object ever since the marriage, and circumstances had singularly favoured her up to this point. Now, if he should discover that she knew Mina had not gone away with Blaxland, he would suspect all the rest, and would turn upon her. Easy-going as he was in every way, once his passion was aroused she knew that it was uncontrollable, and he became capable of the wildest action. But she did not fear him, if prepared beforehand to encounter his wrath; for she believed that it was in her power to compel his submission to her will. To do that, however, would involve a confession on her part which she would rather not make.

A sharp knock at the door and Biddy Flaherty entered. She was a tall gaunt woman with hard sharp features and cunning gray eyes. Although fifty-five, she was strong and active. As already stated, she had been in the service of the Balhooleys since childhood, and was devoted to the Hon. Mrs Chisholm, whom she always addressed as 'me lady,' that being a bit of playful Hibernian flattery which by no means displeased her mistress. This was the person who had been forced upon Mina as a nurse at one of the most trying periods of a woman's life, the birth of her first child; and this was the woman to whom the poor child had been entrusted.

'Did you see the man who called here this morning?' inquired the mistress.

'Av coorse I did, me lady. D'ye think any man can come here without me seeing them?'

'Would you know him again?'

'As aisy as I'd know your own sweet self, me lady.'

'He is Dr Aynsley; this is where he lives' (pointing to the doctor's card on the table). 'I want to learn what patients he calls on to-day, and, if possible, their names.'

'If I wance get sight of him, I'll know everything he does till he goes home for the night.'

'It seems that woman has not gone away, as we thought, but is somewhere in the neighbourhood under the care of this doctor. He will not tell me where she is, and I want to find out.'

'More shame for her to be skulkin' about the place afther what she's done. But I'll find out where she is, me lady, you may go bail for that.'

'As soon as you find out, get a cab and come straight to me. I wish to spare my son the pain of meeting her until he has recovered from the shock she has caused him.'

'Oh, the poor gentleman!—it's the wondher to me that he can think of her at all now.'

'Get yourself ready at once. Dent will drive

you as far as the Yarmouth workhouse. Get out there, and walk the rest of the way. Tell Dent he is to come home, and be sure you do not let him know your errand.'

'An' sure me lady knows she can trust me to howld me tongue.'

Biddy Flaherty departed on her errand and her mistress watched from the window. The Hon. Mrs Chisholm's expression was an unpleasant one—full of anxiety mingled with spitefulness. 'Must it all come out in the end?' she asked herself whilst looking vacantly across the lawn. 'Well, if it does, there will be scandal, of course; but I will get the credit I deserve for the sacrifice I made, and George will have reason to be sorry for having driven me to extremity.'

VARIALE STARS.

Few persons unacquainted with astronomy fail to express surprise on first learning that there are stars in the heavens whose light is variable. Stellar variability seems at first sight incompatible with the stable and eternal character of the heavens, and gives one the idea of change and evanescence among the celestial bodies. But that such a fact should be associated with the waxing old of the firmament is the result of ignorance and preconceived opinion, as the phenomena of variability have probably been recurring with undisturbed regularity for thousands and thousands of years.

Several scores of these variable stars, as they are called, are visible to the naked eye, and their changes may be watched by any one sufficiently well acquainted with the face of the heavens; while, when we call in the aid of the telescope, the scores rapidly increase to hundreds. Indeed, it is not too much to say that could the millions and millions of stars at present known to astronomers be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, probably many thousands would prove to be variable. These marvellous objects present little uniformity of character; they differ from one another in magnitude, period, and range of variation. Some are very bright; others, even at their maximum brilliancy, invisible to the naked eye. One changes so little that it is difficult to determine its variability; another runs through a scale of fluctuation extending to five or six magnitudes. In period, again, or the time from maximum to maximum, there is the utmost variety. Some complete their cycle of changes in a few days; others occupy many months; several have been steadily decreasing in light within historic times; while with temporary stars, their appearance is so rare, and our term of observation so limited, that it is impossible to say whether their changes occur periodically, or whether the sudden increase of splendour is to be regarded as the announcement of a stellar catastrophe.

The space at our disposal is much too limited to give an account even of the most important of these objects, but we may perhaps be allowed to draw attention briefly to two of the most rapidly variable in the northern heavens. The more conspicuous of these is situated in the constellation of Perseus, and was known to the old astronomers by the name of Algol, or the

Demon. For about two days and thirteen hours this object remains quite steady as an ordinary second-magnitude star, and during this time presents no appearance of peculiarity. At the end of this period, however, it suddenly begins to diminish in splendour, and goes on fading till, in three hours and a half, it has decreased to the fourth magnitude. This brilliancy is retained for the remarkably short space of only eighteen minutes; and in another three hours and a half the star has regained its original splendour. When one remembers that this object is not a mere light hung up in heaven, but an immense luminary like our own sun, some idea will be gained of the nature of the causes that are able to produce such change. The other object, though much fainter than Algol, being, in fact, scarcely visible to the unaided eye, is even more rapid in its fluctuation. It is situated in the constellation Cepheus, but being an inconspicuous object, has not the honour of a popular name. This is the most rapid variable known. Its range, like that of Algol, is a little over two magnitudes; but its rate of diminution is nearly twice as rapid, as it passes from the seventh to the ninth magnitude in two hours. The change of light is accompanied by a remarkable change in colour, the star being bluish at maximum and ruddy at minimum, with intervening gradations.

What explanation have scientific men been able to give of these phenomena? At an early stage, it was suggested that diminution of light might be occasioned by the intervention of a dark body, as a satellite, between us and the primary; and in the case of such rapid variables as Algol, in which the changes are effected in a few hours, some such explanation seems absolutely necessary. But the weakness of this theory is that, while accounting fairly well for variation in stars of short period, it fails altogether with those whose changes are slower and more prolonged. However plausible it may seem that a temporary decrease of light of a few hours' duration might be caused by the sweeping of a dark body across the face of a star, it is evident that when the change in brightness is so gradual as to extend to weeks, months, and even years, the explanation breaks down, without at least assuming motions in distant heavenly bodies as sluggish as those in our own vicinity are rapid. Nor, in addition to this, must we overlook the high improbability of the plane of revolution of these attendant dark bodies coinciding in so many instances with our line of vision. Thus, though the satellite theory has at the first blush an air of plausibility, it must be regarded as utterly inadequate to explain any save a small portion of the phenomena.

Another theory has been advanced, accounting for variability by the presence of dark areas on the surface of these distant luminaries, the alternate apparition of the dark and bright portions as the body rotates on its axis causing an alternate diminution and increase of splendour. The same objection applies to this explanation as to the last, for in the case of a star which has been gradually fading during many generations, it is plain that we must suppose a rate of rotation altogether at variance with ascertained facts, nothing being more surely established than that the motions of the celestial bodies are rapid almost beyond conception. Nevertheless, in a

slightly modified form this theory is not without some degree of probability. The star nearest us, and about which we have the fullest information, namely, our own sun, is nearly always marked with a greater or less number of dark portions, called spots, which have regular maxima and minima, with periods differently estimated by different observers, but generally believed to be about eleven years. These spots must in some way influence the amount of light and heat emitted by the sun, though the difference is to us imperceptible; and were they very much increased, it seems unquestionable that our sun would appear to the inhabitants of a neighbouring system as a variable star with a period of eleven of our years. The only objection to this theory is that we require to explain the explanation. To say that the change of light is caused by the presence or absence of dark areas recurring at stated intervals, is simply stating the problem in different terms. What is the cause of the dark regions, and why should they recur at stated intervals? Why should some stars be exempt from them, and others condemned to their periodic eruption? Must the first be regarded as in the full flush of life and vigour, while the latter are moving down to decrepitude and decay? What are we to make of those stars that have been slowly fading since the first astronomers recorded their observations, or what of those whose change of brilliancy is accompanied by a change of colour? These questions raise difficulties with which the theory is unable to cope, and which with our present knowledge we cannot explain. Meantime, astronomers continue to record observations, to heap particular on particular, in the hope that when the mass has become sufficiently large, some great law will loom vaguely into view, and reward the labour of centuries. If we were allowed to express an opinion, we should predict otherwise. Probably the discovery will be made in an entirely different manner—perhaps in the dingy laboratory of the chemist or the physicist. Some new fact as to the shiver or clash of atoms, some unobserved peculiarity in the behaviour of light or heat, will flash suddenly into view, and in a moment reveal the great law which underlies and governs these strange phenomena.

'SCOT.'

THE canine race have of late been much before the public mind. The exertions of Messrs Pasteur, Henderson, and Warren have rendered it impossible for them to complain of being overlooked or forgotten during the past two years. Indeed, they seem to be rising daily in the scale of social importance; and this emboldens me to lay before a sympathising public one of my many and varied experiences in connection with our four-footed friends.

I am a great lover of dogs; so is my wife; we are childless, and console ourselves by bringing up small families of quadrupeds, whom some of our friends—whose tables are richly set about with olive branches—occasionally observe are more tractable and grateful than the more costly and troublesome bipeds. Like most dog-lovers,

I prefer thoroughbreds; and the first years we lived in London we were the anxious possessors of a pair of 'show' fox-terriers. But their constant unaccountable disappearances, and recovery at considerable cost of time and money, exhausted my patience, and threatened to exhaust my purse; so that, when death removed these little friends, I determined to be no longer a source of income to dog-stealers, and hence resolved to fill the vacant post of household pet with a mongrel.

If there is one thing of which I am a judge, it is a dog. I do not mean merely learned in the 'points' of different breeds; but that, given the opportunity of observing the shape of a dog's head, the cock of his ears, the way he carries his tail, the expression of his eye as he follows his master—I will tell you whether that dog is worth making a friend of or not; and I have never found myself mistaken in a dog whose appearance pleased me. Therefore, my wife and I were agreed that I should look out for a good intelligent dog of a size and disposition difficult to make 'disappear,' and so decidedly a mongrel as not to be worth stealing outright.

While we were still (metaphorically) in mourning for the last of the fox-terriers, we found ourselves in an out-of-the-world village high up among the hills of the Derbyshire Peak. Here I saw a sheep-dog, which I felt sure would suit us exactly: a straight-limbed, broad-chested, dignified-looking animal, about the size of a collie, but stouter built and short-haired; of an uncommon blue-gray colour mottled with black, white points, and a pair of curious 'wall-eyes,' the iris like a bit of pale, blue-white china. The lines of the head and the expression reminded me of the dog in Landseer's 'Shepherd's Chief-mourner.' This dog was invariably seen half a yard behind his master, who was the village butcher; and one day, encountering the pair in the bar-room of my inn, I endeavoured to establish friendly relations with both. The dog received my overtures with great reserve; and when, with sad want of good taste, I pressed my attentions on him, he slowly rose, and with a glance of his eye from me to his master, which plainly said, 'My concern is with *him*, and I can have nothing to do with strangers,' withdrew under the settle. I subsequently pointed him out to my wife, telling her that in that dog we should find all we sought.

'That wild-looking creature! with glaring white eyes and a coat like bilberry dumplings!' exclaimed she. 'Why, we should be mobbed, if we took him out in London!'

Notwithstanding this protest, I took the first opportunity of meeting master and dog in the bar-parlour, and—his local value being ten shillings at most, bought him for fifteen; and by the help of a command from the butcher, 'Go on, Scot,' led him into our sitting-room and presented him to his future mistress. Whether he understood the bargain struck in the bar, or by what means he grasped the situation, I cannot say; all I know is that, though his late

owner's shop was only across the road, he never made an attempt to return to him; indeed, he scarcely took any notice of him if we happened to meet. I do not think this was ingratitude, but arose rather from a keen sense of what was due to a new master moving in an altogether different position in life. By the time we were returning to London, Scot had not only attached himself to us, and grown perfectly accustomed to the more refined habits and manners of the society in which he now moved, but had justified my opinion of him by showing a great amount of general intelligence. Bringing him, as we did, from a part of the world where two vehicles appearing in the village at once was looked on as quite an excitement, we were afraid he would lose his head in the crowded and noisy streets of the great city. We were agreeably surprised to find that, beyond fixing his eyes anxiously on my back and keeping well to heel, the first time I took him up Oxford Street, he showed no sign of nervousness or fear; and in a few days was quite at his ease, following a 'bus with myself outside in a most collected and business-like manner; and on once losing me in the press at the Marble Arch, returning promptly to our house in Notting Hill.

After a time, finding that from any place to which he was taken on foot, he would find his way home, and that he never allowed any one to take liberties with him in the street, or responded to the blandishments of strangers, we felt that he could scarcely be lost or caused to disappear; and as he certainly was not worth stealing, we rested happy in the belief that only death would deprive us of Scot. His appearance, too, being so strikingly odd, we flattered ourselves that if anything did happen him, we could not fail to trace him easily and speedily.

Three peaceful years followed. Scot endeared himself to a large circle of friends by his urbane manners, amiability, and general intelligence; became quite a feature in our square, and was well known in the neighbourhood; for he would sit patiently for an hour at a time outside a shop-door, with his opal eyes fixed on the spot where he had last seen my wife's retreating figure. Sometimes a knot of admirers would surround him, talking to him and stroking his grizzled head; but Scot, though he bore what he considered their ill-timed caresses with unflinching good temper, never withdrew his attention from the business of the moment—watching for his mistress. Respond he would not.

Three happy years went by, and then came the Henderson ukase—Muzzles! Scot remonstrated so pathetically against the double infliction of collar and muzzle, that, telling ourselves the name and address upon it could be of no service, since he never got lost, we, in an evil hour, removed the former; and 'Old Scot'—as he was affectionately called, though only now four years of age—trotted about, presenting his muzzle to every human friend he encountered, requesting its removal in the plainest language. This he did with the persevering and trusting hopefulness of a dog who has never been neglected, and feels sure he has but to make his wants understood to have them attended to. One day—a black and fateful day in the annals of modern

London, a day of frost and ice, of riot and fog—my wife and I started early in the day to skate at Hendon. Scot accompanied us to the nearest Metropolitan Station, and was then told to go home. We believed he went; he had never disobeyed us before, and we never dreamed he would do so then. Returning at past six o'clock, there was no sniffing under the door, no impatient whine and scratch, no boisterous greeting as the door opened.

'Scot, sir?' said the servant, interrogatively as we entered.

'Did he not return?' we asked in surprise. No; he had not returned. But we were not really uneasy: he had probably made himself a self-invited guest at the house of some friend near, as he had once or twice previously done. If he did not return before the house was closed for the night, we could send for him in the morning. It was only when we found he was not at any friend's house, that we became anxious, and reflected, that being without a collar bearing his owner's address, the police, in their new-fangled zeal, might, though muzzled, 'run him in'; or, worse still, being muzzled and defenceless, he might even have been made to 'disappear.'

We first made inquiries in and about the station whence we had dismissed him; these, however, led to nothing, and then began the weary round of police stations and Dogs' Homes, with, as usual, no result. Of course the police promised to do all they could. All they did was this: two days after our loss, while I was out, an inspector called, and was received by my wife. He was a youngish man, of bashful manners, who informed her that a dog 'answering to the description' had been found that morning sleeping in a square close by.

'That is not our dog. If he were loose anywhere within ten miles, he would come home,' promptly decided my wife.

After this, advertisements appeared in different papers offering a reward for the restoration of a 'Mottled Black and Gray Short-haired Sheep-dog, with wall-eyes, white points, long tail, with white tip,' &c.

'We shall not be troubled as we used to be when the fox-terriers were lost,' said my wife hopefully. 'Gray dogs are uncommon, so are "wall-eyes";' in fact, there is not a dog in London like Scot. We shall have but one brought, and that will be the dear old fellow himself.'

And I confess I had also some such idea. But we reckoned without the host—of fools, which London can produce at a moment's notice anent any occasion or subject whatsoever.

The first advertisement brought us a small but choice assortment of dogs. No. 1 arrived early, carefully led by one man, the expedition being conducted by a second, who was spokesman. It was a spotted carriage-dog of Dalmatian breed.

'This is not a sheep-dog,' I said.

'Advertisement said "wall-eyes," sir, and a long tail; and this has wall-eyes and a long tail, sir.'

'Very well; leave the eyes and tail, then,' said I, intending to be severely ironical: 'the rest does not answer to the description.'

The man grinned, and, on the strength of my joke, asked for a glass of beer. This being politely refused, he retired, to be speedily suc-

ceeded by a Whitechapel rough, leading a miserable, dirty, curly-coated, brown mongrel.

'Beg yer pawdon, sir,' said this worthy, 'but be this yer dorg?'

'Can that by any stretch of imagination be called a gray sheep-dog?' I asked indignantly, trying to shut the door, which the rough held open with his hobnailed boot, while begging me to consider that he had walked all the way from the east end, &c. A few determined words, however, send him off cursing; and I felt sorry for the poor brute—I mean the four-footed one.

The third animal submitted to us was a large half-bred hound, liver colour and white, with a black spot on his back—on the strength of which he was brought—and a pair of lovely blue hazel eyes, which seemed to plead that he might be owned and taken in.

For the remainder of that day, and—our advertisement being repeated in the leading dailies—for many days after, not only did dogs of all sorts, sizes, and colours arrive at frequent intervals for inspection, but letters came by every post, and even two or three telegrams, from all parts of London, its suburbs, and for fifty miles round, from the Midland counties and the south coast, informing us that dogs 'answering to the description' might be seen on applying to the sender.

At first, either my wife or I went to all places within reach, to see—collies, terriers, mongrels, black, tan, white, liver-coloured, long-haired, curly-coated, bob-tailed, or no tail at all—animals whose sole claim to 'answer to the description' consisted in their belonging to the canine race; for in some cases they were not even of the right sex. After a time, we got wary, required detailed particulars, and sent photos of Scot in the first instance, which plan we also pursued in the case of more distant correspondents; but even with these precautions, we took one or two tiresome journeys, only to encounter disappointment. It was not merely that every one seemed to have gone colour-blind, but that most persons appeared to think that if a dog 'answered to the description' in one point, that was quite sufficient reason to suppose it ours; if in two—the evidence that it *was* ours was held to be overwhelming; and when we had the hardihood to declare that it was *not* ours, they evidently considered themselves ill-used, and in more than one instance plainly showed that they thought I alone was to blame for the useless trouble they had had, and therefore that it ought to be made good to them.

'My dog was described as long-tailed,' I would remonstrate, 'and this one has *no* tail.'

'But it is wall-eyed,' would be the reply.

Or my objection, 'This dog has not got a gray hair on him,' met with the rejoinder, 'He's a sheep-dog, and has a long tail with a white tip,' and this in a tone of conviction, as who should say: 'If he's not your dog, all I can say is, he ought to be.'

In one particularly aggravating case, where information was brought of a dog kept mysteriously in a backyard, and I, after some difficulty, obtained sight of an animal which, beyond possessing four legs and a head, bore no single point of resemblance to Scot, I indulged in a little strong language, and my informant, in a deeply aggrieved tone, remonstrated thus: 'I

got a bone, held it out, and called "Scot, Scot!" and he came up wagging his tail and took the bone; so *in course* I made sure it was yours!"

After a certain time, seeing that this was no mere 'disappearance,' I had offered a reward of double the dog's value for 'information leading to his recovery.' Upon this, a perfect rain of letters set in, the orthography and style of some of which were amusing; for example: 'DEAR SIR in respec of yer notiss i seen the dogg he cum into our Shop i giv im a Biskitt wich you did not name is name so plees rite and say also if your dogg is a Ladye dogg yours to comand,' &c.

Some were aggravating, as, for instance, two advising me 'to apply at the Dogs' Home;' and one—from an elderly spinster, I feel sure—informing me 'that she had always found the police most useful in restoring valued dogs.'

But the most original was one from a gentleman claiming the rank of captain in the army, who stated that 'he knew where the dog was, but should require the reward to be forwarded by post ere he parted with the information.' This demand showed a touching confidence in the guilelessness of my nature and anxious affection for my pet, that was not justified by results.

At last, having done all that could be done—advertisements and handbills having been as widely spread as was in our power to spread them, exhaustive inquiries having been instituted to ascertain if he had been in any way killed; a humble friend of ours 'in the trade' having communicated in a friendly way with others 'in the trade'—nothing was left for us but to await the result.

Alas! reader, we are still awaiting the result, or rather, since many months have passed, we have ceased to expect any. Our mongrel dog—truly 'of no value to any but the owner'—in spite of widely offered rewards of four times his intrinsic worth, his singular appearance, and his keen intelligence, has finally—disappeared.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

To the very numerous class of young men and young women who are regulating their studies in accordance with the announcements of Her Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners, it will be an interesting and almost exciting piece of news to learn that Sir Matthew Ridley and his colleagues, who were appointed to conduct a special inquiry into the Civil establishments, have issued a second Report, containing a variety of recommendations as to the better organisation of government offices. The subjects of their inquiry are of the greatest possible interest to all who look forward to becoming servants of the Crown, and it is satisfactory to notice that to a large majority of these anxious ones the result must prove reassuring and gratifying. 'The numbers, salaries, hours of labour, superannuation, cost of the staff, and the administration, regulation, and organisation' of the Civil establishments have now been once more pretty thoroughly investigated—that is, so far as the mere taking of evidence may be held as equi-

valent to an investigation. No deliverance is yet given, however, on the vexed question of the amalgamation of the Inland Revenue and Customs departments, and to that extent the candidates will for some time be kept in a state of suspense. A very considerable extent of ground has nevertheless been covered, and many wise suggestions have been put forward.

In saying that the result of the inquiry will be gratifying to the majority of candidates we mean that the suggested changes will tend to the benefit of the rank and file as such. They will not probably increase their chances of securing any of the 'prizes' of the service, for these prizes are in future to be much less numerous. This provision will of course fail to commend itself to candidates for the Higher Division—that is, those who are required to pass an examination practically equivalent to a university degree, so that they may be prepared to take broad views of public business, and do the responsible work involving discretion and judgment, as distinguished from that which is 'purely clerical.' It has been decided that the latter class of work is more largely predominant in government offices than the outside public have been led to suppose, and therefore economy can be effected by a reduction in the number of highly paid clerks. This saving on the one hand will enable the government to be somewhat more liberal in their treatment of Lower Division clerks, who, by the way, are to be propitiated with the title of 'Second Division.'

At present, the Lower Division clerk entering a seven hours' office receives £95 a year, and advances by triennial additions of £15 to £250, with the chance of some day receiving £100 extra for special duties, such as superintendence. Ever since this scale was established, it has been recognised that while its treatment of the raw recruit from school errs on the side of liberality, the progression towards the maximum salary must appear somewhat slow after family responsibilities have been assumed. It must be distinctly understood that the extra emolument or 'duty pay' of £100 (or less) cannot be reckoned on as a prospective benefit, but is dependent to a large extent on accidental circumstances—such as, the number of the staff, the vacancies that may occur, and perhaps in some cases the whim of a superior officer. These defects in the Lower Division system appear to be satisfactorily dealt with in the Report. The commencing salary is reduced to £70, and the rate of increase is £5 a year until £100 is attained. Then, with a satisfactory certificate, the clerk will progress by annual additions of £7, 10s. to £190; and finally, if he has proved his fitness for further advancement, he will proceed by additions of £10 a year to a maximum of £350. This point is now reached only in exceptional cases: in future it will be open to all men of character and ability. The chances of still further advancement must, from the nature of the case, be slender, as the higher posts are to be few in number, and some of them

at least will be filled by those whom we may term university candidates. Nevertheless, no hard and fast line has been drawn to bar 'exceptional ability' from rising to its proper level.

To the First Division it is hoped to attract men who would otherwise enter a profession with a fair prospect of success. To induce men of the requisite capacity to take part in a competitive examination with a view to entering an office, a minimum salary is suggested of £200, rising by £20 to £500. Clerks of the second grade would progress by annual additions of £25 from £600 to £800; and in the third grade the scale would be £850 by £50 to £1000.

As to the examinations, no serious modification is proposed. As optional subjects for Second Division candidates—although in a competitive examination all subjects must be practically compulsory—shorthand and one modern foreign language are with some hesitation recommended. It would not be very surprising, however, if shorthand were made compulsory, and the suggestion as to a foreign language ignored altogether. The higher examination is disposed of by the simple suggestion that thoroughness is the quality most to be coveted in advanced studies, and therefore it might be advantageous to limit candidates to a few subjects which must be thoroughly mastered.

There will probably be no disposition in any quarter to contest the propriety of adopting a uniform official day of seven hours, or of compelling those who look forward to pensions to contribute five per cent. of their salaries towards this great and growing expense, especially as these contributions are to be repaid with compound interest in the event of no pension being granted. The necessity also for transferring clerks from one office to another, instead of engaging new ones who are not required, is so obvious as to call for no remark; and whatever difficulties may hitherto have prevented this reasonable arrangement must in future be overcome. The retention of elderly officials, irreverently designated 'fossils,' has often given rise to grave discontent, and forms the subject of three simple proposals. The age for compulsory retirement is fixed at sixty-five; but if the interests of the service seem to require it, a clerk may be 'retired' at sixty; while, on the other hand, if specially invited by the government, he may remain in office until seventy. The absolute prohibition from taking part in the management of trading Companies is a measure which could scarcely be avoided; nevertheless, it must call forth angry protest from those affected, on the ground that government has no concern with the leisure time of its servants. Probably nothing in the Report is more emphatically insisted on than the need for promotion by merit, although of course the witnesses did not fail to indicate the risks attendant on such a system. The superior officer in the Civil Service has little interest in the efficiency of the person he promotes, whereas the private employer would feel that his business interests were at stake in the transaction. For this reason, it has generally been held the safer course to promote the senior in the absence of special disqualification. Before, however, we can arrive at any conclusion on this point, we must see the new regulations at work. These regulations must be promulgated by an Order in Council, which will probably be kept back until the Commissioners

have made their final Report; so that some patience will still be required before we shall be enabled to criticise the details of the latest reorganisation of the Civil Service.

THE DETECTION OF CRIME IN CHINA.

THE Chinese possess no organised detective force, though the officials sometimes visit in disguise the scene of a notable crime for the purpose of making inquiries, and police spies are often locked up with remanded prisoners to try to worm out their secrets. The lower classes being intensely superstitious, the judicial investigation of crime usually takes place at night. The judgment hall is a lofty building of wood, unceiled, and bare of furniture save for the raised dais at the north end, where is seated the presiding magistrate, attended by his secretaries, clerks, and lictors. The only light comes from paper lanterns or cotton wicks in oil-cups, which but serve to bring into prominence the weird shadows flitting about the corners and lurking among the wood-work of the roof. Silence prevails, the few spectators watching the proceedings standing like statues. The accused, dragged from the darkness and filth of a Chinese prison, is forced to kneel before the judgment-seat throughout the trial. Weakened by ill-treatment and appalled by his own superstitious imaginings, he often requires only a little judicious terrorising to elicit a full confession of his guilt. If he prove obdurate, witnesses are called. From these no oath or affirmation is demanded; the breaking of a saucer and other forms for administering an oath to a Chinaman laid down in English lawbooks being quite unknown in Chinese courts. Any hesitation or refusal to answer the magistrate's questions—for he is judge, jury, and crown prosecutor all in one, and no counsel for the defence is allowed—is punished by slaps on the cheek or the application of the bamboo to the thighs; and similar penalties more severely administered check the giving of false testimony. Should the prisoner, in face of strong evidence, persist in denying his guilt, various persuasive measures are resorted to, such as forcing him to kneel on chains, hanging him up by the thumbs, or suspending him by the neck in a wooden frame so that his toes just touch the ground. All such tortures are illegal; but a confession has to be obtained somehow before sentence can be passed, and cases are many, and the time allowed for settling them short. Seldom can the stoutest rogue, or, alas! innocent man, hold out against such treatment continued throughout the night, and renewed, if necessary, again and again.

When two or more persons are equally suspected of theft or the like, the magistrates often show great ingenuity in detecting the guilty. In cross-examination they are peculiarly skilful in obtaining damaging admissions, their suave manner deceiving the accused as to the importance of the point they inquire about so carelessly. Two instances of extra-judicial methods for ascertaining the culprit among many equally under suspicion deserve to be recorded for their cleverness. Some balls of opium taken from a piratical junk by a revenue cruiser mysteriously disappeared while being transferred to the latter vessel. Opium is very precious in China, and a

ball is easily split up and secreted in the wide sleeves or the voluminous waistband of a Chinese sailor. The commander of the vessel was loth to institute a search of the ship and crew, knowing well the craftiness of his men, and that, even if found, the opium would most probably be in the bundle of some innocent man. He therefore resorted to a plan as simple as it proved effective. In his cabin was, as is usual, a shrine of the Goddess of Mercy and of the Chinese Neptune. Before these deities he instituted a solemn service, which was prolonged till evening. When night fell, he mustered the crew and called them one by one into the dimly-lighted cabin. Here each man had to make solemn declaration of his innocence, kneeling before the images, and, dipping his finger in a saucer of water, to smear his face all over, being warned that, if he were guilty, the divinities would make his face appear streaked with black. When the thief's turn came, he tried to outwit the gods by rubbing his finger on the bottom of the saucer; but, to his horror, when he reached the light, his face was all over black marks, the wily commander having held the saucer over a lamp before commencing the experiment.

In another case, where several servants were suspected of theft, each man was given a bamboo of the same length, marked with his name, which had to be deposited in an urn before a small shrine in the outer prison where they were confined. The officer announced that the culprit's rod would grow, by interposition of Providence, one inch during the night. The prisoners were then locked up, no watch being kept on the urn. On the reassembling of the court, one rod was found to be an inch shorter than the rest, as the thief had, under cover of the darkness, endeavoured to circumvent the supposed divine power by biting a bit off his rod.

When any article disappears from a private house and one of the inmates is suspected of purloining it, it is usual, before having recourse to the magistrate, whose underlings exact huge fees for doing anything, or nothing, to call in a priest and hold a commination service. This consists in invoking the evil spirits and bribing them by offerings and music to hound the culprit to death within the year. It continues for three days and nights—if the terrified thief does not confess and make restitution before that time, a result very frequently achieved. Europeans living in China have tried this method, but not with much success, as the gonging and other discordant sounds which constitute the 'music' so effectually drive away sleep that the neighbouring foreigners insist on its being intermitted during the night, and so, say the Chinese, spoil the charm.

Of late years, Chinese newspapers on the European model have been started, and are well supported in the matter of advertisements. So now, the loser of bank-notes or other portable property can, and very frequently does, announce his loss in good Chinese in the columns of one of the three leading dailies, offering suitable rewards for the recovery of his property and the detection of the thief. The European settlement at Shanghai alone of all the towns of China employs regular detectives at the expense of the ratepayers. When, if ever, the Chinese government will follow the example set them by this 'western' community, it is impossible to predict.

WOMAN'S WIT.

[When Conrad III. was in 1133 proclaimed Emperor of Germany, the Duke of Wittenberg refused to acknowledge him as such. The Emperor therefore besieged the Duke, who had taken refuge in his fortified town of Weinsberg. The Duke in the end was forced to yield; whereupon the indignant Emperor declared his intention of putting all to fire and sword, but granted permission to the women to depart in safety, and to carry with them whatever they regarded as most precious. The Duchess of Wittenberg, taking advantage of this concession, with ready wit took her husband the Duke upon her back. Her example was followed by the other women; and the Emperor, seeing them thus come out, with the Duchess at their head, was touched by the spectacle, and pardoned the men for the sake of their wives.]

THEY are hushed—the hoarse voices of battle,
The clashing of shields,
For at sundown, despairing of succour,
The proud city yields.
Then fill me the ruby-red beaker
Brim-high at the spring;
To-morrow we drink amid plenty
'Wass-hael!' to the king!
Oh, sweeter than toil of the bondsman,
Than hawking of lord,
Is the snort of the earth-spurning charger,
The play of the sword.

What, ho! are they pleading for mercy,
The treacherous foe?
Shall we listen with many a brother
Laid silent and low?
Nay, nay; let the women and children
Go forth with their best
Of jewels and house-gear and linen—
Short shrift for the rest.
Oh, sweeter than toil of the bondsman,
Than hawking of lord,
Is the snort of the foam-whitened charger,
The play of the sword.

They come—over-burdened, I warrant,
With treasurings rare;
Wives, mothers, and matrons—by Odin!
'Tis men that they bear!
'Have mercy, O army victorious!
You bid us go free,
With the gold and the gems that we value,
The babes at our knee;
But dearer than house and the children,
Wherever we roam,
Are the treasures we bear on our shoulders,
The shields of the home.'

'There are wives by the strand of the ocean,
And maidens as fair,
Who weep through the whirl of the spinning,
And shield us with prayer;
For the sake of those watching and waiting
Afar by the sea,
For the love and the faith of the women,
Pass on—ye are free!
Oh, sweeter than carnage and glory,
Than jewels and gauds,
Is the neigh of the home-coming charger,
The sheathing of swords.

C. A. DAWSON.

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BLOODHOUNDS AS DETECTIVES.

By GORDON STABLES, C.M., M.D., R.N.

It is coming yet—the time, I mean, when the London ‘bobby’ as he now exists will be as obsolete as the ‘Charlies’ or night-watchmen who, some five-and-twenty years ago, when the writer was a student, used to tramp the streets of the Granite City. We students knew them well; we had good cause to, for we and they were sworn foes. From the time they came on duty at ten o’clock till the ‘wee short hour ayont the twal’ those brawny Charlies had far more trouble with us than with any other class of ‘evil-doers.’ The charge-sheets every morning might have been found well filled, had they only been able to catch us. But they were not. We knew every turn of them, knew the cluntering sound of their foot-steps, the rattle of their iron-shod cudgels, their bass Doric voices as they bawled the hour; ay, and their very shadows in the flickering gaslight. Strange to say, when they were at one end of a street, we would be at the other, and the tricks we played them were many and comical. If it sometimes came to a race, the Charlies were nowhere—how could they be, buttoned up as they were to the neck in such a weight of homespun cloth? As well might a bear attempt to catch a cat.

In the same relation as the Charlies of those days stood to the student stands the ‘bobby’ of the present day to the London marauder. He is a belled cat at night among a swarm of clever, agile mice. The government has belled him, batoned him, bonneted and booted him. There is no mistaking the clang of his iron heel, the steadiness of his step on the stones, the shape of his very head as he stands for a moment at a corner, or the glitter of his cape and truncheon-case on a wet night. Besides, he moves with method as well as rhythm, for he goes the round of his beat as regularly as the moon goes round the earth: if he is found at any particular spot at any particular moment, all the world of wickedness

knows it will be about twenty minutes before he heaves in sight again; and if it be past midnight, then before he does come, his ringing footsteps can be heard sounding loud in the deserted streets.

But all this is bound to be altered in a few years; the authorities will remember their Jack the Giant-killer, and array their night-policeman much as Jack was arrayed, so that he will seldom be seen and never heard. These guardians of the peace will also be entrusted, at times, with revolvers—real revolvers, not the questionable untested weapons they sometimes carry now—and they will be trained to use though never to abuse those desperately handy little shooters.

Another change which shall work wonders in our night police force will be brought about by the systematic use of the telephone. A box or little office will be placed on every beat, at which the man on duty will have to report himself every quarter of an hour to the head office, and in case of need, receive instructions. Such a beneficent innovation would be productive of incalculable good; it means nothing short of having every officer of our vast metropolitan force, within speaking distance and at the very elbow of his chief. The detective department will no doubt be less under command of this executive—in other words, brain will not be dominated by brute-force so much as it is now.

Besides all this, a new and highly intelligent servant to both departments will be added to the forces, and wear the duty-stripes around his neck by way of collar—the Bloodhound. The very name of this noble dog is a terror to evil-doers. I have not the slightest doubt that it was the fact—and that fact alone—of Sir Charles Warren having bloodhounds at his command which stayed the hands of the East End murderers in autumn last. I am writing these lines on the 19th of October 1888, and have no desire to shout before we are out of the wood; but perhaps before this paper is read, we shall have seen that the bloodhounds of this country can do their duty and do it well.

The animal bears a bad name, in a literal sense.

He is supposed by the public to be a dog of extreme ferocity, of gore-lapping tastes, that having once been put on the trail of a malefactor, that malefactor is a doomed wretch; that the hound with the bloodshot eyes and the awful hanging chops will follow him slowly but surely as Fate itself, through streets and lanes of busy towns, into inns where he has slunk to quench his thirst, through woods and wilds, through forest and fern, o'er the watery ford, o'er stony barren hills and beaten paths, and seizing him at last by his guilty throat, will tear him where he stands.

Now, there is a grain or two of truth about this, mixed up with a deal of chaff. But, to begin with, I must say I was sorry to note the wording of many of the letters and papers on this canine friend of ours, when describing his character. I have five of these before me, and each of them is so penned as to give one the impression that butter would hardly melt in the bloodhound's mouth. Letters like these would fail in deterrent effect upon criminality. We might almost fancy a would-be woman-slayer saying to himself as he read these epistles from experts: 'I'm not afraid of a pup like that. I can give him the slip; or if I can't do that, I can give him a bat on the head.'

Now, my own experience—and it is a somewhat wide one—is as follows, and I call upon well-known breeders to correct me if I am wrong. The bloodhound is one of the most sagacious of all dogs; his wisdom even when quite a puppy is sometimes astonishing. When only six months old, he will often show to his master that he has already come to the conclusion that life is real and earnest, and not meant merely to romp and play in. I have had a puppy of this age take me quite in charge, as it were, giving himself all the airs and manners of a dog of seven years old, and going on watch at nightfall as serious as a sentry in an enemy's country. He would look up in my face as much as to say: 'There's nobody in this wicked world worth a thought except you and me, master, and you don't count as far as defence goes; if you please, I'll do the watching for both.'

As a rule the bloodhound is most docile and winningly affectionate. He can be trusted with children; so much so, that a boy may safely do duty as 'the hunted man' when the hound is being trained in hill or forest. The animal is nevertheless suspicious of the motions of strangers; he therefore makes a most efficient guard either to person or property; and his deep, ringing, bell-like voice, heard at night in his own grounds, would be sufficient to keep at bay the boldest burglar that ever went on prowl.

But instances of bloodhounds who, if not actually savage, will, to use a trainer's words, 'stand no nonsense,' are by no means rare. I had the pleasure of being hunted once by one of these. It was in a country where there were plenty of

hills and rocks and running streams, but nothing worth the name of a tree. We were training a pup, and as he was already well up in his work, I had got quite a long start, and had done my very best to puzzle him by wading through water, &c. When I had reached a cosy nook in a far-off glen, I sat down to rest on a stone; but a whole hour passed, and still no appearance of my friend and his pupil was put in. I was thinking I had got well away for once, when I was startled by the sonorous baying of a bloodhound, and next moment found myself a prisoner—made so, not by the puppy, but by the puppy's father. The dog, I afterwards discovered, had escaped from the stable, and come to the hunt on his own account, and here he was. I confess I felt a little uneasy. I knew the dog well enough, but just at the present moment he did not consider it convenient to know me. I felt that I wished to convince him that it was all fun, that we had only been playing at man-hunting. Unfortunately for my peace of mind, the bloodhound would not take that view of the matter. It was no good my holding out a hand and saying, 'Poor fellow, Draco! Good dog, come along then.' This only made him back astern and bay the more. Worse than all, a movement on my part as if to get up resulted in a threatening exposure of some teeth. Draco evidently wished me to understand distinctly that I was the prisoner, and he the detective; I the captive, he the captor. That was the position in all its simplicity; and as it was moreover pretty certain the bloodhound meant to do his duty, I had to do mine, and sit there, till at last my friend arrived with the pup. But the time had seemed very long.

There is a scrutinising calmness and dignity about the eye of a well-bred bloodhound that is quite a study in itself. If you are a perfect stranger to the animal, it is evident he is regarding you not with hatred by any means, nor with affection, but with thoughtfulness mingled with a little suspicion of your intentions, just as a human being would study an ape if one came hopping up to the hall-door.

Both scent and sight are remarkably well developed in the bloodhound, especially the former sense. The shape of the head we encourage now at dog-shows is one in which we have the greatest possible spread of olfactory nerves, the long face in front of the eyes, the expanding nostrils, and deep upper jaw, with hanging flews, &c. Indeed, there is not a point we give in judging that has not a meaning in it. The hearing as well as the eyesight of the bloodhound is extremely acute. They hunt more by scent than sight or sound, it is true, but it would be ridiculous to imagine that when puzzling out a trail, they are not at times aided by either or both the latter senses. The mouth of the bloodhound is capacious. It may be new to some readers to learn that when listening intently to far-off sounds an open mouth aids the ear. Any one can prove this by the following experiment on himself. When travelling by train, let him deafen both ears with his thumbs, and alternately open and shut the mouth. The difference in the roar of the train is well marked.

Our friend the bloodhound is beautifully formed all over for hard work, stands on straight

strong legs, has well padded, well knuckled-up feet, and in shape is quite a hound. Speed, however, is not his strong point. In olden times he was called the 'Slowe hound' among other names, and when the trail was perceptible even to human senses, the dog was taken on horseback, to save time.

The Cuban bloodhound which was used to hunt down the slaves is a much more speedy and ferocious animal than our own hound, which we consider we have brought to a state of very great perfection both mentally and physically; and all good judges agree he is a hound that can be depended upon to work steadily and well and make no mistake. Dr Romanes, in a communication made by him to the Linnean Society, states that a bloodhound belonging to him will readily track his master, but no one else. When we find one of our leading London dailies seriously taking note of this, we have an excellent proof of how little the general public know about dogs in general and hounds in particular. Why, I have known a terrier run away from a rat, and any number of Scotch collies who would not look at a sheep. In both the collie and bloodhound we have the raw material placed ready to hand; it is our duty to train it, if we desire to profit thereby. The training of the bloodhound is very, *very* simple if begun early. We usually have the acting 'runaway man' to rub his boots for a time or two with, say, a morsel of raw liver; but this is soon discontinued, and the pup hunts the clean heel or scent of the man himself.

Here is a point which should be borne in mind by any one interested in the matter. It is the scent of man himself that the bloodhound's instinct sets him after, and not only that, but of some particular man. He has started with this from, say, the scene of some depredation or murder; he has this in his nose and his mind as well; and if he be a well-trained, well-fed, well-treated hound, and free from all nervousness, it will take a very large number of cross-scents to make him swerve.

I put great value on the hound's upbringing and general treatment when not on duty. If the creature has been reared and trained by a fool, and under the influence of fear—if he be not well kept, properly bedded, exercised, and fed, and allowed the companionship of man, he is certain to develop more or less of nervous debility, and ten to one will go wrong at the critical moment.

Anything approaching to ferocity, or even uncertainty of temper, entirely unfits a hound for his work; he should be as docile as the St Bernard, and as much to be depended on even in playing with or hunting children as the Newfoundland. During the recent debate in the newspapers regarding the capabilities of dogs for hunting criminals, many other breeds have been recommended, each and all of which have their merits, but also their drawbacks. Our smaller hounds, for instance, have wondrous scent, such as dachshunds and Bassets, but they lack size and determination; and, worse than all, they give voice. Of course, every owner of a clever dog thinks it good enough for anything, hence we cannot be surprised at keepers' dogs being extolled as fugitive-hunters. Let such animals, I beg to say, be kept to their own work—that of defend-

ing night-watchmen or tracking poachers. One writer says: 'These large valiant and well-trained beasts, mostly crosses between the bulldog and mastiff with a trace of the bloodhound thrown in, will not only follow their man, but when found, *fix* him, and there is no mistake about the matter.' Certainly not, I should answer; there would be no mistake about the fixing, so long as he fixed the right man. The horrible savageness of the fixing will hardly bear thinking about. It would or might be all right so long as the trainer or master was close behind; but suppose the dog escaped and has five minutes' work at his man, what then! No; let every dog do the work for which he was intended; and bloodhounds alone, I maintain, are the only dogs that can be trained to act as police assistants.

It is not, however, in tracking murderers only that the intelligent bloodhound would come in so handy, but a variety of other criminals too numerous to mention. The burglar, for example. It would really, methinks not be going too far to say that in any town where well-trained bloodhounds were kept ready, burglary would be rendered a ten times more hazardous game than it is now, if not an impossibility, without the certainty of detection. If the policeman on the beat found out any time before sunrise that a burglary had been committed, he could make sure of finding his man in an hour, or much less perhaps, unless he had actually taken train or trap away from the place; but even then, he would have what is called 'a clue.' Supposing it were many hours before information was laid, there would still be heavy odds against the thief getting clear away; and in some cases, reset as well as theft would be laid bare. The keeping of police bloodhounds would have a negative and deterrent effect as well as a positive, and this would be the best of it, because prevention is always better than cure.

Some people doubt the possibility of dogs tracking a criminal through the streets and lanes and busy thoroughfares of a great city. They speak of cross-scents; but in doing so they speak of what they do not understand so well as—the bloodhound does. He has got the right scent at the right place, and if he is the right sort of dog, he will stick to that and no other. Besides, it has been done over and over again. Whether to the bloodhound nose every human being has a different scent, I know not; but it would really seem so, else how can the animal follow his man so directly, and single him out among even a crowd of others at a public-house bar or in the bosom of his own unhappy family?

A well-known English breeder speaks of hounds that are attached to the penitentiaries in Texas. The men in charge of them, he says, give most wonderful accounts of the capture of convicts by means of these dogs, although the fugitives had in some instances a twenty-four to thirty hours' start, and in one case they ran their man over forty miles. But these animals are a cross between the Cuban bloodhound and the foxhound, splendidly trained, and kept constantly at work. The same authority avers that our English bloodhounds are infinitely superior to these; and I have no doubt he is right.

On the whole, I confidently advance that with judicious training in the place where he is to be

worked, and from his puppyhood, good housing, good feeding, kindly treatment, and constant practice in hunting men, the bloodhound can be made a most intelligent member of the force.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VII.

PRESENTLY, Mr Esholt looked up from his *Blackwood* and said: 'It may perhaps be as well to explain how I and young Burrell chanced to fall in with each other. His father, my brother Richard, and Mr Granby were friends after a fashion which seems to be going more out of vogue year by year. In telling you ladies this I daresay I am telling you no more than you know already. Be that as it may, when young Burrell came to Liverpool previously to his first voyage, he brought a letter of introduction to me from Mr Granby, whereupon I invited him to come and stay a few days with us at Everton; but he was unable to do so. Between his voyages he has called on me two or three times at the office, and I have always been pleased to hear of his welfare. Well, three days ago he and I met by chance in Water Street. It seemed to me that he looked very thin and sallow; and on inquiry I found that he had been struck down by fever a few weeks after reaching the Bonny River, and on his partial recovery, had at once been transferred to another ship that was about sailing for home. He is now, however, convalescent, and walking about with nothing to do. As he expressed himself as being tired of the sea and wanting some berth ashore, I offered him the post of second cashier in my counting-house, which just now happens to be vacant—but of course on probation. He was only too glad to accept the offer, and he started on his new duties this morning. He seems to be a young man of education and manners. What I have done for him so far has been out of regard to my brother's memory; if I find that he merits it on his own account, he will not find me neglectful of his interests.'

Miss Esholt took care to be present at the introduction of Wilmot Burrell to her brother's wife.

Wilmot had casually heard that Mr Esholt had been lately married, but had attached no importance to the fact, as being one that in no way concerned him. When, therefore, he followed Mr Esholt into the drawing-room on his arrival at The Hollies and was introduced to Agnes as 'my wife,' it was all he could do to keep back the cry of surprise which rose involuntarily to his lips. He bowed low, so as to hide his emotion, and held out his hand, but would not trust himself with even a word in reply. The keen eyes watching from the easy-chair saw Wilmot's quick startled look and the momentary contraction of his mouth, and could not help admiring his power of self-command. Agnes, who had been training herself, ever since she heard the news, to go through the ordeal with composure, hardly succeeded as well. Her cold trembling hand, her colourless cheeks, her unsteady voice, all betrayed the agitation of her mind. Not for

one moment did she venture to lift her eyes to his.

Miss Esholt received the young man graciously—and she could be very gracious when it suited her purpose to be so. She made him sit next her at dinner, and entered freely into conversation with him, endeavouring to discover the salient points of his character, adroitly leading back the conversation more than once, when it seemed inclined to go astray, to his early life and his long vacations at the vicarage, and all the surroundings of those pleasant days, but careful always to leave out Agnes's name, waiting, in fact, till Wilmot should introduce it of his own accord, which, however, he unaccountably failed to do. He had not spoken a score of sentences to Miss Esholt before something seemed to put him on his guard against her, and when he noticed the cold vindictive expression of her eyes as her glance followed Agnes about the room, he said to himself: 'This woman is her brother's wife's enemy. She's trying to draw me out for some purpose of her own. Gardez-vous, mon ami.'

Consequently, as it fell out, Miss Esholt's thirst for information—that is, for the information she was so desirous of getting at—was productive of little or no result. Wilmot was willing to talk and answer any number of questions about his life on board ship and his experiences on the coast of Africa, many of them very strange and startling; but when Miss Esholt, leading him by the hand, as it were, would strive to draw him skilfully back to where he felt the ice every moment growing thinner under him, he would burst abruptly away, glide lightly over the dangerous spot, and get back to safer ground as quickly as possible.

Agnes would have been more than woman if she could have kept her eyes from occasionally wandering in the direction of Wilmot, when she felt that his gaze was turned another way. It seemed to her that he had never looked so handsome as he looked to-night. His late illness had lent a touch of refinement to his features which gave him more the look of a hero than ever. His thick brown curls, among which her fingers had so often strayed, still clustered round his white forehead with the same apparent carelessness as of yore. She had often been struck with his likeness to a certain portrait of Lord Byron she had once seen: to-night she was more struck with it than ever. As her eyes glanced from Wilmot to her husband and then back again, a little sigh fluttered involuntarily from her lips.

Wilmot, for his part, was no less struck with the change in Agnes. He had left her a lovable and fascinating girl, a girl of whom he often thought with a sort of regretful tenderness, whom he would gladly have made his wife, had not Dame Fortune played her such a scurvy trick; he found her now a woman, as lovable still, no doubt, and equally fascinating, but with an indescribable charm about her which had never struck him before. Of what that charm consisted, he did not care to ask himself; it was enough for him to feel and know it was there. He went home that night a prey to a tumult of conflicting emotions—love, anger, mortification, and vain regrets. He felt that never in his life had he loved Agnes as he loved her now, when she was lost to him for ever.

That first visit of Wilmot to The Hollies was by no means his last. Mr Esholt generally brought him to dinner at least twice a week, and he had a standing invitation to drop in for an hour of an evening whenever he felt so disposed—an invitation of which he availed himself pretty frequently. He had lodgings about a mile and a half higher up the river, so that it was only a pleasant walk between his place and The Hollies. He was very cautious both as regards his speech and his demeanour on these occasions. He had formed such an opinion of Mr Esholt's keenness and clear-sightedness in business matters, that it seemed to him only a matter of course that he should bring the same qualities to bear in private life. Then, again, he felt that nothing he said or did remained unnoted by Miss Esholt's ever-vigilant eyes. That she had some hidden purpose of her own to serve, he felt sure, and not to know what that purpose was filled him with vague uneasiness. Such being the case, he was careful not to address Agnes oftener than ordinary politeness demanded; in fact, he rather overdid the part he had laid out for himself to play, and any casual observer would have set him down not as a person who had known Mrs Esholt from childhood, and had lived for months at a time under her father's roof, but as one who had made her acquaintance for the first time after her marriage. But Miss Esholt was not a casual observer, and she did not fail to note the brief, fiery glances, half-veiled though they were, which, despite the guard he had put upon himself, Wilmot could not help every now and then launching in the direction of Agnes; nor how he manoeuvred to sit near her, even though he did not speak to her; nor how he seemed to thrill if, in passing, her dress by accident chanced to brush against him. As for Agnes, she rarely spoke to him except when compelled to do so, but seemed to keep closer to her husband's side than at other times, and would sometimes feign a headache and make it an excuse for retiring while the evening was still young. At the best of times she had never a great deal of colour, but what she had, began to pale as the days went on, till little but the ghost of it was left.

'She can't deceive me,' said Miss Esholt grimly to herself, 'for all she tries to make one believe she has no more feeling than a statue. There has been more, far more, between those two than appears on the surface. Mr Burrell tries to hoodwink us all; but it's plain that he loves her; and as for madam, unless I'm much mistaken, she reciprocates the feeling, but is too frightened to let it be seen. And yet in Robert's mind there is not even the faintest suspicion groping its way towards daylight! Eyes hath he, and yet he sees not.'

Miss Esholt, considering in her own mind the state of affairs at the end of the third week after Wilmot Burrell's first appearance at The Hollies, found that matters did not progress so rapidly as it seemed to her that they ought to do; though in what way they fell short of her expectations she probably never cared to ask herself, or could have categorically explained, had she been called upon to do so. But she felt like a spectator of the first act of a comedy (might it not, perchance, develop into a tragedy by the time the last act was reached!) when the action flags, and one becomes impatient to get on

to the unknown something which one has a presentiment must surely come. *She* had a presentiment that there was an unknown something yet to come.

At this time Miss Esholt had only one friend staying with her at Syringa Cottage, a young lady, Miss Remington by name.

'Robert,' she said to her brother one evening, when Wilmot happened not to be there, 'Miss Remington has been dying to visit Rushmere Grange ever since she saw some drawings of it a month or two ago. I'm told it's only about a dozen miles away. Don't you think that she and I and Agnes might drive over some fine morning, explore the old place, have luncheon at the hotel, and come back in the cool of the afternoon?'

'Why not? I have no doubt you would find it a very enjoyable excursion.'

'But fancy three ladies and no gentlemen! Couldn't you manage to steal a day from business and go with us?'

Mr Esholt laughed, and shook his head. 'So that's your game, is it? No; I don't think you must count on me, charmed as, of course, I should be to join you.'

'I am quite sure you can spare a day if you only choose to do so. You are like the rest of the men, you fancy yourself of far more importance than you really are. Jabez Kimber would see that nothing went wrong during your absence, as he has had to do on many occasions already. You might also spare us Mr Burrell for the day. I am sure a holiday would do him good.'

'Oh, you shall have Burrell, and welcome; but as for myself'—

'If you can't go, Robert, I shall certainly prefer to stay at home,' broke in Agnes.

'In that case, there's no option left me in the matter,' answered Mr Esholt with an air of mock resignation.

Miss Esholt had half hoped that her brother would be unable to go, and there was still a chance that he might be detained at the last moment. What did she expect to gain, what end did she look to achieve by her little plot, which was purely an arrangement of her own?—for although Miss Remington had expressed a languid desire to visit Rushmere, she was certainly not 'dying' to do so. Probably she could not have told herself. But in the chapter of accidents there always lurk unnumbered possibilities.

Rushmere Grange dated from the reign of the Eighth Henry. His daughter, the great Elizabeth, was said to have 'trod a measure' there on one occasion with the Sir Godfrey of those days, who went far towards ruining himself in his efforts to do honour to the visit of his royal mistress. The place was now partly in ruins, and none of the family had lived there for many years. It was in charge of caretakers, whose duty it was to show visitors over such portions of the old mansion as were still in a tolerable state of preservation. Inside, there was little to see beyond the worm-eaten panelling of the walls, a few finely carved chimney-pieces, and some wonderful old tapestry, which had not been removed when the place was denuded of all else it contained. The gardens, however,

with their formal walks and pleached alleys, with their maze, their fountains, and their more or less dilapidated statues, were still carefully looked after, and in themselves alone were well worth a visit.

When the day of the excursion arrived, Mr Esholt, after a couple of hours at business, reached the starting-place by the appointed time, somewhat to his sister's secret chagrin. A roomy wagonette had been hired for the occasion. Wilnot perched himself aloft beside the driver, and was there allowed to smoke his cigar. He would have given something to know from whom his invitation had emanated—whether from Miss Esholt or from Agnes, for he did not doubt that it came from one or the other. In any case, should the Fates prove propitious, he would seize the opportunity for having that explanation with Agnes which hitherto it seemed to him she had studiously avoided.

For some time after they reached the Grange, it appeared as if the Fates were about to remain unpropitious. Agnes kept close to her husband, and evidently would not be drawn into a tête-à-tête. A Bath-chair had been provided for Miss Esholt's use, and Miss Remington as a matter of course kept by the side of her friend.

They had explored the house, and were now out in the grounds, wandering about at their own sweet will. Mr Esholt, Agnes, and Wilnot were walking a little way ahead of the others, when some thought seemed to strike Mr Esholt, and he turned back to speak to his sister. As he did so, a gentleman, accompanied by a youth with a sketch-book under his arm, emerged from a side-walk and came full upon him. The gentleman, a Mr Day, was well known to him on 'Change. There was a mutual laugh over the rencontre; then Mr Day—after having explained that the youth was his son, and that, having a mania for sketching, he would let his father have no rest till he had made some drawings of the Grange—button-holed Mr Esholt and drew him out of earshot of the others, after the manner of merchants in general and stock-brokers in particular.

Agnes and Wilnot strolled slowly on till they came to a point where the path they were following turned sharply to the left. Then Agnes paused and looked back. Her husband was still engaged with Mr Day; but Miss Esholt and her friend were following slowly on. When she turned, Wilnot had stepped round the corner to the left; after a moment's hesitation, she followed him. Even if her husband should be detained, Miss Esholt would turn the corner in another minute or two at most.

Wilnot saw that now or never was his opportunity. Not a moment must be lost. High privet hedges screened the walk on either hand; not a creature was in sight. But before he could make up his mind how to begin, Agnes said coldly: 'We had better go back; we are leaving the others behind.'

'Stay one moment, Agnes—Mrs Esholt—I entreat of you!' exclaimed Wilnot, with that indescribable thrill in his voice which moved her to-day even as it had been wont to move her of old.

'Well?' she said, confronting him with a steady gaze. She had felt for some time that

he had something to say to her, but hitherto she had carefully avoided affording him the required opportunity; now, however, she made up her mind on the spot to have the matter over and done with.

'Ah! Agnes, why are you so cold to me? why?—'

'You forget, Mr Burrell, that you are speaking to Mr Esholt's wife.'

'Pardon me if for one moment I forgot that fact—a fact which has burnt itself into my brain night and day ever since that moment when Mr Esholt introduced as his wife one whom, not three short years ago, I had every reason to hope I should some day call my own.'

'If this is all you have to say, Mr Burrell, we had better turn back at once.'

(To be continued.)

ASCENSION ISLAND.

THIS tiny oasis in the desert of waters of the South Atlantic Ocean will in future be less visited by British ships. The Admiralty have issued their ukase which declares that it is no longer to be used as a coaling station. Many of our men-of-war and mercantile ships and steamers will in future miss their Ascension coal and turtle. The island has been a royal naval station since 1820, previous to which date it had for some years been garrisoned as an outpost by a detachment from St Helena, more than seven hundred miles distant. When Napoleon was at St Helena, perhaps Ascension, so far as regards the strength of its garrison and the number of its inhabitants, was at its best, and a favourite rendezvous for the British squadron that kept watch and ward to prevent the 'Conqueror of Europe' repeating the episode of Elba.

Situated in latitude 7° 57' south, and longitude 14° 21' west of Greenwich, Ascension is about three thousand four hundred and fifty miles from England, and eight hundred and ninety miles from Africa. The island is barely eight miles long from east to west, and about seven miles wide from north to south. Though its general aspect is that of an extinct volcano crater, with ancient remains of lava, scoriae, and pumice-stone, it possesses one hill, styled the 'Green Mountain,' which rises to a height of nearly three thousand feet above the ocean, and is partly wooded and cultivated. In this equable climate, rightly deemed extremely salubrious, the Royal Naval Hospital, perched high up on the Green Mountain, has done much to alleviate the ills that poor Jack's flesh is heir to. Many a military and naval invalid, whose constitution has suffered under the torrid zone of the West African coast, especially the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone—aptly termed the 'White Man's Grave'—has derived great and lasting benefit from this sanatorium. The view of the sea of waters from its verandas is sublime, though unchangeable, except in the wild waves' play and the varied hues of sky and cloud. It is ever ranging between calm,

and convulsions in breeze and gales; apparently boundless and endless, as it rolls along with its loud or soft utterances day and night. The gardens of the hospital are pleasant places, where the convalescents finally build up their shattered constitutions. Though close to the equator, the climate of Ascension is so modified by the south-east trade-wind that the temperature rarely exceeds eighty-six degrees. One serious defect of this otherwise pleasant station is the limited water-supply, as there is but little rainfall during the year, and the spring-water is scanty.

The tiny village of Georgetown, containing about two hundred and fifty inhabitants, is governed by a post-captain of the navy. There are not many houses; but there is a small fort, also tanks, the coal-depot, and the naval store-houses. We hear that the inhabitants and the garrison are not only under naval discipline, but that the whole island is rated as a stationary vessel of Her Majesty's fleet.

Georgetown Bay can hardly be considered a harbour of refuge; there is neither a good pier, harbour, nor landing-place, and the ocean-swell and surf render landing in small boats an unpleasant proceeding. For the benefit of those who might fancy to visit Ascension, it is well to mention that they would have an opportunity of retirement from the busy world, and rarely be disturbed by letters or newspapers, and have the advantage of being able to constantly dine on turtle and turtle soup at small comparative cost. The hard-worked citizen would have ample opportunity to rest his racked brain in this isolated spot, amidst the great billows rolling in from the boundless ocean, that vast marine plain encircling the island. Any disturbance of the public health is to be feared only from external causes—quarantine stringency and modern sanitary appliances alike combine to keep Ascension healthy; and though the climate is naturally damp, from the limited extent of the island and the abundance of sea-air, it is alike equable and salubrious; and by avoiding the noonday sun and exercising some caution, many pleasant picnics and delightful excursions may be made. St Helena, the adjacent island, was specially reported on most favourably by a Committee of medical men before it was decided upon as the final prison and home of Napoleon I.

Huge turtle weighing from six hundred to eight hundred pounds visit Ascension between Christmas and midsummer, and lay their eggs in the sand. They are not permitted to return to their ocean home, but are turned, and placed in one of the numerous turtle ponds, from which they are sold to passing ships or steamers for two or three pounds, and form a welcome adjunct to the ships' 'grub.' Ascension as a rendezvous and depot for the British squadron has played an important part in putting down the slave-trade between the west coast of Africa and South America. The sailors and marines have done good service for many years in road-making, levelling ground, and laying out and keeping of gardens. It is to be feared the withdrawal of the post-captain and the little garrison is sure to be followed by an exodus of

the few inhabitants, and Ascension may then rapidly revert to its original primitive and chaotic condition, or be annexed by some other nation ambitious to possess such a haven in mid Atlantic, where the flag of Great Britain has long held undisputed supremacy, and brought to terms defiant slavers. Our squadrons of war-ships cruising in the South Atlantic will miss their pleasant visits to the island. The 'Home Gardens'—alike a favourite resort of the islanders and visitors—prove how the labours of the sailors and marines have made 'the desert to smile.' The pretty little cemetery of Green Mountain preaches short and pithy sermons to the visitors, reminding all that the prisoners rest there together, and hear not the voice of their oppressors. The tombstones and monuments are in keeping with the locality; possibly, there is some one in authority who, like the officers appointed in the ancient Grecian games, has power to pluck down statues and other erections in memory of the dead if they exceed due symmetry and proportion.

Ascension was discovered by the Portuguese navigator Juan de Nova on Ascension Day 1501, but it remained a desert island for many years. Its plains and tablelands range from one thousand two hundred and fifty to two thousand feet above the ocean. Large quantities of green vegetables are grown, and gladly bought up by passing ships. The little garrison at Georgetown is supplied with water from enormous cisterns capable of holding nearly two thousand tons of water, which is conducted through strong iron pipes laid from the Green Mountain springs, six miles distant. Geology indicates from the steep and rugged ravines intersecting some of the plains, which on the south coast undulate to the shore, and on the north terminate in precipices—coupled with the fact that the island is volcanic—that Ascension is a peak of a vast submarine ridge dividing the North and South Atlantic basins. The inhabitants easily procure abundance of fish, of excellent quality, close to the shore, such as rock-cod, conger-eels, the 'soldier,' &c. There are plenty of guinea-fowl, land-crabs, and a few wild goats. There are numerous small bays and coves along the coast where products of volcanic origin are found.

The sunrise witnessed from the Green Mountain is a wonderful picture, admitting of much dreamy sentiment. First, the tourist notices as far as the eye can view a boundless area of neutral tint; suddenly a tinted line gradually creeps over the eastern sky, but no sun is visible. The 'roseate hues of early dawn' rapidly advance; the sun slowly appears, and a wonderful bath of sunlight streams forth, converting the landscape into a scene of radiant splendour. At the exact commencement, the peak of the Green Mountain alone appears to be coloured by the sunlight, the ravines and plains still lying in gray shadow. A few 'rushing minutes,' and the illumination spreads with continuous speed over the whole island. Each nook, valley, and the encircling sea has caught the glory of advancing aurora. The day has begun with marvellous clearness in the bright sunlight and soft balmy air. The toil of the ascent and early watch is trivial when compared with the rich reward of scenic grandeur that is witnessed. The ascent can be made with compara-

tive ease; there is nothing to endanger life; perils and horrors are absent during the climb, and portentous tremblings of the earth are wanting in the extinct volcano.

A FAMILY SECRET.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER IV.—‘THE TIME HAS COME.’

AYNSLEY knew one friend of the late Dr Fairfax whose advice he thought might be useful to him in his present dilemma. That friend was Mr Hammond, who for more than half a century had practised as a solicitor in Yarmouth, and was the respected agent of some of the best families in the county. To him accordingly the doctor proceeded shortly after the departure of his visitor. As soon as he had explained the circumstances under which Mina had been found by the miller Suffling, and the substance of the conversation he had held with her that morning, the old lawyer looked grave and shook his head. ‘It was an unlucky day for the Chisholm family when the daughter of that bankrupt Irish lord became mistress of Broadmarsh,’ he said, taking a pinch of snuff reflectively.

‘But can you suggest, or do you suspect any reason for this vindictiveness towards her son’s wife?’

‘She is his wife, and that is reason enough for a lady of the Honourable Mrs Chisholm’s nature to dislike her,’ answered the lawyer, with a smile. ‘But, let me see.—There was something peculiar about the will,’ said Mr Hammond as he stepped towards a rack of deed-boxes and examined the names printed on them. ‘Here it is. The late Squire was most generous to his wife. He bequeathed to her the interest of twenty thousand pounds, and the use of Broadmarsh House with all that it contained during her life. He also left her the interest of fifteen thousand pounds until such time as his son George should marry and have a male child. On the birth of this prospective grandson, the interest of the fifteen thousand was to be withdrawn from the widow and allowed to accumulate for the benefit of the said grandson.’

‘Now I understand why the birth of Mina’s—I mean Mrs Chisholm’s baby was such a sore grievance,’ commented Aynsley.

‘Yes; and I confess that the news of his early death startled me with unpleasant suspicions, which, although lulled by the doctor’s formal certificate, are roused again by what you have told me.’

‘You do not mean that you think it possible there has been any’—

‘There, there, my good friend,’ Mr Hammond interrupted; ‘no man—and least of all a lawyer—has a right to publish mere suspicions. Enough to say that the grandson is dead, and the widow continues to enjoy the interest of the fifteen thousand until the birth of another male child.’

Mr Hammond went on to inform Aynsley that he had a sealed packet entrusted to him by Squire Chisholm eight or nine months before he died. ‘But what the packet contains,’ the lawyer went on, ‘I do not know. His instructions to me are

written outside with his own hand, and signed by three witnesses, including myself.’

‘What are the instructions?’

‘I do not suppose,’ observed Mr Hammond thoughtfully, ‘that I should be exceeding my duty in allowing you to read them.’ He again carefully perused what was written on the packet, and then said: ‘There—you may read, for I know my old friend Fairfax had a deep regard for you, and I look upon you as acting for his daughter as a brother might have done.’

Aynsley slowly and carefully read the instructions on the packet, and read them a second time, as if wishful to commit them to memory. He looked up with an expression of grave perplexity.

‘In what year was the late Squire married?’ queried Aynsley abruptly.

‘I cannot remember off-hand; but we can easily ascertain, if the date is of any importance to you.’

‘I begin to fancy it may be.’

‘The marriage was a very hurried affair, and Squire Chisholm’s long purse was freely drained to rescue the Irish lord and his family from absolute poverty.’

‘Where was the present George Chisholm born?’

‘In Paris, I believe. The Squire and his wife started for the Continent on the day of the wedding, and did not come home until three or four years afterwards.’

Aynsley rose and spoke with evident excitement: ‘I want you to allow me to make a copy of the instructions written on that packet, Mr Hammond.’

‘For what purpose?’

‘That I may show it to the Honourable Mrs Chisholm.’

‘The request is unusual, and I do not see how to comply with it.’

‘I will give you sufficient reasons for doing so.’

For another half-hour the lawyer and the doctor were in close consultation; and when the latter left the office, he carried with him a duly authenticated copy of what Squire Chisholm had written on the outside of the sealed packet. He went straight home. Biddy Flaherty, who had been prowling about for nearly two hours, saw him and felt relieved. ‘Now he has gone into his house, he can’t get out again without me seeing him,’ she thought; ‘an’ I’ll be after him whenever he goes, if it was to the end of the world.’

Aynsley received from his sister a list—a very brief list—of the callers for gratuitous consultation; and a still briefer list of patients who desired his attendance at their houses. They were two: one an old woman who lived in the Row which ran by the side of his house; the other was a shrimp-catcher in the same Row who had got himself badly pommelled in a drunken brawl. Neither case required immediate attention, so Aynsley told Jane he would go to them as soon as he found something he wanted from his bedroom.

In a corner beside the dressing-table was a strong sea-chest which had accompanied him all round the globe. Its chief contents now were old letters, diaries, and the uncompleted manuscript of a work which he hoped to get published some day, on the condition and treatment of emigrants

on board emigrant ships. He hastily examined the diaries until he found one dated eight years back. Then turning over the leaves, he stopped when he came to the name of Edward Fortescue, M.D. He read the paragraphs which followed the name, and as he read he became even more excited than when he had looked on the Squire's instructions on the packet in Mr Hammond's office.

'I have got it!' he exclaimed, with an expression of triumph and relief in his eyes.—'I may be late, Jane. Don't wait up for me. I shall go out by the side-door, as I must run down the Row to see those people, and I am in a hurry.' He went out by the side-door, and thus unconsciously escaped the attentions of Biddy Flaherty.

Having attended to his patients, Aynsley hurried to Suffling's mill. He had a pretty clear idea as to how he was to act now in order to place Mina in her proper position—he could not say restore her to it, since she had never held it at Broadmarsh. Everything, however, depended upon her strength; and he was rejoiced to find her much stronger than when he had last seen her. She had taken some of the beef-tea he left in the morning, and enjoyed another sound sleep. The feverish restlessness he dreaded had almost disappeared; and so, after beating about the bush for a few minutes, he ventured upon a direct question. 'You said that you did not expect Mr Chisholm back for a month. Did you make no attempt to communicate with him?'

'I had no opportunity. I wrote to him at the address he gave me, but I am sure my letters were not posted. When I knew that baby was dying, I implored Gedge to send a telegram, and he promised that he would do it. But even if he did contrive to send it away, it cannot have reached George, for—he loves me, and would have come at once when he learned that I so much wanted him.'

'I believe Gedge succeeded in despatching your message, and also that your husband received it.'

She started up in the bed, her eyes bright with the ecstasy of love which inspires new life.

'He has come back—and you know it!—Oh, bring him to me, and I shall be well!' she cried wildly.

'You must be calm, then, if I am to bring him to you,' said John Aynsley softly, and he was conscious of a distant craving in his heart for such a love as this woman had given to another. But he went on with brave unselfishness: 'You are right; he has returned, but it was early this morning, and he is so much fatigued that he is unable to leave his room.'

'Tell him that I am waiting for him—that I will die if he does not come,' she interrupted excitedly.

'I will go for him at once, and if he is able to move, he shall come. But you must promise to try to be quiet.'

'Yes, yes, I will be quiet till he comes,' she said, lying back on the pillow; 'but go at once. He will come when he knows where I am.'

Aynsley was not so confident of that, for the note of assignation with Blaxland was not yet explained.

'I am going to Broadmarsh now, and you may expect somebody here within an hour.'

He went out, and saw Joe Suffling standing on

the long ladder of his mill, gazing across the Denes towards the sea. He ran down the steps as soon as he saw the doctor.

'Look, sir,' he said in a flutter, 'd'yeow see that man without a hat? He have been a-wanderin' up an' down the denes an' the shore for more than an hour a-holding that rag in his hand, an' lookin' wild-like because he couldn't find something he wanted.'

'Who is he?'

'That be Master George—George Chisholm as belong to Broadmarsh.'

Aynsley darted out at the gate and across the Denes to the place where George Chisholm was wandering vaguely about, holding tightly in his hand a lady's handkerchief, which was soiled with sand and sea-water.

'I beg your pardon,' said Aynsley, halting in front of him; 'I believe you are Mr Chisholm of Broadmarsh?'

He was a sturdy and handsome fellow; but he looked distraught and dazed, with his bushy hair tossed and tangled by the wind. 'That is my name,' he answered shortly. 'What is yours, and what do you want with me?'

'Aynsley is my name, doctor of medicine by profession. I am surprised to find you here, for this morning I was told that you were too ill to leave your room or to see any stranger, although my business with you was most urgent.'

'I cannot talk with any one on business at present.'

He was striding hurriedly away. Aynsley saw that he must say something which would arrest the man's distracted attention. 'Mr Chisholm,' he said in a loud authoritative voice, 'I wish to speak to you about your wife.'

Chisholm halted, wheeled round unsteadily and glared at the speaker, who was again close in front of him. 'My wife!—I have no wife!' he exclaimed wildly, as he held up the handkerchief. 'See; this was hers—her name is on it—Mina. I found it on the sands, and she is drowned.'

'She is not drowned,' said the doctor reassuringly.

'Not drowned!—then she has gone away with' — He checked himself, and added gloomily: 'Then she has gone away, as my mother told me.'

'She has not gone away; but, despairing of your arrival, and driven frantic by circumstances which you will speedily learn if you will be calm, she fled from Broadmarsh, and in her frenzy I believe did mean to seek refuge there' (pointing to the sea); 'but Providence mercifully spared her from that crime. She is very ill, and longing only to see you.'

'Where is she? Where is she? Why did you not come to me at once with her message?'

'I have told you that I sought you, but was not allowed to see you.'

'Who that knew your message dared to prevent you?'

'Your mother. I explained everything to her, and still she refused.'

Chisholm staggered as if he had received a heavy blow on the chest. 'I know she does not care for Mina; but I did not think she would have done this,' he muttered feebly; and then with sudden energy, altogether oblivious to Blaxland's note, which had wrought so powerfully

upon him, he cried: 'But where is she? Where is my wife?'

The doctor laid a hand on his arm with a friendly grasp. 'She is up there in the miller's cottage. But before you see her, try to control yourself. The excitement of meeting you may prove too much for her.'

Aynsley took his arm and led him to the door of the cottage, the miller following at a little distance, wondering what new turn this queer business was to take.

Chisholm remained at the door whilst the doctor entered Mina's room. She was awake, and looked eagerly into his face. 'I have brought some one,' he began cautiously; but he was not allowed to proceed further.

'It is George—my husband!' she exclaimed excitedly. 'He has come—he has come!'

'Yes, my darling, I am here,' said Chisholm, bursting into the room; 'and God forgive me for my long neglect.'

There was a short hysterical cry of gladness, and husband and wife were clasped in each other's arms, whilst Aynsley quietly slipped out of the room, closing the door behind him.

An hour elapsed, and during that hour, a letter containing a long telegram was brought from Mr Hammond to the doctor, which the latter perused with evident satisfaction. Then he was called into the room by Chisholm, who looked pale but happy. There was a brief consultation, at the end of which Aynsley was empowered to proceed to Broadmarsh and explain to the Hon. Mrs Chisholm what had occurred, leaving her to make such arrangements as might be necessary for a separate establishment.

Joe Suffling harnessed his fast-trotting pony in the spring-cart and drove the doctor to Broadmarsh. His arrival before the return of the faithful Flaherty caused the Hon. Mrs Chisholm considerable surprise, but she entered the room in which he awaited her with a welcoming smile.

'I suppose you have come, doctor, to tell me that your patient is progressing favourably; and I am glad to say that you will soon have an opportunity of speaking to my son.'

'I have already had the satisfaction of speaking to your son, Mrs Chisholm, and I have now come to speak to you on matters so serious that I must ask you to give them your utmost attention.'

Unbidden, he seated himself at the table, and placed on it his old diary, open at the place in which lay the copy of the Squire's instructions, and the letter with telegram he had received from Mr Hammond whilst waiting at the mill.

'First, Mrs Chisholm, I wish you to understand that for the sake of your son'—he laid a curious emphasis on the word son—'and for the sake of his wife—as well as for your sake—I am anxious that as little as possible of the curious story which has come to my knowledge should be made public. It rests entirely with you whether or not it shall remain hidden.'

'I am still unable to comprehend,' she said with an effort to speak firmly.

'This is a copy of instructions written by the late Squire Chisholm outside a sealed packet which shortly before his death he entrusted to Mr Hammond, the solicitor who for many years managed all his legal affairs. Be good enough to read it carefully.'

She took the paper and read, her brows knitting more and more as she proceeded:

'This packet is only to be opened in the event of my wife, Elizabeth Balhooley, failing to fulfil the conditions on which I married her. These she knows, and they are fully explained in the document within. Should she in any way attempt to deprive my son, George Chisholm, of his property or to mar his happiness, the packet is to be opened, and the contents used as may be determined by legal authority. Should she die without any rupture between her and my son, Mr Hammond is on his own authority to destroy this packet by fire without opening it. My earnest prayer is that the contents may never be known to any one. GEORGE CHISHOLM.'

The names of the lawyer and two others were appended as witnesses to the Squire's signature.

'The packet has not been opened?' inquired the lady calmly.

'No.'

'Well, I should say it ought to be opened without waiting for the contingencies which my poor husband's imagination created. You ought to know that his intellect was much enfeebled for several years before he died; indeed, it never was very strong.'

'I do not think it should be opened,' said Aynsley very deliberately.

'Why should you say so, when you do not know what silly ravings it may contain?' she retorted, carelessly tossing the paper back to him.

'Because I know that it does not contain any ravings, but a statement of facts which—I think for every one's sake—having been so long kept in the dark, should not now be dragged into the light. A gentleman who knew you at Castle Blaney and in Paris was a friend of mine.'

'Impossible. No acquaintance of my family could be a friend of yours.'

'You are mistaken—his name is Dr Edward Fortescue.'

'Dr Fortescue—he is dead!' she gasped, her face turning yellow.

'Ah, I see you know him,' rejoined Aynsley with as near an approach to a sardonical smile as his kindly features could assume. 'No; he is not dead, I am glad to say; although at the time he told me the curious story of the hasty marriage of the Honourable Miss Balhooley and the birth of her son, I did not expect him to live more than a week.'

'What do you mean?' Her voice did not rise above a whisper and her eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

'You know that Dr Fortescue was a good-natured, careless fellow, and always impecunious. He had so much ability, that with only a little ballast he would have risen to a high place in his profession. Ill health compelled him to make a long sea-voyage, and he chose the ship *Hypatia*, bound for Melbourne, chiefly because I was the medical officer on board and his friend.'

'Well?' She took a soft handkerchief and wiped her lips, which were parched.

'Permit me to read a few extracts from my diary. The entry was made in June 1879, when we had been three weeks at sea. Listen!

'Fortescue has been to-day as indifferent as ever about the result of his illness, and talking much about his past career without more than a regretful smile at the opportunities he has allowed to slip by him. Amongst the stories he told me there was one which interested me much. He said that whilst in Paris in 1858 he was desperately hard up. He had borrowed from every one who would lend him a sou, and he had pawned everything which would pass for a coin at the humblest Mont de Piété. He was smoking the stump of his last cigar, and wondering how he could contrive to get a meal, when there was a knock at the door. He said "Come in," expecting to see the landlord or the concierge enter with a demand for payment of rent. But he saw a gentleman of middle age, in whom he recognised the wealthy Squire of Broadmarsh.

"You know me, Dr Fortescue?" said the visitor in a hesitating way, and it was clear that he was in a state of much nervous agitation.

"Of course I know you, Mr Chisholm, although we only met once at Castle Blaney. The way you carried off the Balhooley girl in a month and set the whole family on their feet again caused talk enough to make it impossible to forget you. That's nearly a year ago now.—Hope your lady is well?"

"Yes, she is—as well as can be expected. We learned a few weeks ago that you were in Paris, and I come to ask you in her name and my own to render us a service of the most vital importance to our future happiness."

"Only say what it is, and I'll do it," said Fortescue cheerily.

'The Squire became more nervous in his manner than before. Then, with an effort, he said firmly: "You are very kind, Dr Fortescue, and when you have heard me, I hope you will not refuse our request. But it is my duty to tell you that the service we require from you is of such a nature that it might injure your professional reputation if it ever became known."

Aynsley stopped reading and looked up. The Hon. Mrs Chisholm was now twisting her handkerchief viciously between her fingers, and there was a wild expression in her eyes which caused him some uneasiness.

'I think, madam,' he said, 'I can explain the rest more delicately and briefly in my own words than by reading this record. When it was written, I had no idea that I should ever have anything to do with the matter, and treated it in my diary as a curious story.'

'Go on,' she answered hoarsely.

'Then, madam, your husband told Fortescue that he had accepted the invitation to Castle Blaney in the hope of overcoming the gloom which possessed him by change and excitement. You observed his gloom, speedily won his confidence, and he told you the cause of his sorrow. He had loved a handsome peasant girl, but weak and cowardly fears of the ridicule of friends and neighbours made him hesitate to marry her. He blamed himself bitterly for this weakness; and when the girl gave birth to a son, he determined to repair the wrong he had done and marry her. But she died a fortnight after the child was born, and he was overwhelmed with remorse. He wished his son to be brought up as his heir, but

did not see how it could be done. You solved the difficulty.'

'Yes,' she murmured bitterly.

'You agreed to marry him at once and go abroad. After a due interval, you were to announce the birth of a son; and when you returned to England after a sufficient lapse of time to render the difference of age not easily perceived, the Squire's child passed as the one you were supposed to have borne. This you agreed to do on the condition that the Squire relieved your family from the absolute poverty into which they had fallen, and the further condition that his property should be equally divided amongst any children you might afterwards have.'

'Well?' she exclaimed fiercely. 'What then? Did I not make a sacrifice such as few women would make to gratify the whim of the man? Have I not kept the secret? Have I not fulfilled my part of the bargain? What harm have I done? Who is there that would not pity and sympathise with me rather than condemn me? Use the knowledge you have got of this family secret and who will suffer? Not I—but George—the husband of the woman you love!'

She thought that blow would silence him. Aynsley felt his cheeks tingle and his heart harden against the woman he had been inclined to pity in her discomfiture. He answered quietly: 'Yes, madam, I love Mrs Chisholm so respectfully that I remember she is the daughter of a dear friend and the wife of another man.'

'It is more than she remembered when, as this letter proves, she arranged to elope with her husband's pretended friend,' was the spiteful retort.

'You are altogether wrong on that point, I am glad to say. Here is a telegram from Mr Blaxland. Permit me to read it:

Never wrote one word to Mrs C. in my life. Note found is one addressed to Rhoda Hartford, which she lost at B. My journey to London is to arrange with her parents about our marriage, which comes off next month. Don't understand fuss, but will be down by last train. See you early to-morrow.

HENRY BLAXLAND.'

The Hon. Mrs Chisholm felt that the last support had snapped under her.

'How do I know that this is genuine?' she asked sulkily.

'You have only to await the arrival of Mr Blaxland, who will be accompanied by Miss Hartford, for a telegram requesting her presence has been despatched. Then it will be impossible to deny that the note you showed to me and to Mr George Chisholm, and which might have wrought so much harm, was one you filched from your niece's writing-case whilst she was staying here.'

'How do you know that?'

'Your question is a confession. I understand the whole position, and I respect your too great eagerness to assist and provide for your sisters and their offspring. Disappointed in not having children of your own, you were anxious to keep the lands of Broadmarsh in your family. Therefore you resolved that George should marry one of your nieces, and you thought Miss Hartford would be the most likely one to attract him.

Disappointed in that project, you hated the woman he chose for himself, and you cannot have entertained very tender feelings for him. But as your plans have failed, why not retire from Broadmarsh with your ample income, and save yourself the pain of coming in contact with people you do not like?

'I can keep them out of this!' she rejoined with a vicious gleam in her eyes.

'Very well, Mrs Chisholm; if you refuse to be guided by friendly advice, I will leave the matter entirely in the hands of Mr Hammond. Do you know what that will mean?'

'No; but it can be of no consequence to me.'

'I am afraid the consequences will be very serious to you. The sealed packet will be opened, and then your dead husband's words will make known to the world that not love for him or sympathy with him in his remorse, but a mere matter of money, induced you to enter into the conspiracy to pass off as your own the child of the woman he loved, and would have married had her life been spared. Then the false certificate of birth may involve you in some difficulty with the French authorities. Even if you escape imprisonment, you will be shunned by the society you enjoy so much. Probably, there would also be a post-mortem examination of the body of the child now lying in this house, when the interest you had in his death became known'—

'You dare not hint that I caused it,' she interrupted fiercely, but evidently alarmed.

'I have no doubt that the coroner's verdict would be—"death from natural causes;" but the result of the inquest would leave suspicion of you for ever in the public mind. Now, George Chisholm—who has authorised me to speak in his name—wishes you to be protected from all reproach. What he might wish if he knew the whole story, and that you were not his mother, I cannot say.'

'What would you have me do?' she asked with a sullen scowl at his calm face.

'Be wise, and take the course which will permit the whole of this miserable business to pass into oblivion. Go to London. Live there in peace amongst your numerous relatives and friends, and leave the young people here in peace. No one shall ever know the family secret, unless you force me or Mr Hammond to speak.'

She was conquered. That night she left Broadmarsh accompanied by Biddy Flaherty, who had returned to her mistress after finding, on inquiry, that Dr Aynsley had left his house hours before and would not be home till late.

The Hon. Mrs Chisholm did not see her niece Rhoda, and did not live to attend her wedding, for she was found dead in her chair on the sixth morning after she left Broadmarsh. The physician who was called in pronounced heart-disease to be the cause of the sudden death. Her will left everything it was in her power to bequeath to her sisters, nieces, and nephews in equal proportions. The name of George Chisholm was not mentioned. The latter with his wife returned to Broadmarsh; and after the funeral of their child, Mina slowly recovered health and strength under the careful attention she now received. Joe Suffling and Nan were well rewarded for their kindness to her; and they

both had good reason to think of that moonlight night when the black figure appeared on the Denes as the turning-point in their luck.

Mr Hammond duly burned Squire Chisholm's packet on the death of the widow; and at the same time John Aynsley destroyed all the portions of his diary relating to the Chisholms. So every proof of the family secret disappeared, and the Squire of Broadmarsh will never know that the Hon. Mrs Chisholm was not his mother.

She was buried in the family vault of the old church of Sandybeach; and as Aynsley turned away from the tomb, he thus charitably summed up the character of the deceased: 'The poor woman was insane in her desire to exalt and support her impoverished family.'

NEWS-TRANSMISSION FIFTY YEARS AGO.

THE following somewhat suggestive passage recently attracted our attention while we were reading an article on the 'Pre-eminent Power and Greatness of Britain' in the *Monthly Review* for 1826: 'A newspaper published in the morning in London is by the same night read a hundred and twenty miles off! The twopenny post revenue of London alone is said to equal the whole post-office revenue of France! The traveller going at night from London, sleeps on the second night four hundred miles off!'

We smile nowadays at the facts which appeared so startling to our fathers, and can well afford to let them enjoy their satisfaction without any feeling of envy, when we remember our own advantages. It was with no intention, however, of instituting any comparison between the past and the present that we have introduced the foregoing extract, but because it recalled to our mind a curious incident in the old days of reporting, which occurred some four or five years after the date of that passage. The circumstance we are about to relate was considered, in the era before railways were in existence and telegraphy was as yet undreamed of, a very remarkable instance of rapid reporting; indeed, it completely mystified even those connected with the then existing means for the transmission of news, and continued a problem for some time to those initiated in the ordinary work of journalists. It is from the unpublished notes of the gentleman who had the chief arrangement of the details of the matter that we take the following circumstances.

The undertaking in question was in connection with a famous banquet given at Glasgow more than fifty years ago, and which was convened for resuscitating the old Tory party, supposed to have been annihilated by the passing of the Reform Act. A memorable speech by Sir Robert Peel was anticipated as the great event of the occasion, every word of which would be eagerly read, and the first report of which it was necessary to strain every available resource to secure. The banquet at Glasgow took place on a Friday, and was not over until two o'clock on the Saturday morning; yet—and this is the startling feature which so astonished newspaper readers of that day—in a second edition of the Saturday issue of the *Morning Herald*—which edition was circulated over Great Britain and Ireland early the following

Monday—there was a report of the proceedings at Glasgow, with Peel's speech in full!

One incident alone is sufficient to show how taken by surprise everybody was at this astonishing instance of newspaper enterprise. Sir Robert Peel, after leaving Glasgow, proceeded to Netherby, and remained with Sir James Graham until Sunday morning. On that day, having important business to attend to, he left for the south. The open carriage in which he travelled stopped at the *King's Arms* at Kendal to change horses. The landlord of the inn had been told previously to hand Sir Robert a paper containing the proceedings at the banquet; and there were anxious eyes on the watch from the first-floor windows of the hostelry to note what effect the circumstance of so unprecedentedly early a report would produce upon his mind. He at first refused the paper; but on being told that there was a full report of the Glasgow demonstration in it, eagerly seized it, with at the same time an incredulous look. When, however, he saw in a Saturday's paper, published in London, his own speech verbatim, he was fairly astonished. There was no mistake about it, and leaning back in the carriage, he commenced reading it as, the horses being now changed, the journey was resumed southward.

How had it been possible under the then existing means of transit to secure a report of a speech made in Glasgow late on Friday night, in a London newspaper issued on the following Saturday, and circulated in Westmoreland on the Sunday morning after?

In order to appreciate the difficulties of the achievement, it is necessary that the reader should carry himself back to the period when it was effected. In those days, there being no railways or telegraphy, of course whatever was to be done in the way of rapid communication had to be done by the means of horse-flesh. It must also be borne in mind that Glasgow is four hundred miles from London. The second edition of the *Morning Herald* of Saturday, containing the report of the meeting held in Glasgow on Friday night, was in that town by six o'clock on the Monday morning following, thus accomplishing eight hundred miles in little over fifty hours, besides allowing time for writing and composing six columns of matter. Here was an apparent impossibility; and looking at the matter from one point of view, well might the sturdy natives of Yorkshire maintain that it was all a hoax, and that 'horse-flesh could not do it.' But what horse-flesh could not accomplish, a little ingenuity and arrangement, however, successfully effected.

It was, first of all, arranged to print a large number of Saturday's first edition of the *Morning Herald* with one page blank. There was at the time a coach, called the 'Manchester Telegraph,' which left the *Belle Sauvage*, Ludgate Hill, every morning at half-past five o'clock. This coach ran at the rate of twelve to thirteen miles an hour, and reached Manchester the same night. By this coach the papers were so far transmitted. An agent was awaiting the arrival of the coach at Manchester, and then carried the papers by post-chaise on to Kendal, which was reached early on Sunday morning. Here everything was in readiness for printing off the page left blank. The gentlemen who had been sent to represent the

Morning Herald at the banquet had arrived from Glasgow in Kendal on Saturday evening. Arrangements had previously been made with the printers of the *Kendal Mercury* for the use of their office; and the report of the meeting at Glasgow was set up and ready for press before the arrival of the partially printed papers from London early on the Sunday morning. Consequently, a report of the Friday evening's proceedings at Glasgow was in circulation in Kendal when Sir Robert Peel arrived there at mid-day on Sunday.

It might well seem marvellous to the residents of the north of England, in those days, before the era of electricity or steam, to have a London Saturday paper circulating in their midst before one o'clock on Sunday, containing a lengthy report of a dinner which had taken place at Glasgow on the previous Friday night! Not a single detail of the arrangements had failed; and the result was a complete success. The distribution of the copies over the whole kingdom was carried out with the same happy result; and early on Monday morning, when its contemporaries were being published in London only, the *Morning Herald* was circulating in all parts of Great Britain and Ireland. An apparent impossibility had been accomplished; and the '*Herald Express*' continued for some time to puzzle and excite the wonder of newspaper readers.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

IN testing the new rifle at Aldershot lately, the telephone was used as a means of communication between the marksmen and the markers at the butts. That such an innovation was necessary may be judged by the fact that the range of the new weapon varied during the trials from one mile to a mile and a half. It is the confident belief among those who ought to know, that when this new Magazine Rifle is served out to our troops, the English soldier will possess the most perfect arm of precision which it is at present possible to produce. It is, however, in the nature of things that by the time the army is fully provided for, a more perfect rifle will have been invented.

The *Scientific American* describes and illustrates a new form of bridge which it is proposed to erect across the river Bilbao, in Spain. This erection consists of a suspension bridge of light construction, which is supported from piers of such an elevation that high-masted vessels can easily pass beneath. Hanging from this bridge is a movable floor, the chains by which it is hung being so long that the floor itself is little above the water-level. This floor is pulled to and fro across the stream by suitable gearing, and acts in reality as a kind of travelling carriage for the conveyance of passengers and vehicles from bank to bank.

According to the North China *Herald* the yellow man is chiefly distinguished from his European brother by an entire absence of what in common parlance are known as 'nerves.' He can go through the most tedious and monotonous work from hour to hour and from day to day with no more sense of weariness or irritation than

if he were a machine. And this is characteristic of the young people as well as those of older growth, the boys being so good and tractable that they will plod away at their lessons without any feverish longings after the delights of play. The Chinaman can do without exercise or recreation of any kind. He can also sleep under conditions which would tax a European to the utmost: on a chair, a wheelbarrow, or on the floor, amid the rattle of machinery or the squalling of children, all is the same to him; nothing worries him. It may be this indifference to things that try the patience and temper of ordinary workers, which makes him so formidable a competitor in the labour markets of a not inconsiderable portion of the world.

The Monument on Fish Street Hill, erected by Wren to commemorate the Great Fire of London, which commenced its ravages not far from that spot, has lately shown signs of disintegration, pieces of stonework having fallen into the street below to the great alarm of the passers-by. It is satisfactory to learn that the injury to the structure is not of a serious nature, and that the column still remains as firmly fixed on its foundations, in spite of the near proximity of the Underground Railway, as it did when first built by its great architect. The limestone of which the Monument is built is continually acted upon by the acid vapours which contaminate the atmosphere of the great city, a condition of things non-existent in Wren's time. From this circumstance modern architects can learn a useful lesson, and should be careful to choose a stone for buildings in large cities or manufacturing districts which will resist the chemical action referred to.

Popular fallacies die hard, and one which seems to have the greatest amount of vitality is the old, old story of the toad in the rock. This notion that toads have been found alive in solid blocks of stone is one which has crept into many books, and is still occasionally revived as a thing to be believed in. Such an event has, according to a correspondent of the *Times*, lately happened at Greenock, the imprisoned toad having been found in a bed of clay, and supposed by the finder to have remained in that deposit since prehistoric times. More than fifty years ago, when this superstition regarding toads was common, Dean Buckland determined to set the matter at rest by crucial experiments. He caused several toads to be imprisoned in cells cut out from blocks of stone, which cells were firmly closed and the blocks buried for a period of several days. He also enclosed living toads in holes cut in trees; while some others he confined in plaster receptacles. After-examination showed that the majority of the creatures were dead; the others who retained life quickly succumbing to a subsequent short period of confinement.

Mr J. Johnson's 'Eclipse Life-belt' is a distinct improvement upon the perishable rubber variety and the cumbersome cork jacket used by life-boat crews. It consists of twenty corrugated metal tubes joined together with durable webbing, the tubes being placed vertically on the chest and back. This contrivance more than fulfils the Board of Trade requirement as to buoyancy—namely, twenty-five pounds in salt water, for it possesses a supporting power of thirty-two pounds in fresh water. The belt can also be adapted to

the side of a ship's boat, which can thus be readily made unsinkable. The inventor's address is 16 Dyott Street, London.

A novel form of steam-boiler, which is said to be quite non-explosive, has been invented by Messrs Serpollet of Paris, and is fully described in the pages of *La Nature*. It consists of a thick steel tube, which is flattened under heat and pressure until its central opening is represented by a line scarcely a hairbreadth in thickness. One end of this tube is connected with a pump worked by a small motor, which introduces the necessary water; the other end of the tube serving as the outlet for the steam. The tube is preferably wound into a coil, so that when fitted on to a furnace it will become uniformly heated. Directly the water is introduced, it is turned into vapour, and the steam is turned off by simply stopping the water-supply. The apparatus is of the simplest construction, and does not need the addition of a safety-valve, governor, gauge, or any of those adjuncts which make an ordinary steam-engine so expensive.

The annual Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain, which lately took place in London, did not bring forward any startling novelty either in the way of apparatus or process. But there was indicated by the pictures hung on the walls the wide acceptance by photographers of the comparatively new method of printing in salts of platinum instead of those of silver. Platinum gives a black-toned picture with a dull surface, which is far more artistic than the brown and purple tones with shiny surface which is associated with silver-printing. The platinum has the further merit of absolute permanency, so that it takes away from the photographic image its old reproach of being apt to fade. A recent modification in the platinum process has made its practice far more simple than it used to be, and this circumstance coupled with the advantages just pointed out will be sure to increase its votaries.

Alarm has again been occasioned by fresh subsidences in the Cheshire salt district, and at Northwich the *Wheatsheaf Inn*, a modern building, has collapsed to such an extent that it has had to be demolished. The inhabitants of the district naturally complain that they must see their property submerged and destroyed without any compensation; for although the ruin is attributable to the salt-works, the damage is so universal that it cannot be brought home to any individual worker. The subsidence is caused by pumping up the brine which is due to the melting of the rock-salt far below the surface. As this brine is removed, fresh water takes its place, to react upon the rocks until it is itself transformed to brine. And so the process goes on year after year, the very props of the earth being constantly removed. It has been suggested that the great Salt Syndicate, of which we have all recently heard so much, will constitute a distinct ownership, against which the injured ones may proceed with some hopes of pecuniary compensation for their losses.

At the Lambeth works of Messrs Brin, a practical demonstration was recently given of the direct conversion of iron into steel containing two per cent. of aluminium, a new process, which seems as promising as it is simple. The charge

consisted of about forty pounds of broken cast-iron, which was smeared with clay—the source of the aluminium—and a special flux. This charge was placed in a small foundry-furnace, and was speedily transformed into excellent steel. It is said that other metals can be similarly treated, and that any percentage of aluminium can be alloyed with them in the simple manner described. The plating of iron with aluminium by means of the blowpipe was also shown on the same occasion. It will be remembered that aluminium is a white metal which makes very valuable alloys with other metals, its cost of production hitherto limiting its use. It has gradually been getting cheaper, and this new process will most surely cause it to come into more common use than heretofore.

Remains of old Roman plank-roads have been found on a moor in Lower Hanover, and have been subjected to careful examination by order of the Prussian Minister of Education. Two parallel plank-roads were found to exist on the moor; but whilst one had been almost destroyed, evidently by force, the other showed distinct signs that it had been repaired during the Roman period; for in this latter case, boards had been fastened over the original planks, the fashion of the woodwork being carefully preserved.

The explosion of a petroleum vessel in Calais harbour calls attention to a new danger which menaces every place between which such vessels ply. So long as their tanks are full of oil, there is little danger, for there is no room for the explosive mixture of petroleum vapour and air to form. It is when the tanks have been emptied of their freight that danger arises. People *will* go into a gas-laden atmosphere and conduct their investigation with the aid of a naked light. There is little doubt that the Calais explosion was caused by this strange want of ordinary prudence. Now that the use of petroleum is so common as an illuminant, it behoves the government to take steps to place its use under some kind of legislative control; and this does not apply only to its transport, but to its daily use; for it is a fact that in the United Kingdom nearly three hundred lives are lost through the explosion of ill-constructed paraffin lamps. This is about double the number who fall victims to accidents in our mines. A government measure to deal with the important subject has long been talked about, but it has not yet reached the active stage.

A curious illustration of the perfection of our present method of railway-coupling and brake-operation is afforded by an incident which occurred on the Metropolitan Underground Railway a short time since. It will be remembered that this railway since its completion describes a complete circle round London, so that, on finishing its journey, a train comes back to the same station from which it started. It so happened that a passenger by one of these trains dropped a valuable ring as he left the carriage; but search upon the line failed to recover it. More than an hour afterwards the same train came into the station after having completed its circuit round London, when the ring was found upon the footboard where it had originally fallen. The vibration of the train during its long journey had not been sufficient to dislodge it from its position.

An ingenious method of detecting leaks in a ship has been devised by a Norwegian engineer; but, unfortunately, the method is only applicable to a vessel while in dry dock. A special form of furnace is employed, which is placed on the deck of the vessel, and in which a quantity of bramble or other material which will emit much smoke is burnt. This smoke is forced by means of a blower into the ship, the hatches and other openings having in the meantime been closed, and in a short time any leaks will be discovered by the smoke escaping from them. The time occupied in discovering a leak by this novel method is estimated at from thirty to forty minutes; but it naturally varies with the size of the ship under treatment. The cost of the test is about fourpence per ton.

A new substance which can be used for various purposes, and which can be kneaded while hot, or turned, bored, and otherwise manipulated when cold, is named Poteline, after Potel, its inventor. It is a mixture of gelatine, glycerine, and tannin, to which have been added zinc-white, sulphate of barium, or some similar earth. It can be coloured by the addition of any desired pigment. The proportions of its constituents vary with the use to which it is applied; thus, for sealing bottles, it must be used in the liquid state, and its solid constituents are reduced accordingly.

Many attempts have been made to construct a machine which shall effectually deal with the fibre of the Rhea or Ramie plant, a fibre of such length, strength, and lustre that it is particularly valuable in textile manufactures. The Indian government has twice offered a prize of five thousand pounds for a machine which shall accomplish the work required—namely, the separation of the fibre from the gummy matter and wood with which it is associated, and render it fit for the spinner. This prize has never been won. The French government, too, have offered a sum of money to be competed for in a similar way, and this prize also has yet to be awarded. Mr J. O. Wallace, who was recently exhibiting a Flax-scutching Machine at the Irish Exhibition in London, believes that he sees his way to solving the problem by a modification of his Flax Machine; and the way in which it deals with specimens of Rhea submitted to it shows that although this machine is constructed for another purpose, his hopes of success are well founded. The benefit to the textile trade which would accrue from this conquest of a long-known difficulty would be enormous.

The question of the probable existence of coal under London or in its vicinity is one which has for some time engaged the attention of geologists, many believing that the South Wales coalfield and that of Bristol may be connected by an intermediate link in the Thames Valley with the coal-measures of Belgium and Northern France. Mr Whittaker, who brought before the late meeting of the British Association at Bath an account of a deep boring which has recently been made in South London for the purpose of finding water, urges that this enterprise having failed, the boring might be used for settling the vexed question of the existence of coal in that neighbourhood. The boring in question has reached a depth of about eleven hundred feet, and it is urged that, now that the machinery is on the spot, the expense of

continuing the work would not be great, and could easily be met out of the government grant administered by the Royal Society. The discovery of coal would no doubt be interesting, and of great importance to Londoners in cheapening one of the first necessities of life. But would they not pay rather dearly for it, after all? Cheap coal in London would mean the establishment of iron-works and all kinds of factories in its pleasant suburbs, until the metropolitan area would rival the Black Country in its gloom and hideousness.

An Electrical Shoal-water Indicator has been devised by two Mexican inventors. It consists of a strong cylinder filled with shot, so that when hung by a cable from a ship it will remain perfectly upright in the water. Embedded in its centre is a glass or vulcanite tube half full of mercury, the two ends being closed by metallic plates, which are in communication, by insulated wires carried by the cable, with an electric battery and bell on the deck of the ship. The action of the apparatus is as follows: When the vessel approaches shallow water, the cylinder drags on the ground below, and is consequently no longer upright, but is thrown on its side. This causes the mercury in the tube to touch both the metallic plates attached to that tube, as above explained; the electrical circuit thus becomes complete, and the warning bell on the ship instantly rings.

It is stated that the sea-serpent was distinctly seen in Georgetown harbour on the 20th of last August, and that a tug named *Henry Buck* passed within two hundred yards of the monster. The creature is described as being about as thick as a flour-barrel, and appeared to be sleeping or resting on the surface of the water, until the near approach of the tug caused it to throw about fifteen feet of its tail into the air, to lash the water into foam and to swim rapidly away. It is believed that the monster cannot get out of the harbour, and that the expedition which was quickly organised to search for it will settle once and for all a question which has perplexed men for many ages. The account given is circumstantial enough, but not more so than many a description previously published by eye-witnesses. We hope to hear more of it.

According to recently published accounts, the lemon industry of Sicily is threatened with extinction, owing principally to the circumstance that one of its best customers, America, is now supplying herself with the coveted fruit. Lemon-growing in Florida is, it would seem, a most profitable industry; for a grove of young trees costing each about three shillings will in four years' time produce a crop of fruit selling for sixty pounds per acre, increasing regularly, until, at the end of ten years, ten times that amount will be netted from each acre of lemon-trees. The planters find that the richer soil is so productive that it is not an uncommon thing to find a single tree loaded with from four to five thousand lemons, each one being of a pound-weight. It is curious to note that this large-sized fruit is not saleable, for the very ludicrous reason that it is too big to fit the common American lemon-squeezers; so the lemon-trees are being now planted on poorer soil, so that the exuberance of their growth may be checked.

THE BLACKSMITH AND THE DAISY.

Among the daisies she nestled down,
And plucking one tiny bud,
She peeped through her lashes of hazel brown
At its beautiful crimson hood.
Then shaking the dew from its bonny head,
She lifted it up to her lips,
And whispered his name with a cheek as red
As the bloom on its fragrant tips.

'I love, I love!' and her voice grew bland
As the breeze from the gentle south;
'I love, I love!'—but a strong brown hand
Was laid on her smiling mouth.
'You love, you love!' and the brown hand twined
Through the waves of her sunny hair;
'They love, they love!' sang the tell-tale wind,
Through the locks of the whispering pair.

The shy wee daisy was borne away
From the fluttering girlish breast,
And the rough smith smiled as it coyly lay
In the crease of his open vest,
As though it were gracing the loneliest place
In the forge where he gaily toiled;
It smiled through the smoke with its sweet round face,
Till its leaves were all smeared and soiled.

Up went his sledge with a right good-will,
Then down with a merry clang;
Louder, and louder, and louder still,
As he whistled the tunes she sang.
He tossed his crisp locks as he fondly cried:
'How happy this toiling will be,
When you, love, are tending our own ingle-side,
And waiting, my darling, for me!

'Through the lights and shadows of forty years
I see you with wrinkled brow;
Ah, lovelier far! though your face appears
More grave and more thoughtful than now.
I steal to the window, and softly tap,
While you smile in your low rush-chair,
In your modest kerchief, your snow-white cap,
And your halo of dear gray hair.'

A rush of wind, and the daisy lay
'Mid the dust on the smithy floor,
Never to welcome the soft-eyed day,
Or the song of the blackbird more.
But the blacksmith lifted the faded thing,
Saying: 'Little I thought that this,
The most common flower of the field, could bring
Such a vision of perfect bliss.'

FANNY FORRESTER.

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HOW TO BE HAPPY.

'GIVE us, O give us the man who sings at his work,' says Carlyle. 'Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any of those who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He will do more in the same time—he will do it better—he will persevere longer. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its powers of endurance. Efforts to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous—a spirit all sunshine—graceful from very gladness—beautiful because bright.' It is the old story :

A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a !

It is easy enough to have this 'merry heart' when all goes well. But to keep it through all the ups and downs of this changeable world—that is the triumph. Yet our happiness is greatly in our own hands : and on the cultivation of the cheery spirit depends our usefulness to others.

But troubles are so heavy, some will say ; it is impossible to keep up. Even so ; let them lay us down, let them flatten us out like the grass under a garden roller. We can stand up afterwards humbly, as the grass does, and make the world fresher and brighter that we are still alive.

About being killed by troubles, old Dr Johnson once said a queer thing. He heard of Lady Somebody-or-other who was left a widow and died of a broken heart ; and he said if she had been a poor woman with nine children she would have been still alive. The case would have been worse, but the end would have been better. He knew enough of human nature to know that occupation is strength, and that we shall outlive Fortune's worst if we live for others.

We are dealing, however, not with great griefs, which must have their season, but with human unhappiness in general. It is neither affliction nor hardship that keeps most men and women unhappy. The game is not worth the candle, they say, when nothing troubles them except the

burden of themselves. The cultured ask, 'Is life worth living?' The rich and educated have imported the word *ennui* for their own exclusive use. Edwin has no misfortune to bear when he is in 'the blues ;' what Angelina calls 'the dumps' is a malady without known cause. The same Angelina's father has a balance at his banker's, when he feels life a bore ; and Angelina's mother has all she can wish for, when she is 'so low to-day.' To some people, as to the poet Cowper, it becomes a lifelong affliction to have no joy. Intellectual men are specially subject to it ; hence the ravings of the poets—which they might well have spared the world. Sensitive, highly strung, nervous natures, with the greatest capacity for happiness, have also the keenest sense of the want of it. Even the power of amusing others seems to be no safeguard for a man's own cheerfulness. We all know the story of the doctor advising his patient to cheer himself up by going to see Grimaldi the clown, and the patient saying : 'Sir, I am that unhappy man.'

The close union of mind and body is shown above all things in this—that sadness may be caused by disease, but it may also produce several different diseases. Illness and melancholy seem to work in a circle. It is the doctor's best hope that his patient will make a mechanical effort of cheerfulness and courage, and then in many cases of illness the charmed circle is broken, health returns, and the cheerfulness that was assumed soon becomes real and true by habit. Mark Tapley, we may be sure, did not suffer from 'nerves ;' and very few people do, who have formed the custom of looking at the bright side of everything and despising small worries. On the other hand, a healthy cheerfulness is more difficult for some men than for others. *Punch* was right in answering, 'Is life worth living?' by saying it depended on the liver—a pun perfect enough to make Charles Lamb turn in his grave.

But suppose there is health and still not happiness, what are we to think—dealing as we are, all the time, with the discontent of those who are free from acute discomfort—the form of

unhappiness that overclouds countless lives? We are to think simply that they have not learned how to be happy.

It does not depend on the wisdom of books; it is a practical matter, of which learned men are often profoundly ignorant. In what the boys call a stiff exam., with happiness for the subject, the great thinkers would nearly all be plucked. Carlyle said some good things about it, but gave no recipe for making it. He said that if the nations combined to make one shoeblack happy, they would fail; for if they gave him half the world, he would begin to want the other half. He said likewise, that if but one precious thing were taken away from what we possess, we should know *then* how happy we had been. But all the same he did not tell us how to be happy. Matthew Arnold defined happiness as a sense of hitting the mark; but where is the mark all along life's way, and how are we to hit it? Another great thinker said he despaired of being happy since 'there is no happiness for the gifted.' The lament reminds one of the comic woodcut of the 'sensitive plant'—the Professor at the piano weeping over his own music, while the company sit waiting for him to go on. The 'gifted' thinker argued that happiness diminishes as intelligence increases: that the cow in the meadow may be happy, but not the man. This theory is a favourite one because it is flattering; but it is forgotten that the highest capacity for pain is also the highest capacity for enjoyment. The cow in the field can eat grass and lie upon it, and feel the freshness of the day, and there its comfort ends. But who can count or measure the variety of joys any one of us thankless mortals has already received? Who can describe our capacity for happiness? As the starlit heavens are to our finite vision, it seems to go very near the infinite.

Ah! say the thinkers of discontented thoughts, that is precisely the reason why we suffer. The cattle know of no pleasure beyond eating grass; but we are conscious of an infinite craving. The more we have, if we get but leisure to rest and reflect, the greater is our hunger. When we toil up mountains from summit to summit, there is always a higher summit that no man has trod, and we are not one inch nearer its mists and clouds. Even when we make our home, and kindle fire upon the hearth, and gather our unbroken circle round it, there is a sense of incompleteness. There is a nameless, formless Something wanting, which cannot be got for love or money, nor for toil and time and tears.

Certainly, this is true. The infinite craving is the promise of our immortality. We should not wish to lose it. As George MacDonald has beautifully put it, there will yet come a moment of surprised recognition in which we shall exclaim: 'This was what it meant.'

Still, though perfect happiness is not meant for

us here, we were meant to be far happier than we let ourselves be. As Mrs Browning has it:

Methinks we do as fretful children do,
Leaning their faces on the window-pane,
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their view.

We all have our own sky and landscape, if we will not fret to see something else. In Mr Ruskin's newly edited *Christ's Folk in the Apennine*, there is a beautiful thought by a peasant. This Tuscan countrywoman said there was no reason why each of us should not have *two paradises*—one in this world, and one in the next; and 'as for myself,' she added, 'I trust in my Lord about everything, and I think that is why I get on so well.' In a word, because we cannot have the perfection of happiness, there is no reason why we should not be patiently happy each in our place, a light and a strength and a pleasure to the corners of the world where our lot is cast.

But how? comes the repeated question. Oh that there were some recipe for happiness in the Household books! There is 'How to make Claret-cup' and 'How to remove Stains from Marble;' but not that simplest most necessary recipe, 'How to be Happy.'

The best directions would be: 'Keep an even mind, and carry about with you the philosopher's stone (or the modern equivalent for it) to turn common things to gold.' This needs an explanation, or it might be like a certain recipe which is of no use to the public, because it begins by requiring 'crumbblions' of a fine purple colour.

Evenness of mind, to the sensitive nervous temperament, depends very much upon order. Regular hours of rising and of sleep: a certain broad order of duties in the day, to prevent hurry, and to give the sense of rest that comes of duty done—not many things undertaken, but few and finished; this is part of the self-discipline that contentment depends on. Secondly, beside order of time, visible order is a great help—neatness of person, and a home with the proverbial 'place for everything and everything in its place,' or rather restored to its place on the old-fashioned principle of clearing as we go. Visible order in its highest degree becomes visible beauty—the home full of brightness and good taste, the face and dress and bearing as pleasing as care can make them. All this outward order is a tonic for the mind. Thirdly, if we do not cultivate the power of silence at need, our edifice of happiness—the work of many days, built up to shelter ourselves and others—may all fall down in one hour. There must be in our recipe, added to the ingredients already stated, a small quantity of self-control in temper. The habit of cheerfulness will in time create a good temper; and, strangely enough, an honest pretence to be cheerful produces cheerfulness perfectly genuine. Lastly, look to what we have, not to what we have not; and let not trifles vex and sadden us, since our heart is made for greater things.

This closes the popular recipe for keeping an even mind; but to be happy is something still beyond. Where, then, is the philosopher's stone, that turns common things to gold? Where is the mark we can always hit, if happiness be the sense of hitting the mark?

Any observant man or woman must have noticed that the pursuit of one's own pleasure makes one hunger more and more, and become less hardy, more dependent on circumstance. We must all have noticed, too, that in the worst dejection nothing roused soul and body so quickly as to do—not to say, but to do—something for another. Here, then, is the secret; here is the philosopher's stone that can fill the most unpromising path with gold. If we try to satisfy ourselves, we shall fail. If we seek our joy in others, we shall infallibly succeed; continually we can find something to do for their welfare or comfort, or pleasure or success—not in great things, perhaps, but in the details of every day. Herein is the straight road to being happy 'under all circumstances;' herein is hinted why Johnson's poor widow would not die. As a matter of fact, the secret works so well in many lives around us, that one might say, in a paradox, that active unselfishness seems like the last refinement of self-love. One might say so—in haste and ignorance; but one does not. For even if there be alloy in the gold, we are thankful to the weak and human hands that do their best to make and give it. For them, there is no earthly occupation so happy, and their happiness means health and energy, and the power of being generous at need.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILMOT saw that he was on the wrong tack, so he determined to try another. He stood confronting Agnes, his face towards the entrance to the path, so that he could see any one the moment they turned the corner. 'No; it is not all that I have to say,' he went on with well-simulated passion and vehemence. 'When last I bade you farewell on that moonlight night which can never be forgotten by me, you told me that you loved me, and that you would be faithful to me, even though we might not be able to marry for years to come. I went, cherishing your image in my heart as that of my future wife. One or two letters I received from you; then came a long silence, which I was utterly at a loss to understand. When I returned to England, I found that your father was dead, and that you and your aunt had vanished no one knew whither. Everywhere I sought you, but in vain. Your concealment was very cleverly contrived, Mrs Esholt; I give you credit for that much. At last, by accident, our paths cross, and I find you—the wife of another! Now, I ask you, I demand of you, why you broke your faith with me? What had I done to be treated as you have treated me? Why

did you not write to me and tell me that you wished our engagement broken off, instead of leading me on in a fool's chase after a shadow? These are questions, Mrs Esholt, which I shall feel obliged by your answering.'

He acted the part of a wronged and indignant lover to perfection, and now stood with folded arms, his cheeks slightly flushed, in his dark flashing eyes an expression half made up of just resentment and half of the love he could not forget. He certainly looked very handsome: on that point every one would have been agreed.

The attack was so unexpected that Agnes knew not what to reply. Women are credulous where their affections are concerned; his impassioned manner and the earnestness of his voice wholly imposed upon her. He turned and went slowly along the walk; no one was yet in sight. Mechanically, Agnes followed him.

'I wrote you three letters,' she said in a voice half choked with emotion; 'and as soon as my aunt and I were settled in Liverpool, I at once sent you our new address.'

'I trust you will believe me,' he said impressively, but with a certain sadness in his voice, 'when I tell you that I never received any of the letters in question. But that perhaps was scarcely to be wondered at. We were trading up and down the coast, calling at various ports, but never stopping long at any of them. The other fellows on board were no more fortunate than I was as regards their letters from home.'

'They told Aunt Maria at the office that the letter she left there had been duly given into your hands, and if so'—

'Whoever told her so, lied!' broke in Wilmot vehemently. 'I give you my word of honour that no such letter ever reached me.'

'Even in that case, if you had written to Mr Ludford, he would at once have furnished you with our address.'

'Mr Ludford! I had almost forgotten the existence of such a person. I never saw him but once, and then only for half an hour. I knew no more where to find him than the man in the moon.'

There was not the slightest reason why Agnes should doubt the truth of what he had just told her. Never had she found him out in a lie or the semblance of one; why should she doubt him now? Her soul within her shivered as she listened to his words. Why, oh, why had she not waited a little longer? Why had her trust in him been so easily shattered? He had been true to her, while she!—

Suddenly Wilmot spoke again in low tones, which seemed to quiver with the passion he would fain hide, but could not. 'Agnes, I swear to you that at this moment I love you far more than ever I did, that you are infinitely dearer to me than on that night when we last parted! I know you are another's, that you can never be mine; but I must tell you this; I can keep silent no longer. I am willing to believe that circumstances were against us, that had you been less easily led, you would have remained true to me. But be that as it may, I have remained true to you—or rather, to the memory of that Agnes Granby whom I knew of old, for you are not her—you—are Mr Esholt's wife!' There was a

break in his voice as he spoke the last words; he turned away as if to hide his emotion.

It was a really clever bit of acting. In Mr Wilmot Burrell there was evidently the making of an accomplished *histrion*.

'O Wilmot, I cannot, I dare not listen to you,' cried the heart-stricken young wife. 'Let us return. Forget the past, and'—

'How easily come the words—"Forget the past!" We can no more forget it than we can alter it. But enough. You can never be mine; that I know to my sorrow. I ask but one thing—do not treat me so coldly, so like a stranger. Let me be at least your friend: more than that I dare not ask to be.'

They heard the others talking, and turned on the instant. Miss Esholt had purposely dawdled by the way, so as to give Agnes and Wilmot time for whatever they might have to say to each other. She glanced sharply at both of them as they came up. What she read in their faces was best known to herself.

'Davry,' she said that night to the faithful old servant, who was brushing her hair, 'Mrs Esholt is walking in a very pleasant meadow at present; but I see a precipice right in front of her.'

'Then, mistress, why don't you grab her by the sleeve and pull her back?' asked Davry the literal.

'She is walking towards it of her own accord and with wide-open eyes; why should mine be the hand to pluck her back?'

Wilmot's confession left Agnes powerless for some time to think of anything else. Could what he had told her be true? she asked herself again and again, while feeling it impossible to doubt that it was so. In that case, what a destiny had she woven for herself! In the belief that he was unfaithful to her, his image had been gradually becoming fainter and fainter in her memory, while her dawning love for her husband had been growing and expanding day by day. And now in a moment everything was changed. She acknowledged to herself, and trembled while she did so, that the ashes of her first love, which she had flattered herself were utterly extinguished in her heart, had been suddenly rekindled by Wilmot's passionate avowal that she was still as dear to him as ever she had been. Why had not Fate kept them asunder for ever!

After this, matters to all seeming went on as usual at The Hollies. Wilmot came and went as heretofore. All he had asked of Agnes was that in time to come she should treat him not as a stranger, but as a friend. How was it possible for her to refuse such a request? Little by little her demeanour towards him thawed, day by day her manner became less frigid and more familiar—but it was a familiarity that drew a line which was never overpassed by a hair-breadth. Agnes was still as careful as heretofore to give Wilmot no opportunity for venturing on any further confidences or confessions. It was a great strain on the young wife to have to keep on day after day playing the part she was now playing—to appear to the little world in which she lived and moved as nothing more than the quiet, equable friend of the man in whose heart, as she fully believed, the pulse of love still beat as passionately as of old, and still finding, alas! despite all her struggles to the contrary,

a faint responsive echo in her own. But the profound respect she felt for her husband, her admiration for his noble qualities, and the recollection of the vows she had taken upon herself at the altar—but more than all, and beyond all else, a certain something of which she herself was only half conscious, a something that touched the very well-springs of her being—upheld her and sustained her throughout her trial.

This change in the demeanour of Agnes was set down by Wilmot to a cause far different from the real one, as was nearly sure to be the case with a man of his calibre. He forgot, or did not choose to remember, that it was he himself who had implored her to treat him in future as a friend—as one who had been the companion of her youth, and had lived for months at a time under her father's roof. His vanity whispered that the love which he still fondly imagined she felt for him was gradually obtaining the mastery over her will. Never had he been more mistaken in his life. The false inference thus drawn served but to confirm and strengthen him in a certain dark design which had been simmering in his brain for some time. He was of a sanguine disposition, and he secretly exulted in the certainty of its accomplishment; but he was far too wary, or, as he would have termed it, too 'wide awake,' to betray anything of that which was passing in his mind. To all appearance he was just the same as on the day he first set foot across the threshold of The Hollies: to Mr Esholt, deferential, without the slightest trace of servility; to his wife, respectfully familiar, but still with a certain distance in his manner towards her, and not often addressing her individually; to Miss Esholt, amusing, chatty, and at all times evidently desirous of making himself as agreeable to her as possible.

But Miss Esholt flattered herself that she was not deceived by these outward manifestations either on one side or the other. She had half divined from the first that there had been a love episode between Agnes and Wilmot at some former period, and herein lay the secret of her tactics on the day of the excursion to Rushmere Grange. She had noticed from the first how studiously Agnes had avoided the possibility of any tête-à-tête with the young man; which only made her the more determined that the chance should be afforded him if she could anyway help in bringing it about. It had seemed to her scheming brain that such an interview might have results unforeseen and uncounted on. She was right in believing that Wilmot, all his studied indifference to the contrary, was still secretly in love with Agnes; but as regards the latter, she was, equally with Wilmot, in the wrong. Having no particulars of the interview between the two to guide her in arriving at a conclusion, she not unnaturally attached a wrong value to the change in Agnes's demeanour towards her former lover. 'Step by step she is drawing nearer the precipice,' she murmured to herself more than once. 'Can it be that she is walking blindfold, and does not see whither the path she is treading will lead her? No—I cannot, I will not believe it.'

Some two or three weeks passed thus, when one morning Mr Esholt received a letter which necessitated his immediate departure from home

on a business matter of much moment. He did not expect to be away longer than a week; but as the autumn was now well advanced, and as the fine weather seemed to have broken up, he suggested that during his absence the ladies should effect their removal back to Everton. Agnes scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry that her sojourn at the seaside was thus brought to an abrupt conclusion. She dreaded going back to a renewal of her former experiences in the gloomy old house, and to the daily, almost hourly companionship of Miss Esholt. But on the other hand, was it not well for her that this brief spell of sunlight should come to an end as quickly as possible? Since the day at Rushmere, her thoughts had gradually become tinctured with a dangerous sweetness, to indulge in which, as in the case of certain insidious drugs, seemed to become more of a necessity day by day. Yes, all things considered, it was decidedly for the best that she should go back to Everton and that as speedily as possible.

One of Mr Esholt's last requests before leaving home was that, in his absence, Wilmot Burrell should act as escort to the ladies on the occasion of their journey from New Brighton to Everton.

The news of their departure fell on Wilmot like a thunderclap. He had of course known that the sojourn at New Brighton must come to an end before long; but he had quite counted on its lasting three weeks or a month longer. Mr Esholt's sudden determination seemed likely to interfere seriously with certain plans of his own. When once Agnes was back at Everton, she would be as good as lost to him. Mr Esholt might perchance ask him to dinner once or twice a month, but that was as much as he could look forward to. Whatever he might have to say to Agnes in private must be said before she left The Hollies.

Chance seemed to favour his designs. On the evening before the day fixed for their departure, he called upon the ladies to ascertain whether all their arrangements were completed, or whether they had any final instructions still to give him. He found both Miss Esholt and Miss Remington at The Hollies; but was told that Mrs Esholt had gone as far as the library to take some books back; so, as it was now growing dusk, and there were a number of noisy excursionists about, he said he would go part of the way and meet her. He encountered her about half way as she was coming back. She was somewhat surprised to see him, but made no comment. They walked for a little while in silence; then Wilmot said: "How soft and still the evening is! But for those noisy revellers in the distance, one might fancy all the world asleep. Somehow, an evening like this always carries me back in memory to those happy hours, "twixt the gloaming and the mirk," which now seem so long ago, when we used to pace the vicarage garden together, or wander drowsily, hand in hand, by the side of the soft-flowing river. Old memories and old faces will start up before the most worldly of us at times, and transport us by their magic spell to the happy past. Are you, Agnes, never haunted by such visions of the days that were?" He ventured a glance at her face as he asked the question, but in the dusk he could read nothing.

It was the first time he had ventured to call her by her baptismal name since that day at Rushmere. Some fine instinct seemed to put her on her guard in a moment. "We are all of us, I hope, haunted by visions of the past at times," she said gently, but a little coldly. "We should be worse than we are were it not so. But why dwell so much on the past, Mr Burrell? Why not labour in the present, and look forward to the future cheerfully and with a brave heart?"

Both her words and her manner stung him. "And what is the future to me?" he asked passionately, forgetting for the moment the *rôle* he had imposed upon himself. "What have I to hope or care for in time to come? Nothing. You have taken care of that. It is easy for you to preach of hope and cheerfulness—you who can look forward with complacency to always enjoying the same tame, pulseless existence that is yours to-day. But with me it is different. When once I love, I love for ever, and if I cannot possess that which I love, do not ask me to be happy. Why were you faithless to me? Why did you desert me for a richer man? You have taken from me what I valued most on earth; you have stabbed me to the heart, and now you mock me by asking me to sit down, destitute and bleeding, and delude myself with the idea that I am content!"

This was not at all what he had intended to say. He had intended to be sentimental and pathetic; to let her see that the smiling mask he wore before the world hid a bruised and bleeding heart; he had wanted, in short, to so far enlist her sympathies for his assumed sufferings that after her return to Everton his image should still be paramount in her thoughts. Unfortunately for his purpose, he had allowed his temper to carry him away, and almost before the words had passed his lips, he felt that they would have been better unsaid.

Agnes walked on for a few paces before she could steady her nerves sufficiently to reply. When she did speak, it was in cold, measured tones, in which there was an unmistakable touch of scorn. "Mr Burrell," she said, "you and I have always been good friends: we might, perhaps, have been more than that had circumstances controlled our lives differently; but more than friends we can never be now, and less than that there is no desire on my part that we should be. If, therefore, you have any wish that the friendship between us should remain unbroken, I say to you—Beware. It will depend on yourself in future whether we meet as friends or as strangers."

They reached the garden gate as she ceased speaking. She passed through, thinking that Wilmot would follow her; but he came instead to a sudden halt and let her go forward into the house alone. He felt that in his present mood he could not face those "two other women," as he termed Miss Esholt and Miss Remington to himself. He turned on his heel moodily and took the road which led back to his lodgings. He was savage with himself, savage with Agnes, and, as a matter of course, savage with creation in general. "I'll bend or break you yet, my fine lady, despite your virtuous airs, which are all a sham, and merely put on to hide your

cowardice,' he muttered between his teeth. 'You love me in your heart, and you can't help yourself; and you shall yet be mine in spite of everything!'

OUR OLDEST STAPLE INDUSTRY.

SALT MANUFACTURE.

UNTIL recently, it was the custom, at certain festive seasons, to admit the public to an illuminated rock-salt mine in Cheshire, generally for some charitable object. The sight was at once interesting and impressive. Those stupendous pillars holding up the crystal roof, from which depended great stalactitic masses, sparkling in the reflected light of myriads of candles, struck the beholder with amazement; and as he beheld, he could not fail to reflect with what a liberal hand Nature had provided for one of the sternest of human necessities.

Here, in the district of which Northwich is the centre, are situated those great beds of salt and reservoirs of brine which supply the wants not only of England herself, but also of a large part of the habitable globe. For salt is a necessity—a prime necessity—of human existence. Its very abundance and cheapness make us, the possessors of these rich stores, think perhaps all too lightly of it. Elsewhere, the case is different. In India, for example, where natural beds of salt are found only in limited areas, and those chiefly in the north, vast numbers of our fellow-subjects are dependent upon the supplies they get from England. The people of India are poor, and taxes upon food are to them, as to us, a grievous burden; yet this necessity of life is taxed, and—so statesmen tell us—necessarily taxed, for purposes of revenue. What would the Englishman say if every ounce of salt that comes to his breakfast-table had first to pass under the thumb of the exciseman?

An industry so important, and withal so ancient, carried on in our midst presents many features of interest. Its history is interesting; the methods of carrying on the industry are interesting; and above all, the effects of the industry upon the physical contour of the district are interesting, and it may be added, even alarming; for do we not read every now and then of subsidences of the ground—of mines falling in—of lakes forming upon land where not many years ago corn was reaped—of churches, bridges, and dwelling-houses having to be abandoned, and even of risk to human life from the sudden formation of deep holes in the middle of a populous district?

Let us examine the facts, and see how, from small beginnings, the Cheshire salt-field has obtained so important a place in the world's economy.

Salt was manufactured in the district in very ancient times. The produce, however, when the means of conveyance, and therefore of distribution, were limited was small, and the methods of manufacture of the rudest kind. But, whatever improvements may have been effected in manufacturing appliances, the method adopted was practically the same—that is, by the evaporation of the saturated solution of rock-salt, or brine. Natural brine-springs existed in the district, and were utilised, it would appear, before

rock-salt was even discovered. The Romans, it is believed, were not ignorant of them. In the earliest periods of which we have any record, the brine was raised from shallow pits by means of buckets and hand-pumps; at length, pumping-power was obtained by water-wheels and wind-mills; and finally, upon the invention of the steam-engine, this more powerful motor was brought into requisition. The place where salt was manufactured was anciently called a 'wich'; thus, we have still the appellations Northwich, Nantwich, Droitwich, &c., clinging to some of the chief centres of the salt industry.

Droitwich, which is situated in Worcestershire—and one of the most important seats of the salt industry outside the county of Cheshire—early sprang into importance. In the year 816, Kenulph, king of the Mercians, gave 'Hamilton and ten houses in Wich' with salt-furnaces to the church of Worcester; and about the year 906, Edwy, king of England, endowed the same church with Jepstone and five salt furnaces, or scales. Of the Cheshire wiches we find the first authentic record in Domesday Book. Inquiry was made, by direction of William the Conqueror, as to the holders of these places in the time of Edward the Confessor, the last hereditary Saxon king; and we have an account of the wiches and salt-houses then in operation. The rights of property were, even at that early period, exercised over the brine-springs and salt-works.

Some of the laws and customs which regulated the traffic in manufactured salt are exceedingly curious. Thus: 'Whoever loaded his wain so that the axle broke within a league of either wich, gave two shillings to the king's or the earl's officer if he were overtaken within the league. In like manner he who loaded his horse so as to break its back gave two shillings if overtaken within the league, but nothing if overtaken beyond it. Whoever made two horse-loads of salt out of one was fined forty shillings if the officer overtook him. If he was not found, nothing was to be exacted from any other. Men on foot from another hundred buying salt paid twopence for eight men's loads. Men of the same hundred paid one penny for the same number of loads.'

The salt manufacture in one form or another has been carried on in Cheshire from a very early period, the yield increasing with the population. After the lapse of many years, the pits from which brine had been drawn ceased to be remunerative, and were abandoned, others being sunk as occasion required. The area of manufacture has also extended considerably during the last century, and some places have sprung into importance, notably Winsford, in the valley of the Weaver, which at the present time disputes with Northwich the supremacy as being the chief centre of production.

The geological features of this remarkable salt-field are of peculiar interest. The formation of the 'meres,' so peculiar to Cheshire, is believed to have been due to the solution in past ages of beds of rock-salt lying at great depths below the surface. The depth of the water in one of these meres, at Rostherne, has never been accurately ascertained.

The area of the district in which the saliferous marls have been deposited is, according to Mr Dickinson, Her Majesty's Chief-inspector of Mines,

computed at seven or eight hundred square miles. These marls rest chiefly upon red and variegated sandstones, the exceptions being chiefly south of Macclesfield and beyond the east of Congleton to Odd Rode; and also in part of Lancashire, where they rest upon the carboniferous formation. Beyond Frodsham, extending in a westerly and then in a northerly direction, the salt deposits in the geological epochs seem to have been formed in what is now occupied by part of the estuary of the Mersey. In the salt districts of Cheshire, outcrops of the saliferous marls and marlstones exist in several localities, as at Acton and Winsford.

No outcrop of rock-salt now remains in the salt districts of the United Kingdom. The depth to the top of the rock-salt, called the rock-head, is one hundred and thirty-two feet at Northwich, and one hundred and ninety-five feet at Winsford, whilst at Middlewich no rock-salt has yet been discovered.

Geologists are by no means agreed as to the manner in which these enormous beds of rock-salt were formed. There is, however, a leaning by competent observers to the theory that during the Permian age successive subsidences and upheavals of the land took place; that at each depression of the surface the sea overflowed an extensive low-lying area, where eventually a deposit of salt was formed by evaporation; and that by repetitions of this process the vast beds which we now find were accumulated. In a rough way, the thickness of the beds has been averaged at one hundred and fifty feet, and the extent twenty miles by twelve or fifteen miles; but this extent has not been actually proved.

Practically, the deposits are considered inexhaustible. The upper surface of the rock-salt appears to undulate similarly to the undulations of the surface of the ground. It is upon the top bed of the rock-salt that the brine called rock-head brine ordinarily lies.

The raising of rock-salt is not now carried on to the same extent as formerly. Brine is abundant, and is more readily converted into the salt of commerce, the 'rock' produced by the mines being used almost exclusively in the alkali manufacture. The stores of brine will undoubtedly exist so long as there is plenty of rock-salt to which surface-water, percolating through the superincumbent earth and marl, can have access. The rock is very readily converted into brine by the simple process of solution, which is ceaselessly carried on under ground by the silent operations of Nature. As soon as it reaches a certain depth, the water finds its way into some one of the innumerable streams which are for ever eating away the rock-head, and flowing, in the form of brine, towards the works where pumping is carried on. These streams are locally called 'brine-runs.' This is a constant, ceaseless operation, in which Nature adapts herself in a wonderful way to man's necessities, till we have come to believe that what is will always be. So, indeed, we may take it, for all practical purposes; for, in spite of the increasing output of manufactured salt, no one has yet been known to express a fear, as in the case of our coal-supply, that we are within measurable distance of seeing the exhaustion of our stores.

The underground brine-runs have been proved

to extend for miles. The law by which they are guided seems only the requirement of a supply of water, and descent. Some of them, as the subsidences show, take nearly straight courses, whilst others twist about in various directions. The course taken will probably be where the resistance is least, or where the rock-salt is softest, or in hollows on its surface.

The quantity of brine used annually has been estimated at nine million tons, which will yield (allowance being made for waste) 1,800,000 tons of white salt. A gallon of fully saturated brine contains two pounds eight ounces, sometimes two pounds ten ounces, of salt. The general average of sea-water does not exceed three to three and a half per cent. The manufacture of white or table salt, and practically of commercial salt of every description, is effected by evaporation in shallow pans, either over a coal-fire or by the utilisation of waste steam from engine-boilers. The heat applied varies according to the quality of salt which it is desired to produce. Domestic salt of the finest grain requires for its manufacture a temperature of two hundred and twenty-six degrees Fahrenheit—the boiling-point for brine. As the liquid evaporates, the solid particles sink to the bottom of the pan, forming in the aggregate the lumps with which every housewife is so familiar. For commoner salt the temperature is one hundred and sixty to one hundred and seventy degrees Fahrenheit. This salt is close in texture, and clustered together in larger or smaller pyramids, according to the heat applied. For large-grained flaky salt the temperature is one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty degrees Fahrenheit; and for large-grained fishing-salt, one hundred to one hundred and ten degrees—the slowness of the evaporation allowing the salt to form in cubical crystals.

What used to be called bay-salt, or salt formed by the operation of the air and heat of the sun, although still extensively practised in warmer climates, seems now to be a thing of the past in this country. In the earliest times, this process was probably the only one carried on. Either brine or sea-water was run into shallow pits or reservoirs, where it evaporated to a certain degree, the work being afterwards completed by pouring upon twigs, and sometimes, it is said, by pouring the liquid upon burning wood and collecting the salt deposited upon the ashes. Until long after historic times, wood was the only fuel used; it was not until the year 1656 that the substitution of coal, at Nantwich, is mentioned as a novelty. This might be explained by the difficulty of carriage in those days, as no coal-beds exist within a good many miles of the salt districts.

What, it is interesting to ask, must be the effect upon the district of the abstraction of this enormous quantity of rock-salt and brine? It is not difficult to see that some change in the physical features of the country must in process of time be brought about. And had past generations of those engaged in the manufacture given it a thought, they must have foreseen what is now actually taking place before our eyes. Not that they could have arrested the threatened mischief, for that was, and is, physically impossible, save by putting an end to the industry altogether. The inevitable, it may be said, is

now fully recognised by all interested—that, as brine is pumped up, every gallon representing so much of the 'rock-head' (rock-salt) washed away, so must the ground subside to fill up the subterranean caverns which are in perpetual course of formation.

The effects of this process of solution and pumping have become more and more visible in recent years, as the manufacture of salt has increased. Any one visiting the town of Northwich for the first time cannot fail to be struck with the singular aspect presented by whole streets of buildings. If an earthquake had visited the place, shops and dwelling-houses, bridges and public buildings, could not have presented a more higgledy-piggledy tumble-down appearance. Here we find an hotel yard where the earth not long since sank without warning, swallowing up a farmer's horse and leaving a yawning chasm dangerous to approach. There you see shops and houses which have sunk by a more gradual process, for the doorsteps are below the street-level, and the walls lean this way and that. The town bridge over the river Weaver some few years ago gave way, and became dangerous from the same cause. A building where sat the County Court judge has had to be abandoned; gas and water pipes are constantly breaking below the pavements; and, more alarming still, at intervals of a few years, subsidences on an enormous scale are reported, happily not in the town itself, but in the immediate district, threatening with swift destruction a considerable area. Yet the people take it all as a matter of course. Lakes of considerable extent have formed on what was, within living memory—within a score of years in some cases—rich agricultural land; and while the salt Companies are amassing wealth by this destruction of arable ground, it would appear that the luckless owners of the soil are without remedy! A sheet of water called Witton Flash, near Northwich, has been formed by the gradual sinking of the earth, beginning early in the century, until a year or two ago it was reported to be more than one hundred acres in extent, its depth varying from seven to eighty-five feet—the latter at a place where originally there was nothing but a small brook. In the process of subsidence, a corn-mill and other erections have been submerged. There are other 'flashes' or hollows filled with water in close proximity to that at Witton, and, like it, undergoing constant enlargement.

The most dangerous kind of subsidence is that which occurs—and happily the occurrence is rare—through the falling-in of a rock-salt mine. The last and most alarming occurrence of this sort was in 1880, when the roof of Platt's Hill Mine, belonging to Mr John Thompson, gave way, causing an inrush of water from the Weaver and from neighbouring streams, and filling up the mine to a great depth. This was not an abandoned mine, but was actually being worked. The inundation took place a little before six o'clock in the morning, ere the miners went down; otherwise, there might have been serious loss of life. Besides some old workings communicating with Platt's Hill Mine, that mine itself was very extensive, with excavations fifteen to eighteen feet in height, the depth of the shafts being three hundred and twenty-one feet. 'On my arrival,' says Mr Dickinson, the government inspector, 'next day I found the water up to seventy-eight feet from the top of the Platt's

Hill shafts, being considerably above the rock-head and nearly level with the Weaver navigation. Many acres of the surface were still on the move, with large cracks or breaks going on, and water was bubbling up in levelling itself in the numerous ponds, and, as air was being forced out under considerable pressure from the old excavations, bringing with it a smell, like sewage, or the long accumulated remains from powder-smoke. Parts of Ashton's salt-works and a large chimney had fallen into some of the chasms, and the road and the brine-pipes for conveying brine from brine-pits to salt-works were broken up.' The occurrence was considered one of the most extensive and alarming that had ever occurred in the district. When the inundation was in full force, the large ponds surrounding the old fallen-in pits looked like so many boiling caldrons with the water and air bursting up over the surface; and on the banks were a number of what were called by the people of the neighbourhood mud volcanoes, the wet earth being thrown up to the height of seven or eight feet.

The inundation of these old rock-salt mines is not wholly a disaster to their owners, for in course of time the water eats away the rock-salt until it becomes saturated, when it is pumped up in the form of brine. Such occurrences as that described are, however, sufficiently alarming. It is a fortunate circumstance that, up to the present time, there has been little if any personal injury either to workpeople concerned in the trade or to the general public on account of these repeated subsidences, though the damage to property is very considerable.

It may be remarked, in closing this paper, that a new direction has recently been given to the salt manufacture by the formation of what is known as the Salt Union (Limited). The object of the Union is 'to consolidate the undertakings of the salt proprietors in the United Kingdom, with a view to ending reckless competition,' which, it is averred, 'injuriously affects the salt industry without affording any adequate advantage to the public.'

MR MAGSDALE'S COURTSHIP.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

By EDWARD D. CUMING.

CHAPTER I.—HE PROPOSES.

MRS CORNELIA BUNSHAW sat in her armchair by the fire, dividing her attention about equally between the book on her lap and the clock on the mantel-piece. 'A quarter to twelve, and Peter is not in yet,' said Mrs Bunshaw; 'nearly midnight, and that precious pair still gadding about. It's disgraceful, scandalous! Once in a way, I shouldn't mind it, perhaps; but this makes the third late night in one week. I won't go to bed till I give Peter a bit of my mind, if I sit up till daylight to do it.'

This harangue, which was apparently addressed to the cat, referred to the lady's brother Mr Peter Magsdale, and her cousin Mr Allan Magsdale, who had gone out immediately after dinner 'for a stroll,' with a parting injunction to her not to sit up for them.

We will take advantage of the opportunity offered by Mrs Bunshaw's temporary quietude to describe her appearance and circumstances, the first being somewhat remarkable. She is a tall angular woman, of about fifty, with hard features, and large thick-lipped mouth. Gray hair, cut short, and rather unkempt. She wears a plain black stuff dress and an ancient shawl. She is a clever strong-minded woman, who has taken a prominent part in organising and promoting a 'Society for the Protection of Women's Rights,' the members of which still regard her as its moving spirit. She seldom takes an active part in its proceedings now, however, except at the annual meeting, when Mrs Cornelia Bunshaw's speech is looked forward to as the feature of an occasion whose importance is not yet fully recognised by the world on which the Society's operations are destined to have a stupendous and far-reaching effect. An unlovely being is Mrs Bunshaw, and we see her at her worst as she sits bolt upright, listening with wrathful eagerness for the footsteps she expects to hear every moment on the gravel path outside.

The late Mr Bunshaw departed this life many years ago, taking with him a wide theoretical knowledge of the rights of women, and a burning practical sense of the wrongs of man, for which he was indebted to the principles and teachings of the wife he left behind him. His childless relict now resided with her brother and cousin at Astley Villa, Putney. The former, Mr Peter Magsdale, was thirty-three years of age, a small retiring person, the very meekest and most timid of Somerset House clerks. His sister, who was left a considerable fortune, made him heir to her property on the condition that she was to take up her abode with him when and for so long as she pleased—a stipulation he often deeply regretted, but had not courage to repudiate. Mr Allan Magsdale, the cousin, aged twenty-six, was an architect by profession. He possessed a boundless fund of animal spirits, and his guiding principle in life was to obtain as much enjoyment from it as possible. It would be hard to find two men more dissimilar in every respect than Peter and Allan; but they lived together in the most perfect concord, until Mrs Bunshaw's arrival at Astley Villa wrought a change in the spirit of their dream, and drew them even more closely together than before.

'Peter would never behave like this if he were left to himself,' soliloquised his sister. 'It's Allan I have to thank for leading him astray. But it shan't go on. I'll let Peter understand that Master Allan must look out for other quarters. He shan't stay here another week.'

It would not be easy to define Mrs Bunshaw's objection to her brother's doings. They could not have caused her any inconvenience, and her task of sitting up for him was purely self-imposed. It is probable that the intense dislike she had for her cousin was the motive which prompted her to interfere, for she was perfectly correct in assigning

Peter's misconduct to him. Without him, Mr Magsdale would have known the orgies called smoking concerts only by name; the music halls of the metropolis would have been untrodden ground; whilst the idea of snug but rather uproarious little suppers after such entertainments would hardly have entered his mind. Now, thanks to Allan, he 'knew his way about;' and he reaped a fearful joy from his little wickednesses, which derived additional piquancy from the fact that the sister who ruled him knew little of the manner in which his evenings were spent. But though Mrs Bunshaw was ignorant of the exact nature of his nocturnal pastimes, and disdained to question him on the subject, the late hours he affected furnished her with ample grounds for the indignant wrath she cherished against the hardened sinner who led him astray. Latterly, she had observed a discreet reticence in her intercourse with Allan; his buoyant soul and unfailing good temper rendered him impervious to patronage and snubs alike; whilst his aggravating habit of turning her most cutting sarcasms into ridicule, had forced her to conclude that it was safest to leave him alone.

It was past midnight when Mrs Bunshaw's strained attention caught the sound of a latch-key being stealthily inserted in the lock, and she drew herself up to receive the delinquents, whose hushed movements in the hall betrayed their belief that the occupants of the house were in bed.

'We might have a little drink before turning in,' said Mr Magsdale as he opened the drawing-room door. 'Go and get the things from the sideboard, like a good fellow.'

Allan departed on his errand, leaving his unsuspecting relative to enter the drawing-room and encounter Mrs Bunshaw by himself.

'Are you aware of the hour, Peter?' she asked the startled man, with a tragic wave of the arm in the direction of the clock.

'About twelve, isn't it?' he replied with rather sickly nonchalance. He could never muster up courage to face his sister unless supported by Allan: she carried far too many guns for him.

'About twenty-five minutes past twelve, Peter,' said the lady in measured tones which conveyed a world of meaning.

Mr Magsdale drew out his watch, and after looking earnestly at it, acknowledged the impeachment.

'Ah, perhaps it is about bedtime,' he said, listening anxiously for Allan's approach.—'Missed the train—sorry we're so late,' he added in a penitent murmur.

Mrs Bunshaw turned upon him and with awful calmness began: 'I must leave your house, Peter. I came here with the wish and the intention of guarding your interests; but the life of debauchery which you lead—which you have been led into, I should say—makes my residence here impossible. I must go.'

She paused. Her brother would have given half his income for courage enough to bid her go and never return, but nature had not endowed him with it, so he sighed sadly and said: 'Oh no, Corny; I couldn't think of it.'

This, of course, was the answer she expected, and she resumed: 'I should be most unwilling to go—most unwilling; my duty is to remain

with you. But unless Allan Magsdale leaves the house, I must do so. You see that yourself.'

Mr Magsdale did not see it at all, but only replied again more faintly than before: 'Oh no, Corny; I couldn't think of it.'

At this juncture the door flew open in response to a vigorous kick without, and Allan entered with his tray. 'I can't lay hands on a bottle of soda-water,' he said testily. 'I suppose Cornelia?'

Mrs Bunshaw, who had escaped his observation in the dim lamplight, emitted a warning cough; and Allan altered his tone to one of persuasive sweetness as he addressed her: 'Have you any in the house, Cornelia?'

'None,' curtly responded the lady.

'Oh, never mind,' said he, taking her favourite armchair and stooping forward to turn up the lamp.—'Tell me when to stop, Peter,' he continued, pressing a glass into his kinsman's hand and grasping the decanter; whilst Mrs Bunshaw looked on in speechless rage.

There was not in all London and its suburbs a more temperate man than Peter Magsdale; but at this moment he was so absorbed in his sister's threatening attitude, which presaged an immediate storm, that he accepted half a tumbler of brandy before he noticed what had been given him. As he held it mechanically up to the light, Mrs Bunshaw strode forward and took it from his hand.

'Are you going to drink all this, Peter?' she asked, striving to speak calmly. She was furiously angry; but so well did she succeed in controlling herself, that the obliging Allan mistook her meaning, and courteously rose, offering to bring a tumbler for her. He had not the least intention of giving offence; it was not unusual for her to join them in a 'nightcap,' but he could not have selected a more unpropitious time to remind her of it. Mrs Bunshaw cast a withering look upon him, but did not deign to make any reply. She possessed herself of the decanter, carefully replaced the contents of her brother's glass in it, and, still retaining the decanter, swept from the room, leaving the two to enjoy what refreshment they might want from the water-jug. Having locked up the spirits, she returned, and, ignoring her cousin's presence, reiterated the announcement she had made before: 'Either I leave the house, or Mr Allan Magsdale goes; and I shall be glad if you will make up your mind on the point to-night, Peter.'

'She's in earnest,' said Peter sorrowfully to his cousin when the slam of Mrs Bunshaw's bedroom door pronounced her to be safely out of hearing. 'She attacked me about it as soon as I came in.'

'Pooh! she doesn't mean anything,' replied Allan easily. 'It will be all right to-morrow morning.'

'You don't know Cornelia,' said Peter; 'I do;' and he shook his head mournfully. 'Of course, it's out of the question for me to let her go away. She would alter her will the same day.'

'If you really think your sister wants me to leave, I'll go.—I know it isn't your doing, old fellow; and I should be glad to stay on myself, though the house hasn't been what it used to be for the last six months.'

Peter Magsdale's heart sank as Allan spoke;

he would lose much by his cousin's departure. Even without Mrs Bunshaw's restraining hand, he would never have the spirit to embark on a night's 'spree' all by himself; he would be completely lost without his guide. But that was a phase of the impending change in his household that he knew it was useless to dwell upon. If Allan went, he might say good-bye to his evening amusements, for Mrs Bunshaw would not allow him to go outside the garden after his dinner. He was a weak vacillating creature, and the influence his sister had over him was entirely due to her superior strength of will, though he always attributed his submission to the very remote 'prospects' contingent upon her demise.

'No more pleasure in life for me, if you go,' he said dismally.

'Oh, nonsense; you can take care of yourself by now.'

'Cornelia will make the house unbearable if I cross her,' sighed Peter; 'no more suppers at the Gaiety for me.'

'And what about Miss Cressburn, Peter?' asked Allan with a chuckle.

Mr Magsdale blushed, and assumed a more abject look of melancholy than he had worn before. Miss Mary Cressburn was a young lady whose acquaintance he had made through his cousin's kind offices, and to whom he had lately paid a marked degree of attention. She was an orphan, in poor circumstances, supporting herself and the aunt with whom she lived by giving music lessons. The Magsdales' visits to her house were always made in the evening, and Peter concealed none of his doings more jealously from his sister than this tender dalliance with his heart's mistress. Mrs Bunshaw had long cherished a matrimonial scheme of her own regarding him; and this gifted woman was so accustomed to regulate every action of his life without resistance, that she had brought herself to believe that the consummation of her wishes was only a question of time. The lady she had selected to be her sister-in-law was Miss Anna Terripeg, her most intimate friend and staunchest disciple. Miss Terripeg was by no means averse from the idea, and having satisfied herself on this point, Mrs Bunshaw had proceeded to sound Peter. It was mortifying to discover that the gentleman was not prepared to consider the subject of matrimony at all for the present, and persisted in treating her proposals with unbecoming lightness. This was baffling; but so long as his young affections remained free, there was room for hope: Miss Terripeg had at least no rivals to contend with, reflected Mrs Bunshaw.

Now, if she came to hear of his attachment to Miss Cressburn, she would spare no pains to sift the matter and throw obstacles in his way; indeed, if she took a firm stand, he doubted his ability to continue his courtship at all. A faint-hearted, timorous lover was our friend Peter. Miss Cressburn would have lent a willing ear, had he been able to screw up courage to propose to her; but he did not know this, and nursed his hopes fondly, confiding them to Allan, who, we must admit, had been mischievously diligent in furthering a business which he knew would be so distasteful to Mrs Bunshaw.

'You will be able to make opportunities of seeing her easily enough, if you care for her,' said

Allan, with an effort to prick a little life into his cousin. 'It's too ridiculous to let Cornelia have a word in that.'

'You don't know what she is,' groaned Peter. 'Cornelia and the Terripeg woman between them'— He broke off with a shudder, which moved Allan to uncontrollable laughter.

'I know quite enough, anyhow,' he rejoined. 'I'll look up some rooms I know of to-morrow, and I daresay I shall be able to move into them next week; so you may tell her that it's all settled.'

A very silent party assembled at breakfast the next morning. Mrs Bunshaw, not having been made aware of Allan's intentions, shrouded herself in dignified reserve. Peter was unusually gloomy and dejected; and his cousin having failed to draw him into conversation, devoted himself to his meal without even attempting to pay Cornelia the somewhat cramped civilities which duty demanded of him.

'I am sorry that it is necessary for you to leave us, Allan,' she said, in a tone which implied that it was all his doing, and much against her inclinations. She took his departure for granted, knowing she could have her own way about banishing him.

'I'm sorry, too; but I couldn't have stayed much longer in any case,' he replied; and he quitted the room, followed by Peter, who was carefully avoiding a tête-à-tête with his sister.

Allan's readiness to leave Astley Villa was a little disappointing to Mrs Bunshaw. She prided herself upon her adamant firmness, and had hoped her cousin would have given her a chance of displaying it by begging her to let him remain with them. She had prepared one of her 'little speeches' (Peter knew the kind), in which she would kindly but sternly resist such an appeal. It was annoying that this weak pretence of putting her authority on one side, this transparent assumption of willingness to go, should compel her to leave it unspoken. It was bravado, nothing else.

'I should have told Cornelia that I couldn't continue to live in the same house with her, if I had stayed in the room another five minutes,' said Allan as they started for the station *en route* for their respective offices.

'It's no use quarrelling with her,' said Peter.— 'By the way, will you come with me to Queen's Road on Sunday afternoon? I want to see Mary Cressburn.'

'I'll come; and I hope you will take advantage of the occasion, Peter. I suspect your evening visits are things of the past.'

As a matter of fact, Mr Magsdale had proposed the visit with the deliberate intention of 'coming to the point,' trying to close his eyes to possible results. 'I was just thinking about it,' he replied.

'That's right,' said his mentor encouragingly. 'I'll take care you get a chance; and see that you make the most of it.'

'I don't know what Cornelia will say,' the amorous Peter went on after a pause. 'Don't you think I had better tell her?' He looked up questioningly, and his adviser promptly gave him his directions.

'Now, look here, Peter,' he said. 'You just hold your tongue until you are safely married.

If Cornelia finds out before, I don't believe you've got the pluck to defy her; and as a row is inevitable in any case, you may as well let it stand over till it can do no harm.'

Mr Magsdale fairly gasped: this was taking time by the forelock with a vengeance, and the very idea of such a step took away his breath. He had the most implicit confidence in Allan, however, and was so accustomed to follow his guidance, that he did not even raise any objections; indeed, he hardly realised what the advice implied. 'Thank you,' said this trembling lover. 'It would be the best way, I believe.'

'Of course it's the best way. Why, my dear man, we'll have you nicely settled before Christmas!'

Within six weeks! Allan's audacity carried Peter away, and he parted with him, feeling, that if Miss Cressburn's answer should be 'Yes,' he was committed to a line of action she would not be likely to approve of. 'I'll wait and see,' he wisely decided. 'If she thinks Allan is right, we will follow his advice.' Nevertheless, he quailed as he thought of the consequences he would have to meet afterwards.

The important Sunday afternoon came round at last, and Peter set forth on his knightly quest, squired and stimulated by the indefatigable Allan. They had some difficulty in escaping without Mrs Bunshaw, for her brother's preoccupation had roused her suspicious nature, and if Allan had not stepped into the breach, the expedition must have been abandoned. They were only going to call on some friends of his up at Queen's Road. Of course, if Mrs Bunshaw cared to come, they would be delighted; but it was a long way, and the people were not very interesting. The explanation allayed her doubts, and she let them go, reflecting that they could not get into much mischief on Sunday wherever they went.

'Does Miss Cressburn know anything about Cornelia?' asked Allan as they walked along.

'No. Do you think I ought to mention her?'

'I wouldn't, unless you are prepared to bring them together, which would hardly suit your plans.'

'Not at all,' replied Peter briskly. He was beginning to feel quite reckless, now his mind had been made up for him, and was prepared to rush upon his fate as soon as he found himself face to face with it.

Allan certainly did everything the most sympathetic helper could be expected to do in such a case. He drew old Miss Parkins, the aunt, to one end of the room, and exerted himself manfully to keep her attention from the pair in the distant corner. He knew that if Peter imagined that he was being watched, he would be thrown completely off his balance for the time; and as Miss Parkins' ideas were few and her conversational powers somewhat undeveloped, his task was not an easy one. Moreover, she suspected the nature of Peter's mission, and did not altogether approve of it; and at the end of a quarter of an hour she broke away from Allan, and approaching her niece, asked her pointedly if she was not going out for a walk this afternoon. Miss Cressburn started; but after a tender inquiring glance at Peter, answered in the affirmative, and the two ladies left the room together.

'Congratulate me!' exclaimed Mr Magsdale with a comical assumption of superiority.

'With pleasure.—Did you find any difficulty?' asked his cousin with the air of a man who did that kind of thing every day of his life and was versed in its intricacies.

'None whatever,' replied Peter. 'But I must say I am glad it's over,' he modestly added.

'Ah! Have you settled the day?'

Mr Magsdale had not settled the day; he had found the task of declaring himself quite as much as he could manage, and was content to leave the rest in abeyance for the present.

Allan looked a little disappointed. He was bent on revenging himself on Mrs Bunshaw, and had cherished wild schemes of a civil marriage at the registrar's office in the course of the ensuing week. His notions on the subject were crude, to say the least of them, and he had lost sight of the fact that Miss Cressburn was not likely to prove so tractable as Peter.

Miss Parkins and her niece now returned to the room, and the four set out on their walk. It was a lovely afternoon: a stray September day seemed to remain behind to contrast itself with the murky November, which is the unpleasantest month of the London year, and Miss Parkins, who was an enthusiastic pedestrian, evidently intended to make the most of it. She took possession of Mr Magsdale, and, much to his chagrin, he had no opportunity of speaking to Miss Cressburn again by herself, though her aunt followed the young lady's movements with tantalising closeness.

Unfortunately, some malignant fate prompted Mrs Bunshaw to go for a solitary walk that afternoon, and so guided her steps that she came upon the little party at the moment Allan was bidding Mary Cressburn good-bye with more tenderness than Peter considered was at all necessary. She saw them without being observed herself, and passed on, resolving to take her brother to task as soon as he returned. 'These, then, were Mr Allan Magsdale's friends; these were the people Peter had been so anxious to go and see without her.' There was something at the bottom of this, and Mrs Bunshaw intended to find out what it was.

She was very stern and forbidding in her manner when the cousins came in; a tactical error on her part, for it caused Peter to avoid giving her the chance she wanted of cross-examining him by himself. She was anxious that Allan should not hear her inquiries, but finally curiosity overcame her, and, she spoke. 'Who were the ladies I saw you with to-day, Peter?' she asked carelessly.

The question was so utterly unlooked-for, and Peter's mind at the moment was so taken up in thinking about one of the ladies, that for an instant he fancied that his sister had acquired a new and dangerous talent for thought-reading.

'They were friends,' he blundered—'friends, friends of'—He broke down, and threw a beseeching look at Allan, who swallowed a morsel with provoking deliberation and came to his aid.

'Great friends of mine, Cornelia,' he said airily. 'Very dear friends. I took Peter to see her—that is, them, as I thought he'd like to know them.'

If Mrs Bunshaw's eyes had been turned upon her brother instead of the speaker, the look of intense relief and gratitude he cast at Allan might have turned her suspicions into the right channel; but as it was, she remarked that she had passed them, and wondered who they were.

'Who are these friends of Allan's?' asked Mrs Bunshaw, when that mendacious person left the room.

'A Miss Parkins and her niece,' said Peter, who had seized his cousin's hint, and meant to act upon it even at the sacrifice of truth.

'He seems to know them very well,' she continued, watching him narrowly.

'Yes, I believe he does,' assented Peter.

'The young lady is the attraction, no doubt.—Does he seem to like her?'

'Oh no—I mean yes,' replied the unhappy Peter, recovering himself in time. Allan like Mary! He recoiled from the idea, but must support it to save himself.

'He said the other day it would be impossible for him to remain here much longer in any case,' mused Mrs Bunshaw. 'I thought at the time it was merely brag; but now I begin to see daylight. Mr Allan no doubt is very clever and very deep; but he doesn't think to deceive me, I hope: I can put two and two together.'

So Cornelia Bunshaw put two and two together, and, like many people who are inexpert at such worldly arithmetic, she made them anything but four.

LUNCHEONS.

As some trades and callings have always been ridiculed or denounced, so some meals have been selected as butts for the attacks of moralists and sanitarians. 'Suppers' were the favourite *bêtes noires* of certain 'abstinence doctors' of the last century; and in one of the medieval 'Moralities,' the play turns upon a solemn trial of this meal before the judge 'Experience.' 'Supper' is accused of having murdered four persons by gorging, and only escapes the extreme penalty of the law by agreeing never again to approach within six hours of dinner. Elderly persons may remember a similar prejudice against the now universally acknowledged meal of luncheon. When four or five o'clock was the usual dinner hour, some sturdy individuals held it needless to partake of refreshments between breakfast and the later meal. To require such extra nourishment was akin to the enormities of desiring bedroom fires, warm water for ablutions, and other 'coddling' and effeminate luxuries. It must be confessed that, in houses where luncheon was provided, its opponents often ended their objections after the fashion of the gentleman described in one of Miss Sinclair's novels, who finished his denunciations against this repast 'in the way gentlemen usually do, by drawing his chair to the table and making a hearty meal.'

Luncheon has now triumphed over its opponents and become a recognised institution; unless we look upon it as an old friend rechristened, the dinner of ancient times being at the modern luncheon

hour; while our ancestors supped at the hour at which their descendants dine. According to Dr Wendell Holmes, luncheons are among the pleasantest forms of social hospitality. 'This luncheon is a very convenient affair; it does not require any special dress; it is informal; it is soon over; and can be light or heavy as one chooses.' Breakfasts, a form of entertainment so popular years back, and still patronised by some persons, are less admired by our American visitor.

Many and varied are the forms of luncheon entertainments. There is the social country-house gathering, with a view to an afternoon of lawn-tennis or archery, a meal to which no formal invitations are issued, but to which intimates drop in, or are brought at the last moment by members of the family. A hospitable household, well supplied with young people, usually makes luncheon an elastic meal as regards numbers. Dinner is a more formal affair, and sacred from sudden additions; but at luncheon, Mary's school-friends drop in unrebuked; and Charlie meets young Robinson riding past the gate, and makes him dismount and remain for lunch and a game of tennis after the meal; which has a pleasant informal sociability about it. Luncheons of this description are useful factors in the game of matrimony, intimacies being formed at these friendly entertainments which could never take place at a formal dinner-party. Then there is the more stately London luncheon-party, to which guests are bidden by formal invitation, but which has always the advantage of brevity as compared with the dinner-party. Shy celebrities who profess 'not to go into society' and to eschew 'late hours and formal parties,' can often be lured into attending a luncheon meal; and the hostess finds it possible to capture a lion at half-past one, whom she could never have secured at eight o'clock. Pleasant, too, are the luncheons in the open air, when the ladies of the country-house meet the hungry shooting-party, bearing with them a store of good things, which are enjoyed as meals under a roof, served in ordinary fashion, never can be. There is something absolutely appetite-provoking in the very description of that famous out-of-door luncheon in *Pickwick*, when Sam Weller arranges the viands with suggestive comments, and Mr Pickwick at last falls a victim to the insidious seductions of 'cold punch.' Picnic parties proper are less agreeable. An out-door luncheon should never be too large and pretentious an affair. A small party of intimates and a simple repast are infinitely more pleasant than an assemblage of persons half strangers to each other, and an elaborate menu that requires the attendance of servants. Picnic parties of this latter description are usually very dull affairs. As Albert Smith records:

The wood was always very damp,
The water never boiled;
We wore the smartest things we had,
And they were always spoiled.

How many of us have pleasant recollections of luncheons eaten at the side of a hill in company with a Highland guide; of simple repasts at wayside rural inns during a walking tour; of well-earned refreshment during a tough Alpine

climb. More enjoyable are the sandwiches and flask of sherry than the elaborate repast of the fashionable picnic party, happily now a rare form of entertainment. Years ago, picnics were often organised; and middle-aged people sat on shawls on the grass with secret fears as to rheumatism, and tried to look as if they enjoyed eating with their plates on their knees; while the younger members of the party, in their best apparel, flirted discreetly, but would have been happier if their dresses and complexions had been less exposed to sun and possible showers. Ours is scarcely the climate for fashionable folk to play at Corydon and Phyllis in the open air.

Of all luncheons, the 'family one' is perhaps the most objectionable, at least to others than members of the family. Many mothers practise the highly commendable custom of gathering their olive branches about them at the mid-day meal, when, to quote an educational guide, 'the parent can judge of her children's health by their appetite, and correct any little breaches of good manners at table.' All this is praiseworthy and excellent; but it is a mistake to invite guests to the scene of these maternal cares. The visitor at one of these juvenile assemblages need not expect to gain any attention from his hostess. Vainly does he relate his choicest anecdotes and essay his best conversational powers. Willie invariably chokes himself at the critical part of the story, or Mary requires a second helping just as the guest has fairly started an interesting topic of conversation. The mother's attention is always wandering and divided. The children, their needs, their accidents with table utensils, their solecisms of etiquette, engross her real interest, though she makes a hollow show of listening to her visitor. Probably, if a woman, the guest is expected to perform small table offices for the little ones—to cut up meat, crumble bread, and the like—tasks which, if unaccustomed to the charge of children, the visitor performs amiss, and is rebuked for her shortcomings by the juveniles. 'O ma, Miss — has put gravy over my bread;' or, 'I can't eat fat, you know.' Children are delightful in their right place; but are not good assistants of digestion to persons unaccustomed to their society. It would be kinder, to both children and visitors, if parents who preside at 'family luncheons' were to invite their guests to other repasts than these meals.

The luncheon in its pleasantest form is only an enjoyment possible to the rich—at least of the male sex. Busy men cannot afford the time to indulge in this luxury. A biscuit or a sandwich hastily devoured constitutes too often the mid-day meal of many a professional or business man, and hence, say the doctors, come manifold forms of dyspepsia. Yet what is the worker to do? To leave chambers or office and partake of a solid mid-day meal, returning at once to brain and desk work, is to treat the digestive organs in the worst manner. To sacrifice a couple of the busiest hours of the day is equally out of the question. Professional men are rarely absolute masters of their own time, and cannot break up important consultations, dismiss clients or patients, delay answering letters, refuse interviews, because it is their luncheon-time.

The labourer or the artisan is sure of his uninterrupted mid-day meal-hour; the better-class

toiler has no such privilege. Hence luncheon has, for many of us, when we are able to partake of it in due and leisurely form, all the pleasure of a rare luxury.

ODD THINGS FROM CHILDREN.

AN examiner in elementary schools often hears many amusing answers in reply to his questions. The following are examples of written composition from children in the upper standards. It must not be assumed, however, that in giving these quaint specimens, any slur is being cast upon the general character of the work in elementary schools; these are taken from many thousands of papers, a great number of which are of undoubted excellence, and it often happens that where the majority of the pupils in a class acquit themselves satisfactorily, one child will be found who is quite 'at sea.'

Here is a description of a plum-pudding by a boy whose knowledge is evidently theoretical, and, like his pudding, somewhat mixed: 'When they have put all these in, they make it into a batter and then mix it up: and when they have finished battering it, they put it on the fire for about an hour and a half, to get it to be enough, so that it will be better to eat and softer to chew.'

From cooking we come to natural history, and have the following: 'Guinea-pigs are very pretty little creatures, and people generally have them as a joint for dinner.' The guinea-pig and the sucking-pig were evidently one and the same in the mind of this ingenuous youth.

Here is another in the same department of learning: 'Bees live chiefly on worms and snakes, and are searching for them nearly every hour of the day. Besides this they also live on little insects, which when they are not so very busy, they go down into the ground and have a very nice feast. It is very pleasant indeed in the summer time to watch them making their hive and weaving their honey.'

A pupil was asked to name and describe four kinds of fruit, with this result: 'The four kinds is apples, pears, rubub and carrots and many others.' He was a town boy, whose garden of nature was evidently a greengrocer's cart.

Here is some light on another branch of knowledge: 'Whale ships are large, and have an hold in which a lubber is stored.' Seamen will agree that the hold is the best place for the lubber.

The following on 'feathers' was very difficult to interpret, but at last it proved that the writer had mistaken features for feathers. 'The feathers of anything is the looking of you: some people have deseases and cause them to have an unpleasant look. Sometimes when people go to apply for a situation they don't get it owing to their feathers and bad faces; the master who they ask generally says that he takes beer and won't do for a job of that kind. People who is not ill so much generally has good feathers, they are obtained from keeping yourself clean.'

Dr Charles Wilson, in his general Report on the Scottish Training Colleges, gives several curious answers which have been received from candidates and pupil-teachers. A young lady answering a question on insurance, wrote: 'The money is provided by the Company to defray the expenses of the birth of members in pecuniary distress.' A second demoiselle in commenting upon the proverb, 'Penny wise and pound foolish,' wrote in a mathematical sort of way, and it is feared with some degree of misanthropy: 'This proverb clearly shows that for every wise and good action a man does, he will commit two hundred and forty foolish bad ones.'

One pupil brought Julius Caesar before the public in the light of a wonderful inventor: 'Julius Caesar invented Great Britain, 55 B.C.'—by writing that, a suspicion exists that copying is still in vogue. What a disaster a single mistaken letter deservedly occasions to the young plagiarist! 'Ethelred the Unready was called that because he was never ready for the Danes. He use to entice them away from England by brideing them, but they use to come again and demand a larger bride.'

Poor William Rufus's end was sadder than we wist, if we are to believe a youth, who says that William Rufus was gorged to death by a stag in the forest his father had made to hunt the deer.' Another writes: 'Prince William was drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine: he never laughed again.'—A small biographer of the Maid of Orleans writes: 'Joan of Arc was the daughter of a rustic French pheasant which lived in the forest. . . . She did not like to leave her pheasant home, but after a while she went away.'—'In the rainy season,' says a little pedant, 'the barren desert becomes animated with torrents of luxuriant vegetation.' Before leaving the humours of boys, an oral question and answer may be given. 'What do you mean by a temperate region?' asked an inspector, with a due emphasis on the word temperate. A little boy replied: 'The region where they drinks only temperants drinks, sir.'

Physical science is a dreadful stumbling-block to most youths. Asked to give the causes of sound, a sufferer wrote: 'Sound is caused by the motions of the air, and is carried about by the German band.' A curious dogmatiser, in 'explaining' the origin of a draught, says: 'A draught would be felt near the broken window of a warm room, because if you stood near it, you would feel it.'—A boy, who appeared to believe friction as something tangible, perhaps a sort of newfangled firelighter, scribbled: 'Friction is caused by the rubbing together of two sticks; it is very useful if you have not any matches.'—'What is a member?' asked an official.—'A man on the School Board,' was the answer.—A surname was thought to mean 'the name of a person you says sir to.'

In giving the names of the ten plagues, a respondent unduly enlarged the fourth, 'Plague of flies, beetles, and moskeeters;' whilst the murrain among beasts was written by another, 'Miriam among beasts.'

The following two were lately recorded in the *Schoolmaster*. A class had been asked to use the word dozen in a sentence of their own construction. One of the answers ran: 'I dozen

know what to do.'—'Stability' was ingeniously defined, perhaps by an unstable memory, as being 'the cleaning-up of a stable.'

As the science subjects of Physiology and Hygiene are making rapid strides in the elementary schools of this country, the following answers will illustrate to some extent the cramming system prevalent in these subjects. Here is what a young physiologist says: 'The food is nourished in the stomach. If you were to eat anything hard, you would not be able to digest it, and in consequence you would have what is called indigestion. Food is digested by the lungs; digestion is brought on by the lungs having something the matter with them. The food then passes through your windpipe to the pores, and then passes off your body by evaporation, through a lot of holes in your skin, called capillaries. The gall bladder throws off juice from the food, which passes through it. We call the kidneys the bread-basket, because it is where all the bread goes to. They lay up concealed by the heart.'

In reply to a question, 'Why do we cook our food?' one child replied: 'There are five ways of cooking potatoes. We should die if we eat our food raw.' A second pupil wrote: 'Food digested is when we put it into our mouths, our teeth chews it, and our mouth drops it down into our body. We should not eat so much bone making food as flesh making and warmth giving foods, for, if we did, we should have too many bones, and that would make us look funny.'

Dealing with ventilation, one student informs us that 'the thermometer is an instrument used to let out the heat when it is going to be cold.' Another writes, that a room should be kept at ninety in the winter by the fire, and in summer by a thermometer. A girl remarks: 'When roasting a piece of meat, put it in front of a brisk fire, so as to congratulate it.' Here is a very learned reply: 'Sugar is an amyloid; if you was to eat much sugar and nothing else, you would not live, because sugar has not got no carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen. Potatoes is another amyloids.'

In answer to the question, 'Mention any occupations that are injurious to health?' one reply was: 'Occupations which are injurious to health are carbonic acid gas, which is impure blood.' Another says: 'A stone-mason's work is injurious, because when he is chipping, he breathes in all the little chips, and they are taken into the lungs.' A third says: 'A bootmaker's trade is very injurious, because they press the boots against the thorax, and therefore it presses the thorax in, and it touches the heart, and if they do not die, they are cripples for life.'

In reply to a question on digestion, one child wrote: 'The food is swallowed by the windpipe, and the chyle passes up the middle of the backbone, and reaches the heart, when it meets with oxygen and is purified.' Another wrote: 'We should never eat fat, because the food does not digest.' A third says: 'The work of the heart is to repair the different organs, in about half a minute.' A fourth child says: 'We have an upper and a lower skin; the lower skin moves at its will; and the upper skin moves when we do.' A Fifth Standard child says: 'The heart is a comical shaped bag.' Another in that class writes:

'The upper skin is called epperderby, and the lower is called derby.' While a third, giving the organs of digestion, writes, stomach, utensils [intestines], liver, and spleen.

PROOFS OF AGE.

SINCE the abolition of feudalism, the sovereign of England has had but little concern in ascertaining the age of any subject; but previously it was otherwise. Whilst feudalism held sway in this country, and the landed possessions of tenants holding of the Crown in chief were, during the minority of the holders, in the hands of the Crown, the sovereign had a direct interest in testing the accuracy of statements made by heirs as to their age when suing for 'livery' of their lands; hence the existence amongst the Public Records of the documents known as 'Proofs of Age.' The witnesses examined at the taking of these *probationes* always gave the reasons for their knowledge that the particular heir of whom they were speaking was born in a certain year, and, consequently, then of full age. It is from these reasons that we are enabled to cull material which renders this series of records of historic and social interest.

Let us take first a few of the 'proofs'—we must of course deal with a subject like this in the most cursory way—which record historic facts. In that taken as to the age of Gilbert, son and heir of Thomas de Clare, in 1302, one of the witnesses remembered the date of the heir's birth by the fact that on Monday after the feast of All-Saints, twenty-two years before—that is, in 1280—he (the witness) was at 'a certain conflict' between the English and Irish at Kildroyn, at which Robert le Butiller received a fatal wound; and that Gilbert was born on the morrow of the feast of the Purification following the battle. Again, in the inquiry, taken July 15, 1303, as to the age of Richard le Heriz, one witness states that the heir was born exactly twenty-one years previously (1282 A.D.); and in that year, 'after the feast of St Martin,' Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, 'was taken and slain.' At the inquiry as to the age of John, son and heir of Roger de Tychbourne, taken in 1358, various witnesses agree that he was born at Tychbourne on the vigil of the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, in the eleventh year of the reign of the then king; and they knew this because on the feast of Saint Faith next following (1359 A.D.), the town of Southampton was burned by the king's enemies. In the year 1282, a witness, after stating that an heir had attained his majority, tells us that in the year before the heir's birth—namely, in 1260—there was 'a great scarcity of corn' throughout the country. These are a few of the very many really useful historic facts that are furnished by the Proofs of Age.

The incidents of social life illustrated by these inquiries are also curious. We learn from them

that, in early times, baptism was generally administered on the day of birth, or within two or three days afterwards. Towards the close of Edward I.'s reign, Richard, son and heir of Hugh le Heriz, of whom we have before spoken, was born on the feast of Holy Trinity, and baptised on the morrow of that feast; and in the year 1358, John, son and heir of Roger de Tychbourne—who, as we have seen, was born at Tychbourne—was baptised the same day at the church of that village. As years rolled on, the period between birth and baptism became gradually lengthened, till, in post-reformation times, we find quite a long period intervening. Still—even in Charles I.'s reign—the time was not so long as that often allowed to elapse in the present day. In a 'proof' taken in the year 1633, the jury found that the heir in question, Francis Petre, was born at 'Mauborough,' in the county of Wilts, on the 12th of December 1611, and baptised in the church of that town on the 23d of the same month. The particulars relating to the birth of the heir of whom a witness is speaking are sometimes given in the most minute detail. In the case of the Proof of Age of Francis de Skotland, an old witness, when questioned as to 'the place and day of birth of the said Francis,' answered that 'he was born at Worle, in the house of his father, on All-Saints' Day, twenty-one years ago, after dinner.'

The institution of parish registers in the reign of Henry VIII. ought to have prevented the necessity of taking verbal, and often, to modern ideas, very uncertain evidence as to the date of a birth; yet there is hardly an instance during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., or Charles I. in which one of the authorised registers is mentioned as having been produced at the taking of a *probatio ætatis*; though entries of a birth made in the most irregular places—in any book, or on any scrap of paper that happened to be at hand—were frequently put forward. One instance of this must suffice. Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, a jury was convinced of the date of an heir's birth 'by a writing in a certain book' in the hand of his father in these words: Thomas Syngleton was, by 'Gode's helpe, boren the sixth daie of Marche 1568, beinge Sondaie, at the latter ende of eleven of the clocke at nighte.' In early times we often find a very quaint place selected for entering the record of a birth. As a rule, the Bible or Missal of the parish church was selected; but in the case of Peter, son and heir of John de Fortesbury, taken in 1309, an aged witness stated he remembered that the heir was twenty-two on the Feast of St Laurence then last past, because that day, twenty-two years before, was the eve of his (witness's) mother's second 'marriage; on which day John de Fortesbury came to him, and besought him to put on record the day and year of the nativity of the same heir; and he immediately did so on the wall of his hall; and by this he knows the exact time.'

At the conclusion of one of these inquiries, the heir, when proved of full age, was sometimes provided with a wife. In the year 1299, in the case of a promising young Nottinghamshire squire, Thomas de Longvilliers, who had proved his age, one of the witnesses, 'questioned if the said heir is married, or not,' said: 'He is not.' The

King's Treasurer thereupon informed him 'that the lord the king offers him in marriage one of the daughters of Adam de Cretingges, deceased. And the same heir, having seen the daughters aforesaid, consents to marry the eldest of them. And because the same Thomas had sufficiently proved his age both by evidence of witnesses and by his personal appearance, and as he also assents to the marriage aforesaid, he has seizen of the lands of his inheritance.'

Proofs of Age exist from the time of Henry III. down to the middle of Charles I.'s reign; and from almost any one we take up, a good deal that is of interest might be noted. But we must bring these jottings to a close with the following reference to what took place in a country parish church in England at the close of the thirteenth century, the church in question being that of Ayston, in Hertfordshire. Here, on the feast of St Nicholas, 1293, the heiress of a neighbouring squire, Brian de Brampton, was baptised. One witness saw her being baptised at the church door, whilst his own marriage was being celebrated at the altar; whilst another states that he 'buried his mother' on the same day in the churchyard of Ayston Church, and on returning from the funeral, he met the child's godmother carrying her to baptism.

GOOD-BYE.

Soft falls the moonlight's silvery rays,
Glistening the crest of the wavelets dancing;
Fair is the maid, by the shore, who strays,
Gladness and hope from her blue eyes glancing.
Now, she is nearing the trysting-tree,
Soon her true lover she's fondly greeting.
Little she thinks, as the moments flee,
This is to be their farewell meeting.
Sad would the heart be, oh, bitter the sigh,
Could we know when we're bidding a last good-bye.

No longer the moonbeams gild the tide;
Athwart the sky is the lightning glancing;
The youth has sailed from his promised bride;
Safe in her home she is sweetly dreaming.
No dread forebodings disturb her sleep;
Peaceful, she rests on her snowy pillow;
Her love the while, where the surges sweep,
Lies cold and still 'neath the foaming billow.
Sad would the heart be, oh, bitter the sigh,
Could we know when we're bidding a last good-bye.

All through our lives we are dropping friends,
Bidding good-bye without thought of grieving,
And dark the shadow each parting lends
To the web of life we are deftly weaving.
In that land of light where no shadows rest,
Life's web complete, and our labours ended,
We shall find our lives had not been blest
Had the shadow ne'er with the sunshine blended.
Ah, grieve not, dear friend, heave no bitter sigh;
To the faithful and true there is no good-bye.

MAGGIE ROBERTSON.

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A WINTER DAY.

I HAVE a fireside-loving friend whom I invited to-day to come with me 'a mile and a bittock' along the sparkling hoar-frosted road, to see if the waterfall which leaps Croupie Craig had yet been chained in its wintry bondage of icy fetters.

'Ah no!' cried my friend with a shiver. 'The fireside is doubly cosy when the north wind whistles down the chimney. I will not go.'

'But think of what you will miss!' I persisted, proceeding there and then to depict my anticipated pleasure. 'And as for the north wind—his trenchant blast is a clarion call for us to join him out of doors.'

Would you credit it? My friend, who during the languid summer months takes a walk as regularly as she takes her quinine and iron tonic—and for the same purpose, I suspect—emphatically applied the poker to the very heart of the sparkling fire, and turning her back upon me, commenced significantly to needle her way among the impossible roses of her crewel-work. She evidently thought that I, too, ought to have something of that kind on hand.

But I made yet another attack. 'The long evening is before you; then you can bask to your heart's content in the blazing warmth of the fire and get your face roasted, while your back shivers under the insidious advances of John Frost. A jovial fellow is he, by the way, and he needs no artificial fire to keep him warm, for he can blow hot and cold with the same mouth, as you shall find if you walk with me.—What! You will not? You think it is going to snow?—Well, well; yours is the loss; and after all, no company is better than an unwilling walking-companion. So John Frost and I will e'en trudge it right merrily together, and leave you to drowse over your fadeless worsted roses.'

So I set off along the resounding frosty highway, which seems to have a natural affinity to my tingling feet to-day, with a delightful sense of enjoyment. My whole nature grows elastic under the stimulus of this pungent wintry air; and

every gust of the fitful wind sends pulsating, telegraphic messages of pleasantly import through my veins. I find myself actually humming an air straight in the teeth of a few vagrant flakes of snow which fall tardily from the gathering gray clouds, as if loth to lose their fleetly power of motion. How fleetly I am drawn onward by the electric impulse of the frosty wind! I seem to have winged feet, like the light-heeled—not to say light-fingered—god Mercury.

Although it is only half-past two in the afternoon, the sun has nearly finished his shortened circuit; already he has left the high fields of frosty azure, and struggles—a luminous yellow globe—amid the fast rising snow-clouds whose loose gray volumes are piled against the ominous western horizon. A social band of those cheery little outlaws, the sparrows, alight on the hedge all coralled with feathery hoar-frost, and hold an animated consultation, doubtless anent their next foraging raid; but as my footsteps strike an alarm upon the clanging ground, off they fly with a simultaneous whirl and chatter. May your shadows never grow less, O little feathered mendicants! You are not afraid to brave the wintry weather; and after all, there is nothing like hardship for testing the grit and sharpening the wits both of men and of sparrows. And see! here is kind Robin-Redbreast seconding my sentiments with all his might, displaying his cosy scarlet vest with quite unusual ostentation, as if to show that it is but the emblem of the fire of courage and 'desperate hope' that burns within his little breast. The hardy little fellow actually prefers bare boughs! He does not care a haw for scanty fare, but waits patiently for the thaw to bring the worms, which in the meantime are enjoying a frost-bound paradise of safety under the ground.

Rugged old Winter! How strong and austere he is; and so intolerant of weakness that only the hardiest of Nature's woodland folk can venture to face him. He sends the dainty and fastidious crowds that wait upon the Summer down below the ground, and into ignominious nooks

and crannies, and on wings of migration far over the sea. And yet I like the merciless old fellow. His head is so clear and his heart is so warm beneath its snows, that but to be an hour in his company on this sparkling highway is a rare delight. How fast one can walk when Winter is the guide! I have already reached the rude wayside smithy where a degenerate Vulcan is wielding his hammer with arms which doubtless were mighty and full of sinewy strength some generations ago; however, they are strong enough still to cause a merry din of crisply-reverberating echoes to challenge him from the whinstone quarry close by.

At last I reach Heather Lodge and struggle through the narrow aperture, which is all of its usually hospitable quadrant that the little gate has managed to wrench from the frost-distended earth. I wind my downward way between stiff bare trees and silvery-frosted evergreens until I cross the bridge which spans the stream as it leaps Croupie Craig; and making an abrupt descent, I find myself standing, lost in silent admiration, on the path below the waterfall. For King Winter reigns here supreme! He has captured the waters as they leap the Craig, and turned the glancing, rushing torrent into the pinnacles and minarets and sculptured grottoes of a fairy city. The rocks and ivy-wreaths and pendent tongues of fern are fantastically draped in the silver filigree of the frost. The very mist of filmy spray has been arrested and woven into a curtain of ethereal, cobweb ice before the Frost King's palace—a wonderful cold palace of sparkling ice, all dimly gleaming with a weird green light. What artist can match Winter? He needs no colours, no canvas, no paraphernalia of artist-craft. He breathes upon the scarcely visible spray of this waterfall, and behold, a forest of elfin firs and waving ferns, a world of fanciful imagery is traced upon the brown shoulders of the Craig!

'Find out my method, if you can!' he laughs. 'O puny artist-man—to your brushes, your marble, your clay, and try to imitate me! Those delicate branches of frosted shrubs, those deftly pointed leaves and fairy forests of pine, were fashioned by the identical hand and perchance by the same throe of creative power that filled your green forests with stately trees and branching ferns.' And certainly it is easy to fancy that these frost trees and flowers are the original designs from which leafy Nature works.

While I stand gazing at the frozen wonderland I feel how insignificant man is beside mighty Nature. She can do without man, for she has myriad silvan nations of her own to govern. And yet I am not sure after all if Nature is so entirely independent of man. Does she not ask dumbly yet eloquently for an interpreter? And who is so able to interpret her as man? She is cold, passive, material until he comes and attracts her by his magnetic humanity. Then is she drawn close to him; she responds to his inquisitive questionings like one of her own wild winds to an Æolian harp. She tells him her secrets,

unveiling to his awe-struck gaze her unerring, far-reaching laws; and she laps his senses in the subtle melodies of 'the music of the spheres.' Where is the limit to man's achievements if he goes through the ages hand in hand with Nature and learns from her?

Only a faint tinkle of falling water breaks the enchanted silence around me, for the frost has almost succeeded in capturing the usually thundering voice of the waterfall. But the captive water has discovered a weak link in the icy shackles, and sends one long zigzag lance of liquid music to tinkle among the icicles which fringe the rocky bed of the stream. At last I break the spell which has hitherto bound my feet, and turning from Croupie Craig, I pursue the serpentine curves of the rocky path, treading with every step upon the sparkling hoar-frost lying everywhere. Down in the green hollow winds and glitters the silent streamlet; for its babbling song has also been captured by the frost, although doubtless it croons to itself below the ice that shines like coiling steel as it gleams in and out past the precipitous crag of the Lover's Leap. My eyes are dazzled by the scintillating icicles that dangle over the ledges of the rocks, and by the pure hoar-frost which crests every adventurous ivy-wreath and tottering bush of broom as they peer over the edge of the crag.

Now I reach the wide-spreading waters of the Lower Fall, gloomily submitting to the frost-fetters which have reached it through all the barriers raised by overarching trees. It still retains a fragment of song—a doleful fragment it sounds in my ears, which are filled with the bewitching music of memory; for to-day the song of the waterfall is like a lament over the ruined harbour by its side. This rustic harbour has sheltered many a pair of happy lovers, many a thought-inspired youth, many a dreaming maiden—ardent young hearts who sought this water-haunted solitude in days gone by.

Still onward I walk, passing the wishing-well whose sacred spring is guarded by a group of young mountain-ash trees from every evil spell. Still onward, past piled-up trunks of felled oaks and sycamores lying upon the frozen ground, each prostrate giant marked and numbered for the sale. Here the streamlet, which bears a merry heart even in the midst of winter, escapes from the ice, and breaks the frosty silence with a triumphant rush of tripping song as it flows on its way to the lake. I startle a hungry thrush from an anxious quest among the stiff mosses under the beeches. He was evidently peering about to see if an accommodating and weather-wise mole might have been prophesying a thaw in the practical form of a soft red mound of worm-filled earth; but the thrush will look in vain, for the moles are snugly enjoying their leisure in labyrinthine homes far underground.—Ah, here is a poor little sparrow which has succumbed to the bitter weather! He is lying on his back quite dead and half-frozen to the grass. How pathetically his tiny stiff claws—once so busy, now so very still—are lifted towards the iron sky. No more will he bask in sunny holes among the summer dust. I have reached the pool at the source of the lake where the frozen-out waterfowl have sought shelter. In the summer-time this pool is lush with aquatic grasses

and extravagantly yellow with kingcups; but it is a tangled wilderness of sere grasses and broken ice to-day.

At last, here is the northern shore of the lake, and I venture upon its frozen surface to see how the landscape looks from that unfamiliar point of view. I am quite surprised to find how broad and strange the lake looks, and how suddenly dwarfed and small I feel. That, however, is doubtless a salutary experience which it might be beneficial to repeat sometimes. But suddenly I rush, startled, off the floor of ice in a great hurry, for my ears are assailed by the titanic growling of the lake as the water below its frozen crust struggles with the grappling frost. An eerie sound! I shiver, not with cold but with fear, as it dies, moaning, away.

I feel a little less solitary when, after passing for some distance by the bleak shore, I hear a confused shouting just before I come upon a boisterous company of curlers who are enjoying themselves enthusiastically. Curling is well called 'the roaring game'; indeed, its principal characteristic, as I have observed, is that the bodies of its votaries are quite unable to contain their voices! Who would have imagined that that slim stripling with the broom was the possessor of such vocal thunder! or that yonder white-haired Boreas owned such a breezy vocabulary! How the stones fly and the brooms are plied and the woods resound! And how the spirit of Solitude in the form of the swan stands in the distance, aghast upon the frozen lake, terribly conscious of her ungainly feet, poor thing! The merriment is quite infectious, and I would like to shout too, if I dared; therefore I am quite delighted when a curler whom I know comes over and invites me to cross the lake to the other side. So with the help of courage and a plank I venture over the treacherous fringe of water and broken ice, and have the new experience of traversing the lake on foot dry-shod!

I stand on the wooden steps near the curling-house for a moment, and note how the rinks gleam like bars of polished steel as the singing stones glide along swift and straight to the 'tee,' propelled by the hands of the jovial curlers, who look as if they themselves were propelled by steam, so fast and white does their breath escape into the frosty air.

But I must hurry on, for the sky is now quite overcast and the snow is beginning to fall. I hold out my muff to catch some of the radiant crystals, so delicate in purity, so varied in form, as they fall from the leaden sky faster and faster. Soon the hard earth will be covered with a carpet of white silence, and old mother Earth's brown bosom will be warmly robed in the softest of ermine. Now I spin along within a dizzy whirl of driving snow. The world is transformed before my eyes; the rigid black trees are outlined in softest white by the busy fingers of the snow spirit whose fairy argosies, the snow-flakes, are breasting the invisible billows of air laden, not like the thistle-down of August with the malignant thistles of next year's summer, but with a more beneficent freight of fleecy warmth and protection for the many forms of vegetation which are waiting for spring, deep underground.

Faster and still faster falls the snow. I hurry homewards as this belated blackbird is doing,

chuckling vehemently as he flies; for he is Nature's watchman, who must warn all his feathered kindred that their common enemy the snow is also on the wing.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER a fortnight's absence, Mr Esholt found himself at home again. He brought back with him a bad sore throat, which before long developed into inflammation of the chest, confining him indoors without hope of release for some time to come. This illness was especially annoying, coming as it did at such a time, for just then there occurred one of those ominous lulls in the commercial world which, like the intense quiet that often precedes a storm in the aerial world, caused the souls of many to quake within them. It is not well at such times when the captain of the ship cannot himself direct the helm; but Mr Esholt was a man who never wasted his breath in bewailing the inevitable; all he could do was to make the best arrangements possible under the circumstances.

His old and tried head-clerk, Jabez Kimber, would continue to take charge of the business as heretofore whenever Mr Esholt had been absent. Each morning Mr Kimber would send up the letters, or such portion of them as he deemed it requisite that his chief should see, by pony express to Everton; but as Mr Esholt himself was at present unable to use a pen, it became necessary to employ an amanuensis, to whom, after the letters had been read to him, he could dictate the answers, together with such instructions as he might deem needful for the proper conduct of the business during his absence. For this position of amanuensis Mr Esholt selected Wilmot Burrell. As Wilmot lived across the water, and as Mr Esholt would be likely to require his services to answer the late letters in an evening, it became requisite that he should take up his quarters for the time being at Everton. Thus, by a strange concatenation of circumstances, he and Agnes were brought together again. Agnes heard the news with secret dismay.

Neither she nor Miss Esholt could help being struck with the change in Wilmot's looks when, on the evening of his arrival, he entered the dining-room. Short as was the time since they had last seen him, he looked as if he had gone through some great sickness or great trouble in the interim. His cheeks had a hollowness such as they had never shown before; his eyes seemed to have sunk deeper into his head, and there were dark half-circles under them, the outward and visible signs of inward suffering either mental or physical. But his spirits were feverishly gay. All through the dinner he chatted with much animation with Miss Esholt; but he frequently laughed, and that rather boisterously, when no laughter seemed to be called for, and partook of the wine more freely than he had ever done before at Mr Esholt's table. To Agnes he was studiously polite, but nothing more. To

her, that evening it seemed impossible to believe that this was the same man who, but two short weeks before, had told her in such impassioned accents that he loved her. He rose from the table with the ladies and bade them good-night at the door.

Except at the dinner hour, they saw little of him. He breakfasted alone, and after attending to Mr Esholt's correspondence, he went down to the office during the middle of the day, returning about four o'clock. Sometimes, when there was anything very special to consult Mr Esholt about, Mr Kimber would come back with him; but on these occasions the head-clerk, who was of a nervous, fidgety disposition, with an old bachelor's uneasiness when in the presence of ladies, could never be induced to stop to dinner.

About a week after his return, Mr Esholt's illness suddenly developed graver symptoms than had yet shown themselves. Agnes had seen her husband before breakfast, at which time he looked and declared himself to be considerably better than on the previous day. After breakfast she went out to buy some grapes and other articles, and was gone about an hour and a half. On going into the dressing-room which opened into her husband's bedroom, she found Miss Esholt installed there. She was passing through, when the latter held up a finger warningly. 'My brother is asleep,' she whispered. 'He has become much worse during the last three hours. Dr Pyefitt has just gone. He administered a sedative, and has left word that the patient must on no account be disturbed. Until there is a change for the better, I have arranged to nurse my brother in the daytime with the assistance of Davry, and have sent for Mrs Jukes, an excellent person, who nursed him when he was ill two years ago, who will take charge of everything during the night.'

'But in that case, what is there left for me to do?' asked Agnes in dismay.

'Nothing,' responded Miss Esholt icily.

'But, as his wife, it is my duty to remain by Mr Esholt's side; and surely I can help one or both of you in the nursing!'

'Child!' burst out Miss Esholt, her stony self-possession for once deserting her—'and in many ways you are little more than a child—how dare you attempt to interfere in any arrangements I may think fit to make? My brother is very ill. It is imperatively necessary that he should be nursed by skilled hands, by those used to illness in various forms, and who are at home in a sickroom, not by raw inexperienced young women like yourself. What do you know of illness, pray? Whom have you ever nursed? Mr Esholt is as dear to me as a brother as he is to you as a husband—possibly more so. Do you think, then, that I will willingly allow his life to be endangered merely to gratify the caprices of a wilful girl? Not so, Mrs Esholt. You are his wife, and you can of course insist on nursing him; but if you do, will you be answerable for the consequences? I will not. Take the responsibility into your own hands, if it so please you; but remember that should my brother not recover, I shall assert with my last breath that it was your wilfulness and ignorance that killed him!'

At this juncture Mrs Jukes was announced.

As the nurse entered the room, Agnes left it. She was dazed, bewildered, heart-stricken, and yet that terrible woman's terrible words were not to be gainsaid. Of nursing, in the proper sense of the term, she knew next to nothing. Dare she take upon herself the tremendous responsibility Miss Esholt would thrust upon her if she persisted in asserting her position as a wife? No, she dare not—she dare not! Her husband was ill, perhaps dying, and she must be a spectator—nothing more.

It was dusk when she left her room, and a servant was lighting the hall lamp as she went down. During all those hours no one had been near her. Was her husband better or worse? She could rest no longer without knowing. She had a right to go to his room to ascertain that much, even if every other right were denied her. After pausing a moment, she turned to re-ascend the stairs, and as she did so, she saw Wilmot on the landing above, on the point of coming down. He had just left Mr Esholt's room. His face flushed at sight of her, and then became as pale as Agnes's own. Next moment he was by her side.

'O Wilmot, how is he?' she cried, in her anxiety letting the old familiar name slip from her lips. 'Is he better? Has he asked for me? Is there nothing I can do for him?'

'The symptoms have abated, and there is a slight improvement,' he answered gravely.

'Thank Heaven for that!'

'He has even been able to dictate the outlines of two important letters, which is certainly more than he could have done this morning.—By-the-way, I was coming to look for you, Mrs Esholt.'

'To look for me!'

'Mr Esholt has just handed me his bunch of keys with a request that I would see you and ask you to be at the trouble of opening the private drawer in his writing-table, where you will find a certain memorandum book bound in purple leather. This book you are to hand to me, returning me the keys at the same time, of course after relocking the drawer. Mr Esholt specified this one as being the key of the private drawer.'

Wondering somewhat, Agnes took the keys. 'If you don't mind, I will await your return here,' said Wilmot.

'I shall not detain you more than half a minute,' she answered, as she crossed the hall and then turned the corner of the corridor which led to Mr Esholt's study. Wilmot stood without moving where she had left him. He was still very pale, and his teeth were fixed tightly on his under lip, as if to keep down some hidden emotion. 'Will she never come back!' he muttered under his breath, for Agnes, instead of being away only half a minute, was fully three minutes before she returned. One glance at her face was enough. 'She has found it!' he whispered to himself.

'Here is the memorandum book and here are the keys,' she said in a dull expressionless voice, which contrasted strangely with her excitement of a few minutes ago. He took them, bowed, and, without a word, went back up-stairs on his way to Mr Esholt's room. Agnes stood where he had left her till he was out of sight; then she too went up-stairs, slowly, and taking hold

of the baluster as she went. At the top, she turned to the left and went to her own room.

On opening her husband's private drawer in the study, she saw, lying close by the memorandum book of which she had come in search, a torn portion of a letter, to which her eyes seemed involuntarily drawn. It was written in a bold masculine hand; and quite unconsciously, for her mind at the moment was elsewhere, her glance took in one or two of the sentences. At first their sense failed to strike her, then all at once the hot blood crimsoned her face, and she read them again. Then she shut the drawer quickly and turned the key; but having done that, she stood without stirring for a full minute, her mind a chaos of conflicting emotions. Then she deliberately unlocked the drawer again, took out the letter, and read it slowly and carefully through. She read it more than once, more than twice, till, in fact, every word had burnt itself into her memory. Both beginning and end of the letter had been torn away; what there was of it ran as under:

'You are quite right, my dear Esholt, in terming marriage a mistake. I found that out long ago; you, I suppose, are discovering it by degrees. Young wives are kittle creatures to manage. I can fully sympathise with you, now that the first rosy flush of wedded life has faded into the dull light of this workaday world—now that you are no longer bride and bridegroom, but commonplace man and wife. Take consolation from one who has gone through the ordeal. New harness always sits uneasily at first. You say that whatever you may think or feel, you always show a smiling countenance: a wise policy on your part, which I hope.'—

Here it broke off abruptly; but the young wife had read enough. She put the letter back into the drawer, and taking the memorandum book with her, went her way.

Although Mr Esholt grew no worse in the course of the next two or three days, it might with equal certainty be averred that there was little or no change for the better in his condition. But while his bodily weakness was so extreme, his mind was as clear as ever it had been; and as he lay there through one weary hour after another, it was only to be expected that his thoughts should brood much over the disquieting tidings which reached him day after day from the office; and that of itself was enough to retard his recovery. Lying there helpless in the partially darkened room, difficulties which, had he been about and well, he would have smiled at disdainfully, assumed unreal proportions in his eyes, and although he knew in his mind that they were merely as dwarfs masquerading in giants' armour, he had not strength to combat them, but allowed them to torment him at their pleasure, while calling himself a weak fool for not trampling them under foot, as he would have done at another time.

Then, again, he was bitterly grieved at heart at seeing so little of his wife. 'Where is Agnes?' he would sometimes ask when he woke up from an uneasy slumber and looked round with longing eyes for a sight of his young wife's pleasant face. Then his sister would put him off with some commonplace answer that Agnes was busy elsewhere, or that she had just been to inquire

how he was; and would finish by saying that Dr Pyefitt had forbidden all unnecessary conversation. He had not strength to press the point, but would murmur to himself: 'She does not care for me. Why should she? She has loved once, and can never love again!' And then he would fall again into one of his frequent half-sleeps, in which he nearly always seemed to be watching, with a sort of fearful fascination, a huge dark cloud which was slowly creeping up towards the zenith, and ere long would enfold both his fortunes and his happiness in its pall-like embrace.

In the frame of mind in which he then was, his wife's desertion of him—for such he termed it to himself—seemed almost a matter of course; merely one more among the crowd of misfortunes rushing in from every side to overwhelm him. Sometimes, however, on awaking he would find her there sitting by his side, for even Miss Esholt did not venture to keep her always out of her husband's room—and then it was touching to see the smile that brightened his wan face as he stretched out his hand towards her. 'He is only trying to deceive me,' Agnes would say bitterly to herself at such times. 'He wants to make me believe that he still loves me; but after that letter, how is it possible for me ever to believe again?' Then, again, Miss Esholt was nearly always in the room, and that did not tend to set her at her ease. So she would mechanically press her husband's hand and ask him how he was, and sit a little while, gazing with a sinking heart into his worn face, and then hurry out to hide the tears she could no longer keep back.

Neither by day nor night could Agnes get that terrible letter out of her thoughts. She wandered about the great dismal house, pale and sad, like an unhappy ghost for whom there is nowhere any rest. Not a creature in the world was there to whom she could open her heart and unfold her sorrows. Never so much as now had she missed kind-hearted Aunt Maria's comforting presence. Sometimes a wild longing came over her to leave all this weary coil of trouble behind her and make her way to the far-off parsonage where her aunt now lived, and there claim the love, the shelter, and the rest which she knew would not be denied her. Whenever she and Wilmot chanced to encounter each other, his soft veiled glances and melancholy smiles were not lost upon her. They were not like words—she could not take open cognisance of them; and since the finding of the letter, the knowledge that she was still as dear to him as ever sometimes sent a faint momentary glow through her heart, which only served to make the drear reality seem more dreary still whenever her thoughts contrasted it, as it was inevitable they should sometimes do, with the golden possibilities of what might have been. And so the weary days sped slowly on.

At length there came a day—about a week after Agnes's discovery of the letter—when tidings went through the house that Dr Pyefitt had pronounced Mr Esholt to be much better, and that there was every reason to hope the improvement would continue. That same evening Agnes sat down to communicate the news to Miss Maria, knowing how glad she would be to receive it. Finding herself, when she had written her note,

to be out of envelopes, she went down to her husband's study in search of some, feeling sure that at that particular time Wilmot would be engaged with Mr Esholt. She found the room empty, as she had surmised it would be. The lamp was lighted and the curtains drawn. The desk at which Wilmot usually sat was littered with letters and papers of various kinds. There, on the opposite side of the big square table, was the leather-covered chair in which Mr Esholt sat when at work, and there in front of it was the private drawer in which she had found the fatal letter. An archway and *portière* divided this room from the library proper. Agnes having found what she wanted, had just turned to go, when there came a ring at the front door. Who could it be? Probably Dr Pyefitt, who sometimes made a second call about that hour. She heard a servant answer the summons, and then the sound of voices, but whose voices she was unable to judge. As she could not get back to her room without passing through the entrance-hall, and as she did not care to be seen by any possible strangers, who, for aught she knew, might be some of Miss Esholt's visitors, she decided to stay where she was for a few moments till the coast should be clear.

Scarcely had she come to this conclusion when she heard voices in the corridor—those of Wilmot and some stranger—and was dismayed to find that the speakers were coming in the direction of the study. She had just time to push aside the *portière* and glide through into the library beyond, when the study door was opened and Wilmot and the stranger entered. The library was in darkness; but Agnes at once made her way noiselessly towards a door at the opposite end which opened into a side corridor from whence she would be able to get back unobserved to her room. Her heart gave a great throb when, on trying this door, she found it locked, and locked, too, from the outside. Her only means of escape was cut off! While she was standing in dire perplexity, not knowing what to do next, she heard the stranger say: 'I suppose we have nothing to fear from eavesdroppers?' To which Wilmot replied: 'Nothing.' Then he strode across the room, drew aside the *portière* and peered for an instant into the darkness beyond. Agnes, who was wearing a black dress this evening, had barely time to sink into a recess between two bookcases. Then the *portière* fell back into its place, and all was darkness again.

ON 'CHANGE IN MANCHESTER.

It may interest some of our readers to have a slight sketch on the above subject from the pen of one who has attended daily for the past quarter of a century on the boards of this the greatest emporium of commerce in the world; indeed, it may be said without fear of contradiction that the Manchester Royal Exchange is the largest hall ever constructed and used for purely commercial purposes. The capital invested in the building, which is divided amongst about two hundred and fifty shareholders, is nearly three hundred thousand pounds; and being practically a monopoly, the dividends range higher than on consols, while the security is considered by many almost as good. It is a vast and noble building, constructed in the

Italian style of architecture. The main entrance is approached by steps to the height of fifteen feet above the street-level, thence leading through a magnificent portico, containing four hundred and sixty square feet; which is enclosed within twelve massive stone pillars, about sixty feet in height. At the north-east end of the building there is a stately tower one hundred and eighty feet high, and containing a fine clock. On entering the building at an early hour of the day, when it is almost empty, one is then most struck with its vast extent. Above us, the roof is crowned by three great domes, panelled with stained glass, the central one reaching to the unusual altitude of one hundred and twenty-five feet from the floor-level; those on either side to forty-five and sixty feet respectively. Around us there is an unobstructed walking area (except for the columns) of nearly forty thousand square feet, consisting of a vast nave—flanked on either side with Corinthian columns of Irish red marble—and three spacious aisles or arcades. At the farther end of the building, opposite the main entrance, about thirty-five feet above the floor-level, there is an ornamental semicircular balcony, into which the Master of the Exchange escorts distinguished visitors, in order that they may witness the extraordinary sight presented at the time of 'High 'Change.'

Extending down the whole of the left wing, and some fifteen feet above the floor-level, there is a commodious reading-gallery, framed and enclosed from floor to roof with glass panels, which looks into and commands a continuous and comprehensive view of the hall below, and it is from this gallery really that the best observations can be made, and where the babel of noise is so hushed that you might almost suppose you were in a separate building. This reading-room is supplied with the principal newspapers and magazines of the United Kingdom, and includes also others published on the Continent, in the colonies, in North and South America, and British India. There are no fewer than one hundred and six magazines of monthly issue on the tables.

Ranged along both aisles of the building there are a series of 'drums,' where the numerous telegrams constantly arriving are promptly posted up, and which contain the latest commercial, political, and general information, comprising the last quotations in general produce, iron, corn, and copper; the latest movements in the Liverpool and New York cotton markets; the latest intelligence of imports and exports; semi-daily reports from New York, Liverpool, London, Glasgow, and Manchester Stock Exchanges. There are also two telephone departments—one at either end of the building, the principal one containing fifteen telephones; the other, five; beside which, there is a separate telegraph office; while high above the main entrance doors there are to be seen in large letters the opening price of 'consols,' the 'Bank rate' of the day, and the opening and closing 'estimate' of the total sales of cotton in Liverpool during the day.

Ensclosed within the side aisles and spread throughout the building there are some forty enclosed writing-desks, affording privacy for the transaction of business; besides perhaps twice as many marble slabs furnished with writing materials for the same purpose.

For the purpose of general observation, let us enter the Exchange at about half-past one to two P.M., along with the hurried and impetuous multitude who are now rapidly pouring into the building, and by two o'clock we may find ourselves in an assemblage of between six and seven thousand persons; and on looking around us, we shall discover more eager eyes and anxious faces than we have seen for some time. There is not the gesticulation and facial contortion of the Paris Bourse, or the frenzied excitement witnessed in Wall Street, New York, but there is a suppressed intensity and earnestness of purpose visible in every face. You may search long for a tranquil and serene expression of countenance, and, indeed, no wonder, when we consider the magnitude and keenness of the contest in which all here assembled are engaged. Meantime, if we can only retain our mental balance amidst this hum of human voices and bewildering movement of human hands and feet, let us ascertain if we can who these individuals are, and what is the precise nature of their business here.

First in order, then, there are the agents for the sale of raw cotton representing Liverpool or American firms; then the representative of the spinners of the raw material into yarn and thread; then the salesman of the manufacturer, or the manufacturer himself, who weaves this yarn into cloth—each of these is eagerly in search of the buyers of each commodity. Next in order, though less numerous, there are the spinners and manufacturers of linen, silk, jute, worsted, and multitudinous mixed fabrics for clothing purposes. These are supplemented by the dyers, printers, finishers, and bleachers of these and the varied cotton productions. These are again augmented by dealers in coal, iron, tin, timber, copper, steel, and their resultants in the form of machinery, constructive plant, &c. Besides all these, there is quite a small army of agents for life, fire, and marine insurance (stock and financial brokers, a few), dealers in agricultural and other produce, such as indigo, flax, flour (for sizing purposes), chemicals, drysaltery, &c., *ad infinitum*.

Let us observe a little of the methods of the crowd around us. Here is a salesman of yarn or cloth, who has probably called upon a number of firms at their places of business during the morning, and given them patterns and prices, and is now anxiously seeking them out again for the purpose of final conclusions; and after succeeding in his search, books in hand, both buyer and seller are apparently endeavouring to come to terms. Elbowing on as best we may, for the hall is densely packed in most parts, and getting gradually more accustomed to the almost deafening hum, let us endeavour to hear what is being said on the part of buyer and seller, and we shall probably catch such jerky utterances as the following (in the cotton quarter) from the seller: 'Cannot be done, cannot possibly take less.—Very lowest price.—We are losing money.—Working under cost.' Or again: 'Will take it as an offer and submit.—Will consider it and report.' Or again: 'Market is strong in Liverpool; twenty thousand bales sold to-day.—Shall want more next week!—Cannot possibly hold it over'—meaning, if the bargain is not struck there and then, quotations will not be considered binding an hour afterwards.

On the other hand, from the buyer we may hear such expressions as: 'Cannot give a fraction more!' or, 'Cannot buy to-day.—Bad reports from abroad.—Exchange is down'—meaning, rate of exchange is adverse to remittances from abroad, therefore business must be temporarily suspended.—'The cotton crop is under-estimated'—indicating a plentiful supply of raw cotton in the coming season, and consequently lower prices.—'Will submit your price out'—meaning, will write or wire out to India, China, or South America, &c. (Wiring is more general to India and China, and is of daily occurrence.) 'Cannot possibly exceed our limits.—If you don't accept, order will go back'—meaning, order will be sent back unexecuted for fresh limits, which may or may not be forthcoming, and involving a delay for which the needy spinner or manufacturer with machinery unemployed cannot afford to wait.

Then, again, there are to be heard endless discussions as to the fulfilment of contracts already entered into—discussions arising out of either inferiority of quality delivered, or lateness of delivery beyond the contracted time; and these disputes are often very excited and acrimonious; as of late years, in consequence of the intense competition, contracts of any magnitude are made legally as well as morally binding by the signing of the contract by both buyer and seller; thus bringing any default in execution within the statute of frauds. These difficulties have recently (when they have become too strained for settlement otherwise) been saved from the law-courts by mutual reference to the local Chamber of Commerce, as a better informed and less costly tribunal, and this has been found to work satisfactorily in the interest of all parties concerned.

An attendance on the Manchester Exchange supplies serious matter for reflection on the intensity of the struggle for the maintenance of our established industries against the strain of foreign competition; as, beyond doubt, this struggle is getting daily keener and more severe. In proof of this, it may be stated that continental and American cotton goods in large quantities are frequently sold here both for home and foreign consumption. In American productions, the bargains are made at so much per piece, freight and packing free in Bombay harbour, being the goods trans-shipped at Liverpool on the way from New York to Bombay. To give an idea of the strained condition of things resulting from this intense competition, it is not unfrequently the case that a bargain falls through because of a difference of one sixty-fourth part of a penny per yard between buyer and seller. The struggle is demoralising to all concerned; high moral principles are being rudely shaken under it, the grand old motto, 'Live and let live,' finds itself in an uncongenial atmosphere. *Au contraire*, the cry against this is, 'Live who live can;' it is 'diamond cut diamond;' the weakest goes to the wall, without the element of mercy in the conflict.

A few words in concluding this sketch of the Manchester Exchange as to the magnitude of the business transacted daily—especially on Tuesday and Friday, the market days—on these boards. In monetary value it is quite impossible to arrive at anything approaching a trustworthy estimate, and it is perhaps only in cotton yarn and cloth that the total turnover may be reasonably approxi-

mated; and when this is formulated and stated in aggregate as well as comparative terms, the figures will appear absolutely incredible to an outside observer, and may possibly at first sight be doubted even by many who attend here regularly. There are many days, and it may be safely said to occur at least once a week in busy times, when the total sales of cloth effected during the day amount to twelve million yards, and when the total sales of yarn reduced into single threads would be long enough to girdle the globe sixteen hundred times successively; or be equal to five thousand times its equatorial or polar diameter; or reach from this planet to the moon one hundred and eighty times in succession; or be equal to nearly twenty thousand times that luminary's linear diameter. Or, again—to continue the comparison—it would be sufficient in length to reach almost half-way to the sun; or be equal to over fifty times its diameter; and would be sufficient to cover three-fourths of the distance to the planet Mercury when nearest to us; and almost equal to twofold the distance of Venus when in inferior conjunction.

About three P.M. the hall becomes less crowded owing to the exit of large numbers, many of whom return again an hour later, and remain till close on five P.M., after which the building is almost entirely vacated, and again presents, as in the early morning, that unique and striking appearance of spaciousness which is largely due to its extraordinary dimensions, and which is intensified by the absence of obstructive fittings and furnishings, usually found in most other buildings.

It may be well to state how the estimates given are roughly arrived at. Taking the sales of raw cotton in Liverpool at the moderate total of ten thousand bales for the day, and adopting the not improbable assumption that at least this quantity is sold in the shape of yarn and cloth on the same day, and averaging these bales at three hundred pounds each (a fair average), we get 3,000,000 pounds of cotton; and taking the counts of yarn spun from this cotton at, say, 'thirties,' warp or weft (a fair estimate), and multiplying 3,000,000 by eight hundred and forty (yards to the hank), and then by thirty (hanks to the pound), we get 75,600,000,000 yards of yarn, which, being divided by seventeen hundred and sixty (yards to a mile), gives us nearly 43,000,000 miles of yarn.

MR MAGSDALE'S COURTSHIP.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.—AN UNFORESEEN DIFFICULTY.

THE day fixed for Allan Magsdale's departure from Astley Villa had arrived, and Peter was saying his farewells with a lugubrious countenance. His cousin had secured lodgings in Holland Park Road, no very great distance geographically; but for all the assistance he could be there, he might as well have taken up his residence at the North Pole. Hence unbrotherly feelings raged in Peter's mild breast against the sister who had brought about this separation.

'You will come and see me sometimes?' he said for the tenth time, as Allan stepped into his cab.

'Oh yes; I won't lose sight of you.—Let me know how you get on up at Queen's Road.'

Alas, poor Peter! How was he to 'get on' at

all, when Cornelia would be always at his elbow? Miss Cressburn's occupation kept her abroad all day, or he might have snatched an occasional holiday to spend in her society; and he knew that his sister would not accept any excuse he might invent for going out night after night, as had been his habit when Allan was with them. He half wished that he had not been quite so hasty in proposing to Mary. Now that they were actually engaged to be married, she was justified in expecting him to be frequently with her; and unless he told her how he was situated, it would be hard to give a satisfactory explanation of his remissness. It was very perplexing; and, like all weak men, he took refuge in a resolution to wait and see what time would do for him.

He thought the matter over carefully, and came to the conclusion that his first aim must be to disarm Mrs Bunshaw's vigilance; to make a show of resigning himself to the humdrum life she considered proper, before attempting to begin operations again. The plan answered admirably in its direct object; but it was not long before he discovered that he could not satisfy Miss Cressburn with promises, and within a week of Allan's departure he found himself fairly confronted with the difficulty. He had received her second letter asking him to call, and its terms forced him to confess that the young lady would have just reason to complain of his behaviour unless he promised to go and did go.

'I shall be at home about half-past eight this evening,' wrote Miss Cressburn, 'and won't accept any excuse for your non-appearance. You needn't plead an engagement, as you did last time. If you cared to see me, you wouldn't make engagements at the only time I am at leisure.'

'It's very clear that she's not to be trifled with,' thought he, as he read the letter in his office. 'I must say I'll go, and trust to luck to manage it.' He wrote and despatched his reply at once, and passed the day wondering how he was to fulfil the promise he had made. His good angel sent him succour in a very unexpected shape. On his return to Putney that afternoon, he found Miss Terripeg with his sister; and Mrs Bunshaw's first words showed him the means of keeping his promise without the least risk of trouble. 'Miss Terripeg is going to remain to dinner with us, Peter,' she said; 'and you must walk home with her afterwards.'

Since the day on which Mrs Bunshaw had suggested that this lady was of all others the one best qualified to make him happy, Peter had given her as wide a berth as he could; nor, so long as Allan had been in the house, was there any difficulty in avoiding her. She was a brisk, dark-haired little person of about his own age, with an endless flow of very small talk, and a degree of admiration almost amounting to worship for Mrs Bunshaw, whose character and principles she took every opportunity of extolling. Her manner to Peter was one of confiding tenderness, painfully embarrassing to a man of his shy temperament; and as his sister gave her every encouragement to continue this mode of treatment, with tactless disregard for his feelings, it is not wonderful that Peter met her with very moderate joy.

But she would want him to walk home with her after dinner, and that materially altered

matters. His heart bounded with relief and eagerness, for she lived in the direction of Queen's Road, and she was sure to go home early. He received her with unusual warmth, and made light of the task his sister had imposed upon him; nothing would give him more pleasure than to see her home, and in saying this he was at least sincere.

'Well, I never expected help from that quarter,' reflected Mr Magsdale as he went up-stairs to his room. 'Odd that it never occurred to me before—very odd.' He went on with his dressing, and as he did so his thoughts took a wider range. 'There's no earthly reason,' he said to himself as he struggled into his coat—'no earthly reason why Miss Terripeg shouldn't come here every night of the week, so that I could walk home with her. At all events, I'll do my best to encourage her visits as often as I can.'

It was a new thing for Peter to plan an elaborate scheme to impose upon any one, and although in this instance everything seemed to be in his favour, he went down-stairs to join the ladies somewhat dubious about his ability to carry it through. He made a very creditable beginning, however, and fairly astonished his sister by the brilliancy of his conversation and the assiduous attention he paid to Miss Terripeg's wants at dinner.

'Peter is positively coming out, my dear,' she observed to her friend when they were alone in the drawing-room. 'I never knew him to be so entertaining before; he doesn't exert himself like that for me.' This was strictly true, but hardly fair, for Mrs Bunshaw's usual demeanour was not calculated to excite hilarity in one who held her in such awe as did her brother.

'You can't mean that I am the cause of his high spirits,' said Miss Terripeg.

'I didn't say that your presence had anything to do with it; I only said that he is never so cheerful when we are alone.'

'I wish I could think so,' sighed the lady, pursuing the tenor of her own remark. She really liked Peter, and his sister's candidly expressed desire to create her a relation was treasured in her memory.

'I hope we shall often see you here now; we found our cousin rather—rather undomestic, and were very glad when he left us; I could never depend on having Peter at home any day,' said Mrs Bunshaw with meaning.

Cornelia thought her brother's solicitude lest they should detain Miss Terripeg unduly late was a little out of keeping with the pleasure he appeared to take in her society; as a matter of fact, he had to exercise some self-control to refrain from looking at his watch every five minutes, after the clock in the hall struck eight. It was nearly nine before the guest thought of moving, and past that hour when her leave-takings with Mrs Bunshaw were concluded. The night was cold, and Mr Magsdale's fear lest his companion's health should suffer was no doubt the reason which prompted him to start on the journey at a good round pace of about five miles an hour.

'I must say I enjoy a smart walk on a night like this,' he said pleasantly.

'Yes,' panted Miss Terripeg; 'but—do you think we—need go quite—so fast?'

The discomfited Peter slackened his speed, and explained that he thought she was in a hurry to get home. But she disclaimed the idea of being in haste to lose Mr Magsdale's company—a pretty speech which was thrown away on him, for he was engaged in a mental calculation of the time he must lose in going home with her instead of making his way direct to Queen's Road.

'I love the night,' said Miss Terripeg softly when she had quite recovered breath; 'it seems to me that one's noblest thoughts and highest aspirations are born of the darkness.' Her tone was so alarmingly tender, that Peter felt a little apprehensive, and conceived the noble thought of checking further conversation by increasing his pace again. 'If she begins *that* kind of thing, I must,' he decided in consternation; 'I shouldn't know how to make her stop it.'—'I daresay you are right,' he answered vaguely; and Miss Terripeg, finding him as insensible to poetry as he was to flattery, altered her strain, and proceeded to chatter volubly about Mrs Bunshaw, her talents, her work, and the admiration she commanded.

'How could you get on without her, Mr Magsdale?' she cried enthusiastically. 'So kind, so thoughtful, so attentive to your comforts and happiness.'

'I don't know, I'm sure,' said Peter, wistfully thinking how well he could take care of his own comfort and happiness if Cornelia would only give him a chance.

'Yes, it must be sad for you to think that she cannot always remain with you.'

As Peter's chief sorrow in life was that the future offered no trustworthy prospect of his ever being without her, he could not respond to this very cordially.

'I am devoted to Cornelia,' said Miss Terripeg warmly. Of course her brother must be devoted to her also, and she wanted to find some common ground of sympathy with him.

'I hope you will come and see her frequently,' Miss Terripeg said Peter as gravely as though his sister was *in extremis*, 'and give me the pleasure of walking home with you.—Ah! here is your door.—Good-night.' He evidently feared to linger over the pleasure, for he was out of sight down the street almost before she could ask him to come in and sit down for a few minutes.

'A little eccentric,' she said to herself as she went indoors; 'but a very nice fellow indeed. I must go and see Cornelia again about the Society's meeting, soon.'

Although love lent wings to Peter's heels, he did not reach Mary Cressburn's door until nearly ten, and he hastened up-stairs with some misgivings as to the reception he might expect. His apologies were very graciously received, however, and he settled down to make the most of the short time he considered it safe to prolong his absence. He spent an hour with her, and left the house with sufficient food for reflection to last him a much longer time than he cared about.

Miss Cressburn was quite willing to marry him immediately, if he wished it, but insisted on knowing his reason for such unnecessary haste. Peter beat about the bush for a while, and when finally cornered, admitted that he feared opposition from his 'family,' to whom he dreaded giving offence on account of his expectations. Mary

Cressburn, who had her full share of proper pride, was roused, and declared her wish to be introduced to his family. Peter strongly demurred; he was much afraid that such a step would lead to a rupture, which might be avoided if she waited until after their marriage to make its acquaintance. Nothing the family could say then could untie the knot, and it might reasonably be expected to resign itself to the inevitable. It was plausibly put; but Mary was by no means satisfied. Was Peter ashamed of her? He made the only answer he could. Well, then, if he was not ashamed of her, she must have a better reason for his disinclination to let her meet his friends. Peter looked helpless and miserable, but had no other reason to give. Then he must distinctly understand that their wedding need not be discussed at all until she knew every member of his family; she would never have it said that the man she loved had been disinherited by reason of his secret marriage with her. She wanted everything done openly and in the light of day. If the family did not approve of his choice, then it would be for him to decide upon his course, whether he elected to throw over his relations or herself. She spoke bravely, though she felt with a sinking heart that she was insisting upon a condition which might wrest her lover from her, and leave her to the life of toil and drudgery from which she longed to escape. It could not be helped, and she would not abate a jot of her demand whatever the consequence might be.

To look at it from another point, it was only right and just that she should know everything about the man with whom she had consented to cast in her lot. That was the view Miss Parkins would take of it, and no one could gainsay its correctness. Her aunt was the only relative she had, and Mary held her in deserved esteem. She was a clear-headed, sensible old lady, who guarded her niece's interests with almost motherly care. She was not the woman to consent to such a proposition as Mr Magsdale had made, and it was altogether out of the question to consider it seriously for a moment.

So Peter left Queen's Road in full possession of Miss Cressburn's opinions, feeling that from their very soundness they served to raise another obstacle in a path which had been difficult enough before. He had consistently referred to Cornelia as the 'family,' a prevarication of which he was not a little ashamed, and which did not simplify matters, now that he recognised that Mary meant to know his belongings before she would consent to marry him.

The 'family' looked curiously at her brother when he came in, but having drawn her own deductions from his lengthened absence, forbore to question him about it. She had no doubt in her own mind that Peter and Miss Terripeg had taken advantage of the beauty of the night to go for a little walk together, instead of proceeding straight to the lady's residence. A violation of the rules of propriety, but one which she was disposed to overlook under the circumstances.

'I like Anna Terripeg,' she remarked as he took his seat beside the fire; 'she always seems to enjoy being here too.'

'Yes,' said Peter heartily; 'she's a cheery, companionable little woman. You must ask her

in again soon. I can always take her home, you know.'

Mrs Bunshaw smiled a little triumphant smile and nodded wisely. 'Quite so, Peter,' she said dryly—'quite so.' And she went up-stairs, picturing her brother and Miss Terripeg already facing each other at the altar.

'I hope Cornelia's notion won't lead to complications,' reflected Peter as he stirred the fire into a blaze. 'I suppose I must let her keep it for the present, if I am ever to see Mary at all; for, upon my word, the only way I can get out of the house without being badgered to death about it, is on the pretext of taking Miss Terripeg home.'

A few days passed by, and he heard nothing from Miss Cressburn. Her silence made him uneasy; for it served to impress upon him that she was in earnest about being introduced to his relations, and though the matter was ever present in his thoughts, he had not yet been able to decide upon the course he ought to pursue. There seemed to be nothing for it but to wait as patiently as he might for the situation to develop itself; though, unless something very unexpected should transpire, he could not fail to see that the affair would be at a dead-lock.

'Miss Terripeg is coming over to spend the afternoon with me, Peter,' said Mrs Bunshaw one morning soon after the occasion upon which he had discovered the advantage to be gained by escorting that lady home.

'Spend the afternoon?' he said doubtfully. 'You had better ask her to stay to dinner, hadn't you? It's a long way for her to come.'

'I'll ask her,' said Cornelia. She had been wondering whether her brother would make the suggestion, and received it in silent contentment. As luck would have it, Mary Cressburn selected the same day to write, asking him to come in and see her that evening at the usual hour. He lost no time in sending an answer, but he qualified his promise to go; for if anything happened to prevent Miss Terripeg staying to dine with them at Astley Villa, he might be unable to get away. So he said that an important engagement, which he was bound to keep, would probably detain him, but he would of course do his utmost to come to her at the appointed time.

Miss Terripeg remained to dinner, and Mr Magsdale made ready to take her home afterwards; less cheerfully than he had done last time, for he was far from happy about the interview he was about to have with his fiancée. The route to Miss Terripeg's dwelling took them across the end of Queen's Road; and as they passed under the gas-lamp at the corner, Peter noticed a woman stop to look after them. It crossed his mind that the figure resembled that of Miss Parkins, but he could not be certain. He reached his real destination soon after leaving his charge at her own door, and was surprised to hear that Miss Cressburn had retired and would not be able to see him; he began to think there was something amiss, and the coldness with which her aunt received him did nothing to relieve his apprehensions. She cut short his inquiries about her niece and put him on his trial at once: we use the expression advisedly, for he felt far more like a criminal than a lover before Miss Parkins had done with him.

'I happened to be out posting a letter this evening, Mr Magsdale,' she began gravely. It was a very commonplace thing for any one to do, and if Peter had brought a clear conscience with him, the information would have appeared unworthy of the solemn tones in which Miss Parkins offered it. That *was* her figure he had seen near the pillar-box at the corner, when he passed with Miss Terripeg. It was not his practice to take evening walks with his lady-friends, and in the position he stood towards Miss Cressburn, it would have been particularly unbecoming; he felt this, and being a modest man, he blushed.

The blush was not lost upon Miss Parkins, and she continued more gravely than before: 'Mary has told me of your disinclination to introduce her to your family, Mr Magsdale.'

Peter would have given fifty pounds to have been on the safe side of the hall door, but there was no escape for him; he wriggled uneasily in his chair, and said: 'Yes, Miss Parkins,' in a hollow whisper, which in itself would have convinced any jury of the speaker's guilt.

'I thought at the time it was curious; but after seeing you with that lady this evening, it occurs to me that you are concealing something from my niece.'

'It was only a friend of my sister's whom I was taking home,' burst out Peter. 'I—I often take her home in the evening.'

'I presume that was the important engagement you feared might prevent your coming here to-night?' said Miss Parkins with cutting irony.

What an awful mistake, he now saw, he had made to say that in his letter. He was not a ready man; and the light in which his conduct appeared to Miss Parkins so overcame him that it did not strike him to give the perfectly reasonable explanation of it which the simple truth would provide. His sister had asked a friend to dinner, and common civility required him to be present; the lady had a long way to walk home, and ordinary politeness required him to escort her. Could anything be clearer?

Unfortunately for Peter, his judge did not give him time to collect himself, but summed up and delivered sentence without even going through the usual formality of asking if the prisoner at the bar had anything to say.

'You come here, Mr Magsdale, and entangle the affections of a young and innocent girl, and then propose a secret marriage to her. You are discovered making an "important engagement" with another lady, a fortnight after she consents to marry you.—I don't want to hear a word, Mr Magsdale,' said the judge, raising her voice to drown his expostulations. 'I told Mary at the time that I didn't think you were good enough for her; but she liked you, and it was not my business to make objections. However, until you are prepared to present her to your family as your intended wife, you need not come here again. But please bear in mind that Mary is my niece, and that you will have me to deal with, if you try to play fast and loose with her.—Now, you had better go.'

Miss Parkins rose as she concluded, and motioned Peter to the door. Even then, he might have cleared himself to some extent, but his weakness was paramount, and he set the seal on the proof of his guilt by walking silently from the

room and out into the street. The matter had come to a crisis, and he knew that if he meant to adhere to his engagement, he must bow to Mary Cressburn's will, and take her to see his sister; and what the result of such a proceeding would be he did not care to contemplate.

'If she only knew Cornelia, she wouldn't be in such a hurry to make her acquaintance,' he groaned. 'I'll have to say that I'll introduce her: there's nothing else to be done.'

And indeed, when he reviewed the events of the evening, it seemed to be the only way out of his difficulties, although he could not see the end of it and knew not whither it might lead. The manner in which circumstances had conspired to drag Miss Terripeg into the game, too, was singularly unfortunate. He had done his little best to have that lady invited to Astley Villa, giving his sister to understand that he welcomed her for her own sake, and wished to improve his acquaintance with her. In plain language, he had taken advantage of the plans Mrs Bunshaw had so long cherished, to make a tool, for his own purposes, of a woman who liked him. He had succeeded so well that it would now be doubly difficult to confess that he had betrothed himself to another. Miss Parkins had treated him very unfairly about Miss Terripeg in connection with the 'important engagement' mentioned in his letter; but he could disabuse Mary's mind of any suspicions she might have on that point, and as soon as he reached home he sat down and wrote to her. He gave the explanation her aunt had not allowed him a chance of making, and begged her to believe that he was concealing nothing from her. He went on to say that he would introduce her to his relations, since she made such a point of it, and concluded by asking her to see him and hear everything he had to say.

To this Mary Cressburn promptly replied; she accepted his statement with regard to Miss Terripeg, but warned him that she could not consider any engagement wherein a lady was concerned of sufficient importance to interfere with his duty towards herself for the future. She would be glad to see him as soon as he could call, and they would arrange a day for her visit to Astley Villa.

It was the answer Peter might have expected; but even as he had written in haste, he now repented at leisure. He could not withdraw his promise to make her acquainted with his relations; but before he went to Queen's Road again, he would see Allan and obtain advice from him.

AN OLD NEWSPAPER.

'DOCTOR,' said the old housekeeper at the Manor-house, when I called a day or two after her master's funeral to ask how she was—'Doctor, I was turning out an old cupboard in the parlour yesterday, and among a pile of bills and receipts I came across an old newspaper; and, thinks I, this will just do for Dr Salisbury.'

'Your thought was a good one,' said I; 'there is nothing that I enjoy more than an old newspaper; and there must be something worth reading in this one, or your master would never have taken such care to preserve it through all

these long years, for it bears date November 9, 1805.'

'And, of all odd things in the world,' she added, 'where should I find it but inside of an old sailor's cocked-hat as once belonged to poor master's grandfather!—him that was shot aboard Nelson's ship in the fight agan the French.—Many's the time I've heard master talk of Captain Frank.'

And so, away I went with my prize. I was too busy that day to examine it with any care, until evening found me as usual in my study, with the curtains drawn and my chair not far from a blazing wood-fire, pen and ink close at hand, and the old newspaper carefully laid out on the table before me. There it lies, one single sheet, twenty inches by fourteen, of old thin paper, gray with age, and frayed at the edges, and bearing date, Truro, November 9, 1805—the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, then the chief newspaper for all the west country, and not inferior to the *Exeter Gazette* itself. Mr Thomas Flindell appears to be printer, publisher, and editor; and it is he who announces to his readers the sad calamity which had befallen the nation, in these portentous words: 'We have this week to announce a battle more tremendous, and a conquest more glorious, than ever the proud annals of England could boast till now. But LORD NELSON is no more; his ardent soul has departed to heaven on the wings of VICTORY. Four thousand Britons killed and wounded. All faces seem to be in mourning for our gallant and ever to be lamented Admiral; 'tis a dear-bought victory.'

This was the tremendous battle and splendid victory of Trafalgar, where the French fleet, of thirty-three ships of the line, four frigates, and two brigs of war, sailed in triumph out of Cadiz to meet the twenty-seven ships of the line, with four frigates, under Horatio Nelson; and after a bloody engagement of four hours, met with total and disastrous defeat. Nineteen of the enemy's ships were taken or sunk, one was blown up, and six were wrecked in the gale that came on at sundown, after the fight on the 21st of the preceding October. 'But not one of His Majesty's ships,' says the despatch, 'was lost in this most glorious conflict.'

This grand and important news, for which all England eagerly waited, was brought to Falmouth on the 4th of November by Lieutenant Lapenotiere, in the *Pickle* schooner, and thence carried, as fast as post-horses could fly, direct to London, which it reached at midnight of the 6th. At one A.M. the good news was published at the Admiralty, where long before daylight vast crowds assembled to gather tidings of the great fight, and the terrible list of the brave fellows who had perished in defence of their country. The early mails of that morning were crowned with laurel ere they left the Post-office in St. Martin's-le-Grand and carried the message far and wide throughout the land—horses, men, carriages, all decked with branches, flowers, oak-leaves, and ribbons. The whole street, says a spectator, is filled with a double line of royal carriages; and every moment are shouted aloud by Post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the names of the great ancestral cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln,

Winchester, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, York, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags; and every swift departure is crowned by enthusiastic cheers of the crowds that have gathered to join in the triumph. So flies the message of mingled joy and grief, to tell the nation how nobly her sons did their duty in the day of the great sea-fight—how the proud boasts of the invader had been scattered to the winds, the tyrant Bonaparte crushed; and how dearly victory had been bought in the death of Nelson, and the thousands of other gallant souls who shed their blood to win it.

The engagement began at noon at the hoisting of the famous signal, 'England expects that every man will do his duty;' and after raging for an hour and a half, as Nelson stood on the quarter-deck and was pointing out to his officers the gallant way in which Collingwood had brought his ship into action, he received his fatal wound in the breast from the mizzen-top of the *Redoutable*. Captain Hardy had vainly implored him on that day to change his dress, or to cover the stars which he usually wore on his breast; but Nelson replied: 'In honour I gained them, and in honour I will die with them.' Into the fight, therefore, he went, as usual, in his admiral's frock-coat, bearing the four brilliant stars and orders, arranged diamond wise **, and thus became an easy and conspicuous mark for the French riflemen. His last words were: 'Thank God, I have done my duty.'

The terrible conflict was continued for more than two hours after his death, when the last of the French ships struck her colours, and the victory of Trafalgar was achieved.* The last public words of the great minister William Pitt, on hearing the news of the victory and death of Nelson, were: 'Let us hope that England, having saved herself by her splendid courage, may save Europe by her example.' Saved, indeed, England was; but for many a long day the nation mourned for the thousands of brave Englishmen who perished at Trafalgar; and Mr Thomas Flindell might well say: 'All Plymouth faces seem to be in mourning.'

Before parting with our Old Newspaper, it is curious enough to note how differently it is made up from a newspaper of our own busy times. Strictly speaking, there is no Leading Article, three-fourths of the whole space being filled with short paragraphs relating to Trafalgar, letters, and despatches. Advertisements are very few in number, and among the few only a single one relating to literature; that of a book, price four shillings and sixpence, *War in Disguise, or the Frauds of the Neutral Flags*; and among the others, a notable one asking for 'Tenders for Building a Prison on Dartmoor capable of receiving five thousand prisoners of war.' Only two touch on the question of drink—one in which Mr Crowgey

* The bullet which killed Nelson is still treasured as a memento. On removing it from the wound, it was found to have embedded in it a portion of gold lace as firmly as if inserted in a molten state. Mounted in crystal and silver, it finally passed into the possession of the late Prince Albert.

of Falmouth offers 'The Only Geneva, at very moderate prices;' and a second, also from Falmouth, offering 'French Brandy imported direct from France'—those being the days when Cornish smuggling was at its height. Brandy was cheap enough in those days; but the price of wheat in Mark Lane, on October 26, 1805, was fifty-eight to sixty-eight shillings, fine quality seventy to seventy-four shillings, per quarter; though, strange to say, at the same date it was selling in Truro market at thirty-seven shillings per bushel, a difference which I cannot attempt to explain. Its price in Winchester and Mark Lane is now thirty-eight to forty shillings. 'Consols' were in those November days at £59, 14s., just three-pence higher than in June 1815, when, up to the date of Waterloo, they stood at £59, 13s. 9d.

Further than this, the *Cornwall Gazette* has not in it a particle of news worthy of note; though the editor does his best to chronicle the exact state of wind, weather, and tide at all the great sea-ports on or about November 1—that is, a week before the date of publication. But in his special column, he adds, by way of startling information, 'two curious facts'—one, that 'a cornstack in the dreary regions of Borrowdale, Cumberland, has excited the utmost surprise of the natives, it being the first stack of grain ever seen there by the oldest inhabitant;' and the other, that 'hopes are at this moment entertained that the Cape is in our hands, as the governor is a Dutchman well disposed towards England.' The Cape of Good Hope was, however, not ours until taken by Sir D. Baird and Sir J. Popham in January 1806.

With this final morsel of news, we must take leave of our old newspaper, of which we are inclined to doubt there being another copy in existence.

LITTLE BOW-LEGS.

It certainly was a dreadful day for the middle of March: the sleet was being driven in clouds along the streets by a keen east wind, and roads and pavements were deep in slush. Nurse Grant paused just within the threshold of a small house in Old Road, Stepney, to unfurl her umbrella and gather up her skirts. 'I will call again this evening, Mrs Evans; but I think the danger is past for the present, and you need not be uneasy.'

'Thank you, nuss, I'm sure. Please God, things will go better now.'

'Well, I really think she is round the corner; but be sure she takes plenty of nourishment.—Good-morning.'

'Oh, nuss, I nearly forgot, so I did! Will you just call at No. 9 and see Little Bow-legs?'

The nurse nodded; she was already out in the street, and the wind would have drowned any verbal reply. Her black veil was blown across her face, her umbrella creaked with the strain upon it, and nurse gave a little shiver as she hurried along, pushed on by the wind as by unseen hands. When she reached No. 9, she gave a sharp double rap at the knocker, and then watched a grating in the pavement to the left. A face appeared below it presently, and nurse nodded; a moment after the door swung open, and nurse dived into the welcome shelter.

'Very dark down-stairs to-day, isn't it, Miss Moses?'

'It is so, nurse; but I'm glad all the rooms are let.'

'I'd rather have one up-stairs room unlet, I think, and get more light and air. I wonder I don't have you for a patient, living in a cellar like that;' and nurse shook her head severely and began to climb the stairs. On the second landing she opened a door and entered a low room lit by one small dirty window. There was a bed in one corner of the room, and a large table covered with crockery, sewing materials, papers, &c., stood in the middle. The walls were hung with bird-cages of every description, some wretched little wooden things, others nice large breeding-cages, and all occupied by birds, who were fluttering and singing and filling the room with noise. Several strings were stretched across the ceiling, from which damp garments were hung; and diving under these, nurse reached the fireplace, before which a small boy was sitting. He had not heard her enter because of the birds; but directly he saw her, he got up from the floor, and seizing various rags, threw them over the cages from which the loudest songs were trilling, and then pushed forward a chair and said: 'Sit down.' He was a boy of about seven, with a well-shaped head and clear pale complexion; on his face was a grave expression, as of one weighed down by weary experiences.

'He is very ill, nurse. Do you think he *can* live? He is to be my very own, if he does;' and he held up a wretched-looking canary he had been cuddling under his coat.

'It looks very ill, Jim. Has it caught cold?'

'I b'lieve so. He used to sing beautiful, better nor all the others put together, and now I think he'll die.'

'I hope not.—But you didn't send for me to see the canary, did you?'

'No, nurse.' The boy paused and covered up his bird. 'I want to go to the 'orspital.'

'I'm afraid, dear boy, they can't do anything for you there.'

'Oh yes, they can; they can do most anything. Do take me.'

'But, Jim, it would be a horrid operation, and you would have to stay in bed for weeks.'

'I don't care; I don't care for nuffin, so as to be like other boys. Now, I can't run, but I tumbles down, and they shouts after me everywhere: "There goes Little Bow-legs!"' The boy's voice quivered, and nurse looked distressed.

Just then the door opened, and a woman came in with a black bundle in her arms. 'Bless me, nurse, is that you? Sure you are good to that boy. I dunno what he would do without the books you lend him, for he can't play like other boys.'

'Is that work, Mrs Millan?—How are you getting on?'

The woman unpinned the black bundle and threw it on the bed. 'Flannel trousers, nurse. A nice job to do in a muck of a room like this. They birds sprinkle dirty water over everything.'

'Better than no work; and the birds paid the doctor's bill last year.'

'That's true too.—How's Betty Evans?'

'She is much better to-day.—About this boy

of yours, Mrs Millan; he says he wants to go to the hospital to see if they can straighten his legs. What do you wish?

'Wish! I wish I'd never married his father. He's got his father's legs, and he'll get his father's temper soon, I specs.'

'I don't know anything about his father; but I think Jim is the best and most intelligent boy of his age that I know.—Do you wish him to go to the hospital?'

'As he likes,' replied Mrs Millan carelessly. 'I don't believe nothing will make those legs straight. 'Taint as though it were an accident; it runs in the family.'

'If anything could be done, it would probably be by breaking the bones of both legs, and the boy would be in bed a month.—Could you lie quietly on your back for four weeks, Jim?'

'Yes, or a year, so as I should be like other boys.'

'If he's set on it, nurse, he'd better go, if you can give him a letter.'

'I will give him a letter,' said nurse, rising. She glanced round the crowded little room, and longed to put in a plea for more space and light; but experience had taught her it was useless. The Millans were very respectable; but the husband was an enthusiastic politician, and his spare time and cash were devoted to the cause of his particular creed. He also had legs so bowed as to be a hideous deformity, and perhaps this had helped to embitter the man's spirit. Poor Mrs Millan had a hard time of it often with this cantankerous husband of hers; and her speech had grown very sharp, her nature hard, through constant collision with the man she had married from love and pity. She had to work to keep the home together; and small room though that home consisted of, it was often difficult to pay the rent. So nurse made no complaint of the untidy close room, but wrapped her cloak around her, and nodding good-bye to Jim, went forth into the storm-driven streets again.

That very afternoon she applied to the matron of the District Nursing Society, and secured an out-patient's letter for Little Bow-legs. She scarcely thought the surgeons would attempt to straighten such crooked limbs; but the boy might become more content were he once persuaded that his burden was inevitable.

Mrs Millan took Jim to the hospital the next Saturday afternoon. They found many friends in the out-patients' waiting-hall, and Mrs Millan enjoyed a good gossip before Jim's turn came to enter the surgeon's room. At last the porter passed her in; and a nurse in a white cap and apron came forward and took the letter, and after glancing at it, stripped off Jim's shoes and stockings and set him on a chair before the surgeon. A few rapid questions were asked, and several of the students examined the legs.

'My boy, do you want your legs put straight?'

asked the surgeon at last.

'Yessir.'

'You are quite sure you are willing to bear some pain?'

'Yessir.'

'Give him a ticket for the children's ward, Smith.—Next case, nurse.'

Jim's heart failed him for a moment when he found himself in the long ward with so many

curious eyes fixed on him as he walked along in his ungainly manner. Every one seemed very busy; and a nurse whisked a screen round a crib and slipped Jim into bed in no time, and then dismissed his mother, telling her to come again the next afternoon. Jim pulled the clothes over his head and cried a little; but presently a baby girl in the next crib began crowing at him, and Jim played bo-peep with her through the bars. Gradually he gathered courage to look around. There were such lots of pictures and toys and flowers about in this large bright room, that Jim thought it must be like the fairy palace in the book Nurse Grant had lent him. Presently there came down the ward a tall woman in a dark dress, but wearing a soft white cap with long floating strings, and a dainty apron. She had the most beautiful face Jim had ever seen, and she was always smiling. There were some people who knew Sister Mona well who said that when she wasn't smiling her face was the saddest face on earth. But Jim never saw Sister without a smile; and because of the love and compassion which dwelt in her eyes, he always thought she looked like the photograph of the Christ which hung opposite his bed. The Sister stood beside his crib while she read his entrance ticket; then she had a look at the poor crooked legs. She talked cheerfully to Jim all the time, but seemed to understand, as no one else had done, what a grievous affliction is an ever-present deformity. However, the next day when Mrs Millan came, Sister took her into her own little room and asked her seriously to consider whether she desired her son to undergo an operation before she came to a final decision.

'Bless me, Sister, I brought him here for an operation. I certainly ain't a-going to take him out again. He gave me no peace till I brought him; now here he must stop till summat's done.'

Sister turned away and went to question Jim; but he only reiterated his mother's statements. His one wish was to be like other boys.

It was Tuesday afternoon when the celebrated surgeon, Mr Pell Taylor, came to make a thorough examination of Jim. He was followed by a crowd of students, to whom he pointed out the most remarkable features of the case. He bade them notice the absence of all signs of rickets; he commented on the strangeness of such a deformity being inherited; and he told them that the outside world would say osteotomy was a cruel operation, not to be undertaken merely for the cure of a deformity; yet it was at the express wish not only of the parent, but of the small patient himself, that he was about to perform that operation. And in conclusion he bade the dresser of the case make a cast of the legs as they then were, and told Sister to have Jim in the theatre the next day at three o'clock.

After all, poor Little Bow-legs was only a child, and was very frightened when the time for the operation drew near. But he knew nothing about it. He remembered waking up and feeling very sick, and his legs pained him, and he cried a great deal. Then he slept again; but when he woke, the pain was still there, and his head ached, and he cried again. Then Sister came and tried to soothe him, but he scarcely heeded her till she said: 'Look at your legs, Jim.'

He dried his eyes, and Sister threw off the bed-clothes—and there were two straight legs tightly bandaged up between thin wooden boards, and slung from an iron cradle. He gazed in amazement.

'That's right, dear; don't cry any more, for you are no longer Little Bow-legs.—Drink some milk, and go to sleep.'

For the next few days Jim was very quiet; his legs were rather painful, and he had to lie flat on his back always. Then gradually he got more cheerful than he had ever been in his life before; he chatted with the other children and played with the toys the nurses gave him, and whenever his bed was made, he gazed anxiously at those two straight legs in the wooden splints. Did they really belong to him? Should he ever stand upright on them and walk like other boys? Mrs Millan came constantly to see Jim, for she was a good mother as East-end mothers go. She was never cruel to the boy; she was even kind to him in her own way; but she never dreamed of petting or caressing him.

'How's my bird, mother?' Jim always asked.

'Oh, it's all right: ever so much better nor it was when you was always foolin' it about. I reckon you'd better sell it before next winter, though. You'd get five shillings for it easy.'

Jim had another plan in his mind, but he kept it secret for the present. At last, after many long days of patient waiting, came the anxious time when the splints were to be removed. The great surgeon himself was there to see the result of his skill; and oh! with what suspense Jim watched while bandage after bandage was unrolled and the bits of wood were taken away. He held his breath while Mr Pell Taylor ran his hand over the thin little legs and then lifted first one and then the other.

'Yes, that's all right, Mr Roberts. Wonderfully successful!—Where are those casts?'

Sister fetched the casts of the two little bow-legs out of a cupboard, and Mr Roberts put them side by side with the two straight limbs which Jim was eyeing so anxiously. Were they really his legs? He tried to move one, and it felt dreadfully heavy and queer, still it did move a little, and certainly the great surgeon seemed content.

'Splendid! splendid!' he exclaimed. 'We must have a cast of the legs as they are now, and keep both for comparison.—Put a plaster of Paris bandage on now; but before the boy goes out, be sure and take a cast.'

'Is it all right, Sister? Shall I be able to walk on them?' whispered Jim.

'Yes; it is quite right. You shall run races and win them, in a week or two.'

The next time Mrs Millan came, Jim told her the good news with a smile. The old grave expression was leaving his face, and he was always laughing now.

'I suppose you'll be home soon?' said his mother.

'I s'pose so.—Do you think father would give me a cage for my bird? I've got tenpence here the doctors and people have gave me.'

'Bless me, child, you can keep the bird where it is till you sell it.'

'But it's my very own bird, mother, and I

don't want to sell it. I want to give it to the doctor what made my legs straight.'

'You little stupid! he don't want a bird.'

'Please, bring it next time, mother, and let me try.'

Sister was rather dismayed when she found a canary in full song located at Jim's bedside; but when she learnt what was in the boy's mind, she was greatly pleased. A few days afterwards she came running down the ward; and none of the children had ever seen Sister run before, so they called out: 'Hi! Sister!'—'Golly! look at Sister running!' But Sister only smiled, and ran on till she reached Jim, who was sitting on a small chair with two crutches by his side. Sister seized the cage and put it in Jim's hand and whisked away the crutches. Just then Mr Pell Taylor entered the ward, followed by the usual crowd of students.

'Now Jim,' said Sister, 'walk to meet him and offer him the bird.'

Jim struggled to his legs and walked down the ward, firmly and uprightly, till he met the great surgeon. 'For you, sir,' said Jim, holding up the cage, 'cause you have cured my bandy legs.'

CANINE SMUGGLERS.

AMONG the many ingenious devices which have been resorted to from time to time for the purpose of evading the Custom-house duties levied upon certain articles, it may not be generally known that our canine friends in a neighbouring country have played no inconsiderable part, but have been largely used as aiders and abettors in the nefarious trade of smuggling, themselves being the carriers of contraband goods. Such has, however, been the case in the north of France; and the way in which the dog was trained for the work of smuggling, and rendered an efficient agent capable of being entrusted with the cargoes which he was expected to bear in safety over the frontiers, is not without interest.

The commodities which the dog conveyed were chiefly lace and cigars, both of these being light and portable; and these articles were actually carried to and fro between Belgium and France for a considerable time by means of these sagacious creatures. The method by which the dogs were rendered amenable to this kind of traffic, and by which certain of them in many cases became quite notorious from their skill in carrying it on, was as follows. The dog required for the service was a shaggy or long-coated one; and in addition to his own natural garment, an overcoat, consisting of the skin of another dog of larger dimensions, was provided, which was fitted on to his shoulders and reaching to his loins, was fastened under the belly, in which part the smuggled goods were closely packed. These false skins, moreover, were so well adjusted as almost to defy the closest scrutiny. Besides this disguise, these smuggling dogs had to submit to a special training before they were deemed efficient and qualified to enter upon the business required of them. For this purpose the master-smuggler, the owner of the dog, made an initiative journey under the guise of a merchant or peasant going to the frontier upon a visit to a relation in the Customs; and he

himself would travel thither either by cart or by rail, whilst his accomplice would lead the dog by a cord, through a more circuitous and less frequented road, to the same spot. The dog had previously been kept without food for at least twenty-four hours, and upon his arrival was welcomed by his master with many caresses and an ample supply of his favourite meat. After this satisfactory reception, he was confined, and again kept without eating for the space of two or three days. After that time he was released, and then, hungry and impatient, he would make for his former home with all speed, traversing the same route along which he had been previously brought. Men were appointed to watch for his coming and to waylay him with threatenings; and if he were found to deviate from the route mapped out for him, and along which he had been taken, as if for the purpose of making a short-cut across any lane he had to travel, the dog was at once assailed with blows from cudgels, stone-peltings, and occasionally, if he perversely persisted, a gun with blank cartridge was fired at him. These men who thus assaulted the dog were generally clothed in a manner which resembled the uniforms worn by the police and the officers of Customs; consequently, a wholesome terror was thus duly impressed on the animal's mind in regard to all men wearing any official dress, and such were assiduously avoided, whilst considerable caution was also inspired with a desire to keep himself concealed.

The dogs were also always sent forth in the twilight, so that they habitually made their journeys during the night. By these means strenuously carried out, a complete training was soon effected, through which the dog, when deemed fit to enter upon his smuggling career, was able, by his continual excursions to and fro beyond the frontiers with the valuable loads entrusted to him, to bring in an excellent income to the master engaged in this illegal trade.

It was not likely, however, that a system like this could long be unnoticed, when men who had hitherto been poor and needy, and who were known to have been hardly able to gain a miserable subsistence, became wealthy in an amazingly short space of time. This mode of smuggling was discovered; but still it kept its ground, owing to the cleverness of the experts which had been long engaged in it. At Mabuse, there was a dog which had acquired so great a renown that he was dubbed *le diable* by the authorities. A price was set upon him. He was white, so all white dogs were carefully watched; but this dog was white no longer; the colour of his coat was frequently changed, and his master dyed him black, brown, or light tan by turns. It was the sudden accession of riches to the owner of this dog, and his indiscreet display of them by building a large and handsome house, that had riveted the attention of the revenue authorities upon this man's movements in the first instance; but the dog was very skilful, and long evaded the emissaries of justice. Snares and ambuscades were laid for him. Many tales were told of the artful manner in which he avoided them. At one time he mingled with a flock of sheep right under the eyes of the commissary of police; at another time he trotted the whole distance under the very carriage which was conveying the officer of excise

who was on the lookout for him. But the poor fellow was run down at last. Being sore pressed, he endeavoured to cross the Scheldt by swimming, and might have succeeded even then in effecting his escape, had he not received previously a slight gunshot wound. As it was, he met his fate, and was drowned. Within the false skin of *le diable* was found packed rich lace to the value of fifty thousand francs!

THE MISTLETOE.

THE wind blows cold, and the sun is low,
And the sapphire sky has changed to gray;
But blithely, blithely over the snow
The children troop from the woodland way,
Laden with holly and evergreen,
And the mistletoe peeps out between.

From many a church tower far and wide
The bells ring out with their merry chimes,
Telling glad tidings of Christmas-tide:
And the old folks dream of bygone times;
But the lads—O the lads, they whisper low
As slyly they hang up the mistletoe.

Grandfather sits in his old armchair
Spreading cold hands to the cheerful blaze;
Dear grandmamma, in her kerchief fair,
Remembers Christmas in *her* young days;
But the maidens smile, and their soft cheeks glow
As they linger under the mistletoe.

With a wreath of laurel and ivy bound
On the ruffled curls of her linden hair,
Baby sits like an empress crowned
(Her only throne is a cushioned chair).
Ah! many a kiss is in store, I know,
For our small, sweet queen 'neath the mistletoe.

Open the purse and unbar the door;
Let the Christmas angels in to-night;
Hearts that remember the sad and poor
Are filled with joy, though the purse grows light:
The milk of kindness should freely flow
Under the holly and mistletoe.

Let anger, and envy, and strife all cease,
Old wounds be healed, and old wrongs set right:
We hail the birth of the Prince of Peace—
Shine into our hearts, O kindly Light,
That brotherly love may burn and glow
Under the holly and mistletoe!

E. MATHESON.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
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SABLES AND STARCH.

THERE is a characteristic story told of Gambetta, the late popular French tribune, that in the early days of his reputation, on being invited to one of the evening receptions of Madame Adam, the brilliant editress of the *Nouvelle Revue*, he entered that lady's salon in a very free-and-easy morning dress, including—so the tale goes—a flannel shirt. Believing his newly introduced acquaintance to belong to the too familiar type of the 'blue-stocking,' he was not prepared for the elegant etiquette of Madame Adam's since famous receptions. The good breeding of the hostess was, however, shown by the tact with which she immediately paid such marked attention to the clever but socially inexperienced young lawyer, that he was soon placed at his ease amidst the surrounding crowd of white ties and swallow-tails. In later days, when M. Gambetta became one of the chief figures in Madame Adam's salon, he would often refer with amusement to the circumstances of his first appearance there. The incident is one which in certain respects has probably happened to most of us, though few lawyers attain the position of Gambetta, and all hostesses have not the kindly art of placing at their ease the delinquent, who is only too usually young, and hence an acute sufferer.

Unimportant as the error in etiquette may be, to some sensitive minds nothing is more painful than thus to find themselves in walking-dress at dinner among a company of persons attired in what Thackeray has felicitously referred to as the livery of 'sables and starch.' It requires, indeed, either an inordinate share of conceit, or a genuine and very enviable share of philosophy, to be able to feel comfortable under such circumstances. That this should be so, affords a striking proof of the force of those conventionalities which have grown up with the advance of civilisation. Nothing, in fact, is more singular than the subtle manner in which these simple forms of etiquette seem to be associated with certain of our moral convictions. The savage, though, strangely enough,

he dresses with most punctilious care for war or for any religious ceremony, feels no necessity for a special costume when taking his dinner, if any of his irregular meals can be said to merit such a title. He squats down before his food, and eats with the aid of fingers to which soap and water are unknown. He would regard as an affectation—if he did not regard it in the light of a religious ceremony—the preparation, slight though it be, made by what, socially speaking, may be regarded as the next step onward, the pale-faced backwoods settler, who, before sitting down to his dinner, will—only, however, if a woman be present—probably give his hair a touch-up with the brush he dips in the basin or pannikin in which he has rinsed off the more apparent soil of his daily labour.

Strangely enough—still continuing the train of recognised conventionalities—by the settler, indeed by many other equally respectable members of the community, the extreme care of the townsman in dressing for dinner, is, we know, regarded much as the backwoodsman's conduct is looked on by the barbarian, and he in his turn regards the barbarian as a mere savage. This connection with morals, which thus in different sections of society is associated with the minutiae of etiquette, offers a not uninteresting phase of the study of sociology. That the process of civilisation has invariably tended in the direction of complicating what may be termed the ritual of existence, is a mere truism, involving at the same time the much disputed question as to the distinction between luxuries and necessities. The luxuries of one stage of civilisation soon assume the position of necessities. In this very connection it has not impertinently been wondered how the ancients could possibly have existed without soda-water or tobacco; yet a surprisingly large number of very worthy persons continue to this day to live certainly without one at least of these so-called necessities. As the elevation in the standard of living—within which province may be included the luxury of dressing for dinner—has invariably been commenced by the few, the many have always resisted innova-

tions of this nature as evidences of gross affectation and attention to frivolous details, which is not the light in which such forms are regarded when once firmly established. It was one of the severest accusations of effeminacy brought by the frugal Venetians against the Byzantine spouse of one of their early Doges, that the foreign Dogaresa ate her food with a fork. How subtly our views on this very matter have undergone a change, it is needless to remind those who are aware of the social and domestic evolution—through various stages of non-existence and steel two-prongedness—of what the Irish to this day know as the split spoon, on the 'nice conduct' of which, even in these days of electroplate, there is a curious variance of opinion, not to mention manual skill.

It has been urged that the now almost universally established habit of daily 'tubbing' may, or rather has come to be regarded in a similar manner. In a not very distant past, such a minute attention to cleanliness, even in what are known by some as the highest families, was in no way enforced as a moral duty, as would seem to be the case nowadays. Something of the old traditions of defiant dirtiness may be said still to linger with a large number of the community. An occasional bath, as an American writer has put it, is even yet as much as is thought by many compatible with moral earnestness and high aims. Similarly, the habit, as a habit, of dressing for dinner is a disputed question in many families. By the more serious portion of those on whose personal exertions the general comfort of the household may be said to depend, the custom is usually considered as essentially an inconvenience, though of late years the observance has spread in circles where a generation ago such a concession to etiquette would have been regarded as eminently frivolous and affected. This fact of course may be attributed to the larger spread of formal social entertainment, as compared with the less exacting past. Apart from that small section of the community known as 'society,' which lives in a perpetual round of social exactions, and therefore wears 'sables and starch' as an evening uniform, there is a very considerable number of professional men who in the present day find themselves during 'the season' so constantly invited out that it becomes with them almost a necessity to assume the swallow-tail with the approach of night. The comfort alone of changing the clothes worn during the daytime is no small inducement to many others; while that all-powerful motor of 'respectability' steps in to encourage the habit with a large number of others. At the same time, it will be freely admitted, nothing is more troublesome than the absence in certain sections of our society of any fixed rule on the point, a feature only surpassed by the equal uncertainty which prevails respecting the hour of dinner, in discussing which, it is surprising how the latent snobbism of certain persons makes its appearance.

Entering on an entirely different matter—the origin of our existing evening dress, like many other social features, may be said to be lost in the mists of antiquity. Little as its cut and details have changed within the last thirty years, the swallow-tail coat almost in its present form will be found in fashion-prints of exactly a hundred years back, some two or three years prior to the

outbreak of the French Revolution, which, in addition to the political and social changes it produced, affected scarcely less radically the costume of the civilised world. Till the reign of George III., and in France till that of Louis XVI., the every-day coat worn by respectable society was of a type approaching what is now regarded as an overcoat, while the waistcoat was scarcely less conspicuous for its length. Some two or three years before the memorable date which marks the fall of the Bastille in 1789, we can trace the general form of our existing costume. This can be seen not only in the cut-away coats then worn, but in the boots worn instead of shoes, and the round hat, which was so shortly to sweep away for ever the long established cocked-hat; though, let it be remembered, the elder members of the community continued for many years to retain the fashions of the past, a fact not sufficiently realised by the stage costumier or the historic painter.

Any one desirous of passing an interesting hour or so could not do better than examine a collection of costume plates of the last hundred years. During that time, varied as have been the changes in the dress of our grandmothers and mothers, the male costume has undergone only very minor alterations. With the close of the last century, our modern dress may be said to have been definitely determined. With the simplicity of attire which was introduced by the French Revolution, were abolished for good, with wigs, powder, and red heels, the brilliant silks and satins and embroideries so affected by our great-grandfathers. Henceforth, a good suit of honest broadcloth became the universal evidence of respectability. With the earliest years of this century, the black swallow-tail coat, though worn in colour in walking-dress far into 'the thirties,' we find firmly established, and with that profusion of clean linen which has always been recognised as a mark of gentility, came to be regarded as the correct costume for evening wear in society, in the House of Commons being obligatory. In spite of the many efforts made to modify its forms and even its colour, that costume, with all its inconveniences, has been found by the civilised world to answer a definite purpose. It is clear that a long time will elapse before modern evening male attire will undergo any important alteration.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER X.

WILMOT was just leaving Mr Esholt's room with a number of letters and other documents in his hand, when a servant came to tell him that there was a gentleman at the door who desired particularly to speak with him. Wilmot went at once, thinking it was probably a messenger from Mr Kimber; but the person he found waiting in the entrance hall was a total stranger to him. He was an under-sized, dark-complexioned, dapper-looking man, apparently about thirty years old. He had keen bright-glancing eyes, an insinuating manner, and a soft sleeky voice. He wore a suit of mourning, new and very shiny, with two large jet studs

showing prominently on the ample bosom of his shirt. Wilnot bit his lip as he went forward, as if to keep down some inward agitation.

'You are Mr Wilnot Burrell, I presume?' said the stranger, seeming to take him in at a glance from head to foot.

'That is my name,' answered Wilnot stiffly.

'As I have called on a private matter of some importance, I had better, perhaps, begin by introducing myself,' went on the other, as he extracted a card from his case and presented it with a smile and a little bow. Wilnot took it, and read thereon a name he had never heard before: 'Mr Reginald Vampy.'

'You say you have called to see me on a private matter,' he said, his eyes wandering from the card to the stranger's face and then back again. He was evidently ill at ease about something.

'Precisely.—I see you are busy'—with a glance at the letters—'but five minutes will suffice for me to say all I have to say.'

After a moment's hesitation, Wilnot said: 'Come this way, Mr Vampy;' and with that he led the way towards the study. Mr Vampy followed with a remark or two as to the unsettled state of the weather, to which the other hardly responded. As soon as they were inside the room and the door shut, the little precautionary measure already described took place, after which the two men sat down at the table, facing each other.

To Agnes, hiding there in the dark against her will, the situation was one that filled her with dismay. There was no way out but through the study. Should she, or should she not, make her presence known? But how account for being there?—how explain why she did not come forward at the moment Wilnot drew back the *portière* and announce herself? But even while she was asking herself these questions, the two men began to speak, and she recognised that the moment for retreat had gone by. With her consent or without it, she must perforce stay where she was till the interview should come to an end.

'As your time is valuable, and mine, perhaps, scarcely less so,' began Mr Vampy, 'I will not waste it by beating about the bush. Brevity, as I take it, is not merely the soul of wit, but that of business as well. I have here in my possession'—and he produced a bulky pocket-book as he spoke—'a certain slip of paper bearing your signature on one side of it and that of Mr Robert Esholt on the other. It is, in fact, a bill, drawn at two months' date, for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, and will fall due a fortnight from to-day. In all probability, you recognise the document in question?' Mr Vampy held up a slip of paper between his thumb and finger as he spoke.

If Wilnot Burrell's face had been pale before, it was ashen now. His mouth worked with a strange nervous twitching. For a few moments all power of speech seemed taken from him. Mr Vampy put back the slip into his pocket-book and quietly waited.

At length Wilnot spoke. 'The bill you hold was given on the distinct understanding that it should be accepted as deposit, and not be discounted or allowed to change hands in any way.'

'That is a point respecting which I have no information,' replied Mr Vampy in his quiet precise way; 'but in business, circumstances sometimes alter cases, and as a matter of fact the bill has come into my people's hands in the ordinary course of such transactions.'

Again there was a brief silence. Wilnot seemed to be weighing every word in his mind before giving utterance to it. 'Even granting such to be the case, Mr Vampy—although, mind you, a gross breach of confidence must have been committed somewhere in order to make such a thing possible—the bill does not fall due for a fortnight, consequently—you will pardon my saying so—I fail in some degree to gather the purport of your call upon me this evening.'

A peculiar smile wrinkled the curves of Mr Vampy's mouth and peered out of the corners of his eyes. It was not a pleasant smile, and Wilnot's marrow seemed to turn to ice as he saw it.

'The reason of my visit, Mr Burrell, is not far to seek. My people have had some previous acquaintance with the signature of Mr Esholt, who, as you are doubtless aware, writes a very bold bluff sort of hand. Now, singular to say, our cashier—he is one of the most suspicious of mortals—is not altogether satisfied with the endorsement of the bill I showed you just now. He says that it differs in two or three small but very recognisable particulars from Mr Esholt's usual signature, and that when that gentleman wrote it, if write it he did, he must either have been ill or—shall we say—slightly "mellow," or, in fact, anything you please except in his ordinary business mood. Such being the state of the case, my firm have deputed me to wait upon you, or upon Mr Esholt, or both of you with the view of satisfying that most suspicious of cashiers that the endorsement in question is really that of the person it purports to be. I hope I have made myself clearly understood?'

Of a surety he had done that, as Wilnot acknowledged to himself with an inward shiver.

'Pray, Mr Vampy,' he contrived to say presently, 'may I inquire the name of the firm you so ably represent?'

'That is a detail, Mr Burrell, which at this stage of the affair I grieve to say I am not at liberty to enlighten you on. When I called at your Water Street office this afternoon,' he continued, 'and was informed that I should find you here, I was also told that Mr Esholt was ill. Possibly, however, he is not too ill to see me for half a minute, so as to enable me to satisfy my people with regard to the little matter which has brought me here. Perhaps, Mr Burrell, you will kindly ascertain whether Mr Esholt will favour me with an interview.' As he spoke he took out his watch and glanced at it.

Wilnot felt as nearly all hunted animals are said to feel when brought to bay. He could not turn and rend his foe, much as he would have liked to do so, but he could at least set him at defiance and dare him to do his worst. Like many other men, he was only a coward up to a certain point; and now that the worst had to be faced, now that no door of retreat seemed left open to him, his nerves braced themselves like bands of steel. Leaning forward, with his elbows on the table, and looking his visitor straight in

the eyes, he said in a cold hard voice that was not without a touch of defiance in it: 'What should you say, Mr Vampy, or whatever your name may be, if I were to tell you that the endorsement on that bill was *not* written by Mr Robert Esholt?'

'I should say that you would be telling me nothing more than I had a very strong suspicion of already.'

Wilmot sank back in his chair and stared at the other, as not knowing what to say next.

Mr Vampy's irritating smile once more crept over his face. 'I was pretty well assured before I entered this house,' he went on, 'that Mr Esholt's pen had never written his name on the back of the bill in my possession.'

'In that case, sir, may I ask once more to what I am indebted for the honour of this interview? I presume your only object in coming here was to inform Mr Esholt of your clever discovery; why, then, you should have sought this preliminary interview with me, I am at a loss to understand. Mr Esholt is up-stairs, and although far from well, I have no doubt he will see you on a matter which so closely concerns the interests of both of you. Shall I ring for a servant, Mr Vampy, to take up your card?' He half rose from his chair as he asked the last question.

'I admire your impetuosity, Mr Burrell,' answered the other in his sleek evenly modulated tones, 'although, under the circumstances, it is perhaps scarcely judicious on your part to give way to it. Apparently it has not suggested itself to you that in coming here I might possibly be actuated by a motive very different from the one you have imputed to me.'

A great throb of hope seemed to vibrate through every nerve in Wilmot's body; he half caught his breath for a moment; then he said in a faint voice: 'Go on, sir, if you please.'

'I presume, Mr Burrell, that when the little document to which our conversation refers was first launched on an unappreciative world, there was some likelihood of its being duly honoured when it should fall due?'

'Every likelihood, Mr Vampy—a likelihood which is as strong to-day as it was six weeks ago.'

'I am glad to hear it—very glad, for your sake, Mr Burrell. Supposing, in that case—I merely say *supposing*—our firm should see their way to allow the bill to come to maturity in their own hands and without negotiating it further, it may be accepted as a fact that it would be met in due course on its presentation on the twenty-fourth?'

'That may be accepted as an undoubted fact, Mr Vampy,' he replied, but with just a shade of hesitation, which did not escape the other's notice.

'That is to say, Mr Burrell, so far as one may accept anything as a fact in a world in which promissory notes play such an important part.' Mr Vampy chuckled softly to himself, and then resumed more soberly: 'So far, so good. Our firm, Mr Burrell, while actuated by every desire to conduct their business on purely philanthropic principles, find themselves under the unfortunate necessity of doing as their neighbours do. You will scarcely, therefore, be surprised at my asking you what return you would be prepared to make in consideration of the service just hinted at by me?'

Wilmot moistened his parched lips with his tongue. Then he said: 'Will you tell me what return it is in my power to make?'

'I will. The bill I hold is for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds. You shall give me a supplementary document—merely your own note of hand—for a further sum of one hundred pounds, making in all three hundred and fifty, which amount you will be in a position to meet this day fortnight—eh?'

Wilmot Burrell set his teeth hard and clenched his hands. He was so utterly taken aback that he needed a few moments to recover himself. But the brain works nimbly in the great crises of our lives. 'If I am in a position to meet two hundred and fifty pounds on the twenty-fourth, I shall be in a position to meet another hundred,' he said to himself. 'Should I not be in a position to meet either, then one piece of paper will be just of as much or as little value as the other.'

Mr Vampy had picked up a book and was glancing over the title-page. Presently he said: 'Well, Mr Burrell, what say you? Do you accept our proposition?'

'I accept it.'

'Good. On the supposition that you might do so, I brought with me a little form duly drawn up, to which I will presently get you to affix your signature. Before doing so, however, I must ask you to be good enough to enlighten me as to the means you propose to adopt, or the source from which you propose deriving the funds to enable you to meet your engagements on the day in question.'

If Wilmot had been staggered before, he was doubly so now. He stared at the little man in black as if he only half comprehended his meaning. Mr Vampy looked at his watch for the second time.

'Pardon me,' said Wilmot at length, a little stiffly, 'but you are seeking to inquire into private matters which concern myself alone.'

'Pardon me, Mr Burrell, but is not our interview of a private and confidential nature throughout? When you come to think the matter over, you will recognise that I am asking of you nothing unreasonable. You have promised to meet a certain engagement by a certain date; all I want to know is the method by which you purpose arriving at the result in question. Without doubting your bona fides in the least, you will allow me to hint that there is nothing to hinder you between now and the twenty-fourth from starting for Paris, or New York, or Timbuktoo; in which case what, may I ask, would be the value of the little bill which my firm, wisely or unwisely, have taken upon themselves to discount?'

Wilmot abruptly pushed back his chair and began to pace the room like a man in a strait from which he sees no way of escape.

'Come, come, Mr Burrell,' said Mr Vampy in a tone of mild banter; 'there's not the slightest necessity for you to put yourself about. A little confidential information is all I ask for, which there can be no difficulty in your affording me. May I be allowed to hint that possibly there's a bit of horse-flesh at the bottom of your little difficulties—that perhaps you are looking forward—eh? to the Croxton Autumn Meeting, this

day week, to recoup your fortunes and set you on your legs again? Come, now, Mr Burrell, confide in me—make a clean breast of it.'

'You've hit the right nail on the head, Vampy!' exclaimed Wilnot in one of those sudden bursts of confidence to which desperate men sometimes give way. 'I've laid sixteen to one on *Persephone* for the Croxton Cup; and if she pulls it off, I shall be able to wipe the slate clean and have a clear thou. into the bargain.'

'Bravo, Mr Burrell, bravo! When a man takes to riding across country, he should ride boldly or not at all. I hope with all my heart *Persephone* will show the others a clean pair of heels—all the more because I happen to have a couple of fivers on her myself, so that you and I may be said to row in the same boat. Still, there are uncertainties in all things mundane, not excepting horse-racing, and I am sure you are far too astute an individual not to have at least two strings to your bow in the little game you are now playing. Supposing for a moment *Persephone* does not come in first—what then?'

The momentary elation which had shown itself in Wilnot's eyes a minute or two before had now died out again; his face put on the same dull ashen hue it had worn earlier in the interview. He had resumed his seat, and was nervously tearing a sheet of paper into minute shreds. After a moment or two he said, but without raising his eyes from the table: 'Even if that should happen which you say might happen—not that it will, mind you—I have other means left of meeting my engagements when they fall due.'

'And those means are?'—queried Vampy's silky voice.

There was no reply. The sheet of paper was still being torn and retorn. 'I am awaiting your answer, Mr Burrell. Time is on the wing, as some poet has very justly remarked.'

Wilnot drew in his breath and set his teeth hard for a moment; then he said, in slow sullen tones, still without looking up: 'We have a big settling-day at the office on the twenty-fourth.'

'I understand. The bill will be met by you out of the day's proceeds.'

Wilnot nodded.

'And after that— But that is a matter which concerns yourself alone. So long as my people can rely on having their money, they have nothing to do with anything further. As it happens, I have some acquaintance with the interior working of Mr Esholt's office; but I had no idea, Mr Burrell, that you held a position in it sufficiently onerous and confidential to allow of your being able to—well, to meet a liability like the one we have been discussing, without running the risk of any immediate unpleasant consequences to yourself.'

'The explanation is simple enough,' answered Wilnot, still sullenly, for at no time was he one to stand being catechised without resenting it. 'So long as Mr Esholt is away ill, Mr Kimber, the head-clerk and cashier, undertakes the general management of the business, while his own ordinary duties are divided between myself and another clerk.'

'Nothing could be clearer so far,' answered Mr Vampy blandly. 'But supposing—and we always have to suppose a great deal in these

matters—supposing Mr Esholt should be well enough to return to business earlier than the twenty-fourth, and Mr Kimber were to resume his ordinary functions—what then?'

No answer.

'It seems to me, Mr Burrell, that there is still a little screw loose somewhere—just a possibility, in fact, that your house of cards may come tumbling about your ears at the last moment. "The best-laid schemes of mice and men"—you know the rest. And in such a case, what would become of my poor little bill? Have you nothing further to suggest, Mr Burrell?'

'Nothing.' It was indeed a house of cards that he had built for himself; he recognised that fact now, in the pitiless light thrown on it by his visitor, as he had never had the courage to recognise it before.

'It seems to me,' said Mr Vampy, after a pause, during which he had been softly tapping on the table with the nails of his right hand, 'that there is one way, and one only, by means of which my people will be able to make themselves absolutely sure of their money, and you at the same time have one more chance afforded you of pulling yourself together and of running straight for the future.'

Wilnot looked up, and the eyes of the two men met. Wilnot's eyes asked the question his lips were powerless to ask.

As if in answer to it, Mr Vampy leaned forward a little way and said in low impressive tones: 'Mr Esholt must *not* be well enough to go back to business by the twenty-fourth.'

SHEEP-WASHING IN NEW ZEALAND.

THERE may be many who have seen sheep-washing as it is carried on in England, to whom a description of the manner in which large flocks are similarly dealt with in the colonies should prove interesting. If the reader will understand, first of all, that in the colonies forty thousand sheep are considered but an average flock, it will be seen that to wash such a number with hot water and soap, and to rinse them afterwards in running cold water, is no trifling undertaking. Washing is not deemed necessary on all 'stations' or 'sheep-runs'; and year by year there seems to be a growing inclination to abandon the work as costly and unprofitable. On different stations, too, the process adopted varies considerably, and in some cases it goes no further than a quick plunge through cold water only.

The object of this paper is to attempt to describe a particular 'dip' in the South Island of New Zealand, in which the writer took part during the spring (colonial—month of November) of 1881. The run in question lies upon the north bank of the Waitaki River, and the entire flock numbered some eighty thousand sheep, but rather less than half of these only were washed or 'dipped.' For this purpose, twenty-four men had to be employed, exclusive of the 'musterers.' These latter are the men who go out upon the run at shearing or washing time with trained dogs and gather together and drive in the sheep.

In mustering, the run is cleared in sections, and in many places it is very difficult and laborious work. This can be understood when it is realised that a sheep-run may contain one hundred thousand acres of land; and this land, it must be remembered, is very unlike any country upon which sheep are depastured in England. Mountainous and broken country much of it is, and often studded with clumps of thick timber. So rough and broken is most of the sheep-country in New Zealand, that mustering on horseback is quite impossible; hence the shepherds or musterers have to travel on foot; and climbing hills and fording mountain torrents and rivers, they gather the sheep together in flocks, with the aid of their dogs, and drive them in as best they may. The run will be divided, as already stated, into sections. These sections, ranging from five hundred to ten or fifteen hundred acres in extent, are termed 'paddocks.' The musterers then take the run paddock by paddock and gather in the sheep, and drive them to the shearing shed or dip, as the case may be; and it is their duty to keep the supply always up to the demand of the shearers or washers. To this end the mustering gang will be sent to bring in the sheep from the first paddock a day or two before the men who are to deal with them are engaged to begin work. Thenceforward the musterers have to work day and night might and main, that they may be always in readiness with fresh sheep as each batch is disposed of. In the old days, before the invention of wire fences, there was no subdivision of the runs into paddocks, and then the labour of mustering was far more troublesome and unsatisfactory. The number of permanent shepherds whom it was then necessary to employ was also much greater than is the case at the present day. Thus wire fences throughout the colonies are termed 'wire shepherds;' and many a broken-down old tramp may be heard to curse the invention of fencing-wire, which he avers has deprived him of the means of earning a livelihood.

But now let us suppose that the musterers have brought in their first mob of sheep and that the work of washing is about to begin. The necessary number of men has been engaged; and each man has had to sign an agreement for the wages he is to receive, binding himself to work under certain conditions. The sheep as they are brought in by the musterers are driven into a large fenced yard which opens into one somewhat smaller, this second yard opening again into one smaller still, and so on until they all culminate in a small pen capable of holding from forty-five to sixty sheep. The first dip-hand was the 'yarder-up,' whose duty it was to keep working the sheep forward as the final small pen and the yard leading into it were emptied. In this temper-trying labour he was assisted by a dog. Next, in the small final pen, two hands were stationed. These, for reasons following, were called the 'dry-chuckers-in.' Now,

one side of this pen consisted of a swinging shutter, a door, in fact, hinged upon its upper edge instead of on its side; and upon the outside of this door there was a sheer fall of about four feet plump into one end of a long wooden trough. This trough, about twenty feet long, two feet six inches wide at the top, and seven feet deep, was sunk in the ground to a depth of about six feet; it was filled twice daily with water heated to a certain temperature, and in which a liberal allowance of soap had been boiled up. For the heating and soap-mixing there was a furnace built under two large iron tanks; and the third dip-hand, an old soldier, had the responsibility of keeping up the supply of hot water and soap. A pipe led from the tanks to the trough, and the water in the latter was replenished as it decreased, owing to the quantity carried away in the wool of the sheep as they passed through it. The portion of the trough immediately under the swinging door was partitioned off from the rest by a little gate sliding in a groove, and fitted to lift up and down by hand in the same manner as a sluice-gate; and this end of the trough, and the side of it opposite to the swinging shutter to a distance equal to the length of the shutter, were built up to a height of five or six feet, so that the falling sheep should have no chance to escape. The remainder of the trough was similarly divided into four partitions, to the charge of each of which a man was appointed.

At the beginning of the day's work, the dry-chuckers-in, having received the 'office' from the overseer, opened the proceedings by grabbing each a couple of sheep and throwing them against the swinging shutter with force sufficient to carry them through, so that they fell souse into the water below. And inexpressibly astonished the animals used to look as they disappeared and the shutter closed after them. The berth of dry-chucker-in was one of some dignity, because upon these officers devolved the responsibility of keeping tally of the number of sheep washed. The writer, in company with a diminutive but muscular Jew, had the honour of this appointment, and kept the score, as aforesaid, with a sense of vast importance. Four sheep having passed through the shutter-way much as the clown in the pantomime makes his exits and entrances, it was the duty of the man stationed at the first division of the trough to take them in hand. This he did by first ducking the heads of any of them that might have managed to escape total immersion in the fall; after which he rubbed the soapy water well into them, particularly round their necks, with a weapon designated a 'crutch.' This was an instrument precisely in the form of the ordinary crutch used by lame people and of about the same size and length. But the sheep-washer reverses arms, as one might say, and performs the rubbing with the crook-end. The crook also serves to hold up the chins of any sheep which may come near drowning in their progress through the bath. Having rubbed them down all round, this first man lifts the first little gate and

with his crutch passes the four sheep into the next partition. Then, immediately the gate is shut again, the dry-chuckers-in—always on the alert—hurl down other four sheep; and thus the trough is kept always full from end to end with the sheep passing through it in a continuous string; the man at each partition repeating the process of 'crutching' already described. Each man is engaged upon his batch of four sheep just long enough to give them about half-a-dozen brisk rubs apiece. From this it will be seen that neither the dry-chuckers-in nor any of those engaged in the work have much idle time.

Reaching the end of the hot-water trough sneezing and gasping, and with their thick wool so loaded with soapy water that their legs can scarcely sustain their own weight, the poor sheep are pushed, dragged, and goaded up an inclined plane into another small pen elevated to the level of the dry-chuckers'-in pen. Here they fall into the hands of the wet-chuckers-in, three in number. This, the wet pen, has upon one side of it the approach from the hot-water trough already described, and upon each of the other three sides a swinging door, as in the dry pen, but smaller. The door in the dry pen is the full width of the side; but those in the wet pen close the orifice of a shoot only just wide enough to allow a sheep to slide down it end on. Beneath each of these shoots there is a well about eight feet long by four feet wide and some five feet deep. These wells are in fact boxes let in flush with the ground in the same way as the hot-water trough. Upon three sides the walls of the wells are perpendicular; but on the fourth and outer side there is a sloping part equivalent to the inclined plane which leads out of the trough into the wet pen. This serves for a landing for the sheep when their cleansing is perfected.

But they are not half done with yet. Emptying into each well there are two spouts of water falling from a 'fluming' overhead. These spouts are each about the length of a sheep, and are fitted one near each end of the well and parallel with the end or shorter side of it. The water falls from the fluming overhead some four or five feet to the bottom of the spout, and the orifice through which it then passes being very narrow, the stream of water disgorged falls with considerable force. Near each corner of the well and in the same line with the spouts, a barrel is sunk flush with the ground—that is to say, there are two barrels to each spout, one at each end, and in the same line with it. In each barrel a man stands sunk nearly to his armpits, so that he is able conveniently to lean forward over the well. Thus there are four men to each well, or two to each spout. Now it is the business of the wet-chuckers-in to keep the men at the wells supplied with sheep just as the dry-chuckers-in feed the men at the trough. But the berth of the wet-chucker-in is certainly no sinecure, whatever that of his dry confrère may be. The wet sheep are heavy, frightened, and stubborn, and often so exhausted that they have to be hauled laboriously out of the hot-water trough by the 'scruff of the neck.' An average colonial sheep will weigh, I think, about fifty-six pounds when fully fleeced. He is also springy and active; and any ordinary man, with a preliminary pressure downwards upon the animal's back, and then a quick

lift, can throw it easily over his head. But when the animal is loaded outside, and half-filled inside, with soapy water, he is a very different handful. However, they have to be got out of the hot-water trough somehow; and when they have been safely landed in the wet pen, they are sent two by two down the shoots into the wells beneath. Each shoot has at the bottom a second swinging door weighted with lead, to break the fall of the now heavy and helpless animal. The shoots disgorge the sheep in the middle of the well between the two spouts; and when it plumps into the water, the two spouters, who are ready for it, take each one end and drag it beneath their spout. Upon the bottom of the well, underneath each spout, two rollers are fixed, which rise high enough to give a rest for the sheep while being spouted. The wet-chuckers-in, from their pulpit-like pen above, can see when either pair of spouters has finished a sheep, and their duty is to keep the supply up to the demand. Each spouter is professedly provided with a complete waterproof suit—sou'-wester, gum-boots, and oilskin coat—to protect him from the splashings made by the struggling sheep, and from the leakage that falls from the fluming above. But to the considerable discredit of the station owners, the efficiency of the waterproofings was largely a thing of the past.

When the spouters have placed a sheep in position under the spout, and resting on the rollers as described, they hold each two legs with one hand, while with the other they turn the animal slowly from side to side, at the same time parting the wool, so that the water may have free access to the skin. The continuance of this treatment for a minute or two brings about a magic transformation in the appearance of the sheep. By the force of the water the dirt is knocked rather than washed out of the wool, and in a very short time the animal is turned off the rollers and guided to the landing-place a new being. Having landed from the well, it is at liberty to wander off unmolested into a fresh grassy paddock. From this sanctuary, at the end of a couple of days, when the fleece is dry, the sheep is taken to the shearing-shed and disrobed.

A few words now as to the pay earned by the men engaged in the work. All the men except the spouters were paid 'twenty-five shillings a week and their tucker;' that is to say, they were provided with a hut to sleep in, rations and a cook, and the twenty-five shillings a week. The payment is always made upon the conclusion of the work by bank cheque; and then begins the stampede for the nearest public-house. The spouters were paid thirty shillings a week and tucker; and well they earned the extra pay. Spouting is not pleasant work, whatever dry-chucking-in may be. The water that falls through the spouts is intensely cold. This is the case with all running water in New Zealand, because nearly all the rivers rise in snow-clad mountains, from which they run with such impetuous rapidity to the sea, owing to the steepness of the descent, that there is no time for the warmth of the sun to raise the temperature materially even at midsummer. If the spouter be a raw hand or unskilful in the work, he will be splashed over the head and face all day until he is nearly blinded, and the water will trickle down his neck, inside the waterproof coat, and

wet him from head to foot. Let him be ever so handy, he cannot escape a semi-drenching daily from the leakage of the fluming above his head. For the sake of seeing all the fun while he had the chance, the writer relieved a rheumatic spouter for one day; but he felt no ambition whatever to prolong the experience. The day chancing to be bitterly cold, considerably enhanced the enjoyment—and his awkwardness in handling his sheep led to a pretty equal division of the spouting between himself and the quadruped. He came out of his tub at night more dead than alive, and with the colours of a blue-and-white flannel shirt transferred to his skin, so that he looked like some new species of aboriginal warrior. Diogenes found philosophy possible with his days and nights spent in a tub, but eight hours in a sheep-washer's tub might have disturbed even his equanimity.

The working hours were eight daily. Beginning at eight o'clock in the morning, the work went steadily on until ten; here there was a rest for ten minutes, called 'smoke-oh,' when all hands went up to the hut for a pannikin of coffee and a piece of bread or plain cake; then back again to the pens, crutches, and tubs until twelve. Here there was a spell till one o'clock for dinner; then at it again till three, and another ten minutes 'smoke-oh' with coffee as before; after this the work went straight on until about twenty minutes past five—the odd twenty minutes patching up the breach made in the eight hours by the two 'smoke-ohs.' The coffee twice a day is an institution really devised for the sole benefit of the spouters, to whom some stimulant is almost necessary. All the spouters of old standing may be heard constantly bewailing the degeneracy of the times, which has brought about the unsatisfactory substitution of coffee for rum. In the 'good old days,' a 'go' or 'tot' or 'stiff nip' of rum was served to the spouters each 'smoke-oh.' The work lasted twenty-nine working days, during which time 36,471 sheep were washed—giving an average of over 1250 sheep for each day.

The sheep have to be turned out by the spouters to the satisfaction of the overseer, and on cold days the dirt is not 'knocked out' of the wool so speedily as in warm weather. This is because in cold weather the grease or 'yolk' in the wool congeals, and consequently, with the dirt that it holds, is less 'lively' and more difficult to loosen. Upon some days, great difficulty would be found in getting the sheep clean enough to pass the overseer, and none of them when finished would look anything like so well as upon other days. On hot days, therefore, they would be turned out much faster than when the weather was cold. Sometimes, too, the musterers would keep us waiting an hour or two for sheep. Running in such wild country, the sheep get their fleeces full of dirt and rubbish of every description, grass seed, coarse sand, bits of stick and bark, and notably thistle thorns. With these last, dry, every sheep's fleece will be loaded, as will every finger and most of the rest of the carcase of the dry-chucker-in, before the first day's work is done. For the first few days the yolk of the wool irritates the skin of the hands, and makes them so sore that clutching the sheep is torture to the tender flesh; and the harassed chucker-in will be seen trying to do the work with his knees, to avoid touching the wool with his hands at all. This irritation soon wears off;

and by-and-by, one falls into a knack of catching his sheep unawares and dexterously by one hind-leg and jerking him so quickly through the door that he has no time to struggle. Next, the dry-chuckers-in will vie with one another in feats of strength, selecting heavy sheep and pitching them over instead of through the door. There is an additional charm in this, because thereby the first crutcher below is made very angry. He gets splashed from head to foot, and probably varies the monotony of the day two or three times by dropping his crutch and storming the dry-pen fortress, bent upon punching the heads of his tormentors. It has not been demonstrated that this exercise is good for the sheep; and indeed it looks like the very refinement of cruelty. The wretched creatures are frightened and knocked about and tortured enough in the process without their misery being added to in this way. But it is only a question of whether being lifted over a door instead of thrown through it frightens them more; for, excepting accidents, neither method hurts them; they fall clear into the water. The greatest suffering falls to those with horns; many of these get knocked off, whereby the poor sheep must suffer considerable pain. Now and then a sheep with two and even three fleeces will be brought in—that is, a sheep that has escaped the musterers for a year or two, and so remained unshorn. These sheep become as strong and active as goats, and very wild and unmanageable. Sometimes, after having been driven with difficulty to the dry pen, they will jump the fence and make off again to the hills, escaping washing and shearing for another year.

The work of the 'yarder-up' is simply abominable. Yarding-up sheep is work fit only for stoics, and these do not abound among working-men. The frightful ill-treatment to which sheep are subjected when being yarded-up is pitiable to witness. But when a man finds that his inability to persuade a few sheep to run through a gateway is keeping twenty men or more idle, and is bringing down upon himself the wrath of 'the boss,' he is apt to lose his temper and forget to be pitiful.

MR MAGSDALE'S COURTSHIP.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.—DEEPER, AND DEEPER STILL.

MR MAGSDALE'S conference with his cousin brought him little comfort. Allan admitted that when he recommended a private marriage he had quite overlooked the possibility of Miss Cressburn raising objections; but since she insisted on following the conventional usage of the nineteenth century, he did not see that Peter had any right to oppose her.—What would Allan advise him to do, then?—It appeared to him that no advice was called for; Peter must take his intended down to Astley Villa and introduce her to Mrs Bunshaw, and the sooner he did it the better.—Could Allan help him at all in it?—Certainly not. This wasn't a case for the intervention of an uninterested party; he had done quite as much as he could to help him already, and Peter was quite able to fight his own battles; at anyrate, if he

wasn't, he ought to be.—After that, our friend understood that he need not look to his cousin for assistance, and went sorrowfully back to his office.

A very despondent miserable Peter crept down to Putney that evening. He felt that every one was against him, that there was nobody to sympathise or help, now that Allan had washed his hands of the business. He was aggrieved at his cousin's defection; he had aided and encouraged him so long as the path of his love ran smoothly, but the moment difficulty arose, he drew back, and bade him find his way through it by himself. It is to be feared that Peter's love was of that delicate hothouse growth which is incapable of withstanding rough treatment; which requires such gentle nurturing that it is not worth bringing to life, and does not deserve its name. His too tender passion was overshadowed, almost blighted, by the selfish fears which filled his heart. He had no ardent longing to see Mary Cressburn now; the knowledge that he must fulfil the promise he had made and face the consequences, hung over him so heavily that he dreaded meeting her. He had allowed three days to slip by since he received her answer to the letter wherein he promised to take her to see his relations, and was no nearer making up his mind to do it on the third day than on the first. He had a sneaking hope that she might relent if he waited long enough, and beg him to marry her how and when he willed. But time went on, and she made no sign; indeed, if she had consented to a secret marriage now, it is doubtful whether Peter's weak-knee'd devotion would have been equal to the test.

Allan had given sound advice when he recommended his cousin to lose no time in making Mrs Bunshaw acquainted with Mary Cressburn, though he knew nothing of the former's scheme regarding Miss Terripeg. Peter never lacked opportunities of going to Queen's Road now, had he cared to make use of them; he found his sister's friend at Astley Villa so frequently that her absence was more noticeable than her presence. She came early and stayed late, and worked perseveringly to establish herself in his good graces. She studied his peculiarities and tastes with an unobtrusive diligence which he gradually and insensibly grew to appreciate; she sought his advice, and listened to his opinions with a deferential respect for his superior wisdom which could not fail to impress a weak vain man with an idea of her good sense. It was not long before he overcame the old antipathy, which owed its origin more to Mrs Bunshaw's injudicious management than to any personal attributes of the lady herself; and without being absolutely disloyal to his fiancée, he formed a closer friendship than Miss Cressburn would have been at all likely to approve of, or, indeed, was entirely safe for so weak a vessel to indulge in.

Days lengthened into weeks, and Peter saw himself drifting slowly but surely into an entanglement which he had not the strength to avoid. A month passed, and Mary Cressburn had never called upon him to make good his word, though once she wrote, somewhat coldly, asking when he intended to visit her again. It roused the uneasiness he had tried to quell, and at the same time convinced him that he might trust to her affection

to obtain his own terms with her. She wanted him back, and he would go when she offered to set him free from the promise he had made. Her love for him was growing keener and brighter with starvation; and his, though he hardly knew it himself, was growing weaker and colder day by day. It was easy to leave her letter unanswered. She would understand that the promise she had extorted from him was the reason of his silence, and would know how to recall him if she wished; so Mary received no reply to her letter, and he went unhindered on his dangerous way.

It chanced one evening that Allan Magsdale, finding time hang heavily on his hands, made an excursion down to Queen's Road to see Miss Parkins and her niece. He had neither heard nor seen anything of his cousin since the day he had appealed to him for advice, and had a little curiosity to know how the affair with Miss Cressburn was progressing. Something more than curiosity prompted his visit: he had been the means of making Peter known to the young lady, and, when his attentions to her became obvious, had satisfied Miss Parkins of his ability to marry, in a pecuniary sense. He had, as we have already remarked, done much to bring them together, and felt himself in a measure responsible for Peter's good faith. He found the ladies at home, and met with the cordial reception they had always given him; but when he asked about his cousin, his question was received in silence, whilst aunt and niece exchanged glances as though they expected this and did not care to touch upon the subject.

'We have not seen Mr Magsdale for over a month,' said Miss Parkins with stiff formality, after an awkward pause.

'Of course Mr Magsdale may have been ill,' added Mary in excusing tones. 'I wrote to him a fortnight ago; but he did not answer.'

'We have not heard of Mr Magsdale for over a month,' said Miss Parkins as gravely as before.

'I haven't heard from him myself for a long time,' said Allan, who was anxious to defend his cousin, though an angry suspicion was raising its head, despite his efforts to persuade himself that nothing was wrong. Mary rose and left the room, murmuring some apology; and he was satisfied that she believed Peter to have broken faith with her.

'Do you know what has caused this?' he asked, as soon as he was alone with Miss Parkins.

The old lady laid down her work, and delivered herself of the feelings which had been pent up in her breast, unrelieved by speech even to her niece. She spoke calmly, but with an undertone of irritation. 'The last time Mr Magsdale came here I saw him alone, for something had occurred to make me think that he was not behaving honestly. I told him then that we didn't want to see him again until he was prepared to introduce Mary to his family, as she wished. The next day she told me that he had written promising to do it, and that she had asked him to call and arrange a day. Neither of us has heard a word about him since, and it's my belief that if we leave him alone, we never shall. He is a villain, that man! Mary says she has done with him for good and all; but I haven't.' The emphasis and energy of Miss Parkins' last words told Allan that she was in earnest, and that trouble in one

shape or another was in store for Peter. He asked no more questions; he was disgusted with his cousin's cowardly folly, and felt that he would richly deserve the worst fate it could bring upon him.

'I would never have believed this of him, had I not heard it from you,' he said. 'I will go down to Astley Villa to-morrow and find out what it means, if you think that I could do any good.'

'I don't think you could help us in that way, Mr Allan, thank you. I think, too, that I can settle accounts with Mr Magsdale myself, though I must do it without saying a word to Mary.'

Allan had no doubt of her ability to deal with Peter, and was relieved to find that his own connection with the affair did not saddle him with the task of giving assistance in bringing his kinsman to book.

Miss Parkins was a woman possessing much fixity of purpose; and the day after her conversation with Allan, she resolved to take the business in hand at once; she said nothing to Mary, being quite aware that she would strongly resent any step being taken which might lead Peter to suppose that he still held a place in her thoughts. Miss Parkins' plan of action was rather undefined: she meant to call at Astley Villa, and show the false lover up in his true colours before the circle of haughty relatives which his references to the 'family' led her to suppose she would find there. What such exposure might lead to, she did not know; but circumstances would have to guide her thereafter. Accordingly, she started on her mission the same afternoon, and reached the house at an hour when Peter was busy at his desk in Somerset House.

Was Mr Magsdale at home?—No; Mr Magsdale was not; but Mrs Bunshaw was in, if the lady would like to see her. Miss Parkins hesitated for a moment: the name of Bunshaw was a household word not only in the region of Putney but for a radius of fully half a mile round, and was not entirely new to her, though she could not at once recollect how it sounded familiar. Ah! of course, Cornelia Bunshaw, the champion of woman's rights. She had no idea what relationship the lady might bear towards Peter Magsdale, but clearly she was some near connection.—Yes, she would see Mrs Bunshaw, please; and she was conducted into that celebrity's 'study,' where she waited until the owner appeared.

'Miss Parkins, I am informed,' said Cornelia in her grandest manner as she entered the room. She had a good memory for names and faces, and at once recognised in her visitor the lady whom she had seen with her brother and cousin in the street some weeks previously, and whose niece she had been led to understand was the 'attraction' which drew Allan to Queen's Road on that Sunday. She sat down, wondering what could have brought the young lady's aunt to Astley Villa to see her.

Miss Parkins was a little at a loss to know how she had best approach the object of her visit, but, after a preliminary cough, she rushed into it with startling straightforwardness. 'I came to ask for an explanation of Mr Magsdale's conduct towards my niece, Miss Mary Cressburn,' she said, and stopped.

Cornelia, like the clever woman she was, saw it all quite plainly before she heard another word.

Allan had been 'amusing himself' with Miss Cressburn, and had gone off in a hurry when he found that he had carried it too far. His answer, when she expressed her regret at his departure, and the way he had spoken of the friends he had taken Peter to see, flashed across her mind. Of course, it was just what a harebrained fellow like Allan would do, to love and ride away as soon as he saw he was getting into trouble.

'You refer to my cousin, who resided here until four or five weeks ago,' she answered. 'He is not with us now, and I am not acquainted with his whereabouts.'

It was just about five weeks since Peter's last visit to Queen's Road; and Miss Parkins, who was quite ignorant of that perfidious individual's affinity to the lady before her, naturally accepted the information. It upset her calculations; she could not expect much from Mrs Bunshaw the cousin. But Mrs Bunshaw the advocate for the rights of women was the very best person whose sympathies she could enlist. She was a rapid thinker, and changed her ground with considerable skill.

'I am sorry to learn that he is nearly related to one so universally known and respected as yourself, Mrs Bunshaw' (Cornelia gave a cast-iron smile of acknowledgment); 'but now I have troubled you thus far, I am tempted to ask for your advice.'

Mrs Bunshaw's grim visage relaxed. Every one likes to be asked for advice, and she loved it. Advice about dealing with Allan's misconduct, too; it was most gratifying, and she grew quite gracious.

'I shall be happy to afford you any assistance, Miss Parkins, even though a relative of my own should be the offender. The claims of consanguinity must ever bow to Principle.' It was a high-minded sentiment, and Cornelia felt that she was doing herself justice.

'You encourage me to proceed, madam,' said Miss Parkins, a little overawed. 'About six months ago, Mr Magsdale was introduced to my niece; he paid continual visits, and their intimacy resulted in his making Mary a definite offer of marriage, which she accepted. Soon afterwards, he proposed to marry her secretly; but Mary of course wouldn't hear of it; and since she refused to do so, we have heard nothing more of him.'

'Did he assign no reason for wishing to keep his marriage private?'

'He said he feared opposition from his relations. I must add that he promised to present my niece to them, but never made any attempt to keep his word.'

'And you have heard nothing of him now, for a month?'

'Nothing whatever, Mrs Bunshaw.'

'I deeply regret to confess that such behaviour is quite in accordance with the estimate I have formed of my cousin's character.—But what do you propose to do?'

'I had intended to make his conduct known to his relatives, first of all.'

'He has none, except my brother and myself.'

'Then, I fear we can do nothing,' said Miss Parkins with a sigh.

'You have not considered the propriety of using the weapons offered by the law?'

Miss Parkins had never thought of taking such extreme measures: Mary Cressburn would be

furious if she dared to hint at an action for breach of promise of marriage, and publicity would be quite as objectionable to herself.

'My niece would never consent to the course you propose,' she said; 'we must allow the matter to drop.'

'Your niece's duty towards her sex should be her first thought, Miss Parkins,' said Mrs Bunshaw sententiously; 'but I see no necessity for letting her know what we do. I can vouch for it that Mr Magsdale will never face an action.'

'Mary would never forgive me if I made use of her name, as I should of course have to do; and even if he paid damages under threat of legal proceedings, she would not look at a penny of it. I'm afraid it isn't to be thought of.'

But Mrs Bunshaw was not so easily foiled. Allen appeared to have behaved disgracefully, and she was not unwilling to help to punish him. She thought for a minute before she spoke again. 'Is your niece of age, Miss Parkins?'

'Not yet, Mrs Bunshaw.'

'Then the duty of securing justice for her, the onus of protecting her from such designing knaves, devolves upon you, whether she approves of your methods or not.'

Miss Parkins wavered. Mrs Bunshaw, who must know the man intimately, was certain he would not face the ordeal of a trial. She thirsted to avenge her niece, and if she could do so by the simple expedient of a lawyer's letter, she might perhaps venture upon that, unknown to Mary Cressburn. She was not influenced by any hope of obtaining compensation; her aims were purely retributive; if she could succeed in making Mr Magsdale suffer for his faithlessness, she would be quite content. The only feasible means of punishment were those suggested by Mrs Bunshaw, and she began to give way.

'Even if I wished to go to law, I could not afford the expense,' she said.

Mrs Bunshaw rose from her chair, and striking the impressive attitude which was the admiration of the Society, permitted herself the luxury of a short and eloquent speech. We will not inflict the whole of it upon the reader; the last few sentences of the glowing peroration will suffice for our story: 'As I have explained,' concluded Cornelia, 'the fundamental principle of this organisation is the protection of our Rights. Your niece's Rights have been tampered with, grossly infringed, by a man whose kinship to myself I blush to remember. I would that our Work were sufficiently advanced to enable us to deal with him without having recourse to the uncertain remedy prescribed by the law. But I see no choice; and it will be the pride and the privilege of the Putney branch of the Society to extend to you the support and assistance you need.' Mrs Bunshaw looked round at an imaginary audience, and slowly sat down; whilst Miss Parkins watched her, indulging in curious speculations as to what the 'Society' would do to Mr Magsdale if he were handed over to it for treatment.

'I will give you a letter of introduction to Messrs Carrel and Stalker of Lincoln's Inn,' continued the champion, '(they are the solicitors we always employ), and direct them to look to me for liquidation of their charges, though they will of course ultimately fall upon Mr Magsdale.'

The idea of doing everything at the faithless man's expense had its effect upon Miss Parkins. She thought for a few moments, and finally declared her readiness to act upon Mrs Bunshaw's advice.

That excellent woman lost no more time in discussing the matter; she opened her writing-case, and proceeded to frame the letter to her lawyers, which she handed across the table to Miss Parkins for perusal. 'I have not mentioned any names but your own, you will observe,' she said; 'you are best able to explain the circumstances to Mr Stalker, who is the partner you will probably see.'

Miss Parkins, having read and approved the letter, took her departure, promising to let Mrs Bunshaw know at the earliest possible moment what result the step about to be taken might produce.

Miss Parkins returned to Queen's Road with the letter to Messrs Carrel and Stalker in her pocket. She intended to act upon Mrs Bunshaw's directions and see the solicitors the very next day. Peter appeared to have left Astley Villa more than a month ago—slinking out of the way, no doubt; but a letter addressed to Somerset House would reach his hands.

Although our unworthy hero allowed himself to drift perilously near the rocks, he awakened to a sense of his position in time, and finding himself unable to tack, decided to cast anchor. Miss Terripeg 'went down to see Mrs Bunshaw' nearly every day, on the tiptoe of expectation, and came away each evening lost in wonderment at this bashful lover's unaccountable slowness in speaking the words which she was certain trembled hourly upon his lips. Mrs Bunshaw, however, was confident that 'it was all right.' Peter was shy, Peter was diffident; he must not be frightened or hurried; only leave him alone for a few days, and she was much mistaken if that did not bring his addresses to the satisfactory climax Miss Terripeg had reason to expect.

But days succeeded days, and yet he did not speak. Mrs Bunshaw was growing angry and impatient; Miss Terripeg, who was depressed and inclined to be lachrymose, told her friend she feared that Peter was a deceiver.

'Try a little coldness for a day or two,' said Mrs Bunshaw.

So Miss Terripeg tried a little coldness at first, and then a great deal; she may be said to have iced her manner towards Peter before she gave up the plan. But it did not answer; he continued distantly polite and obstinately silent. The frigid course of treatment had been abandoned as fruitless the day before Miss Parkins made her visit to Astley Villa. Mrs Bunshaw at first conceived the idea of holding up Allan's scrape as an awful warning to her brother; but she gave it up, thinking that his friendship might prompt him to caution his cousin, and perhaps enable him to escape. It was too good a text for a lecture to be lost entirely, and accordingly she treated Peter and Miss Terripeg to 'a few remarks' that evening at dinner. 'I had a very sad case brought to me to-day,' she began, as though Allan were a species of moral invalid—'a very painful case, involving necessity for the Society to give assistance through its lawyers.'

Miss Terripeg was keenly interested at once;

how wise it was of the person to come straight to Mrs Bunshaw !

'It was a melancholy instance of the deep duplicity sometimes evinced by young men of the present day. A man had proposed to a girl, and ran away as soon as she accepted him.'

There was a crisp simplicity about the story which moved Miss Terripeg profoundly, and caused Peter to blush almost purple—no doubt at the awful duplicity of his own sex.

'The young lady's guardian called upon me, and I gave her what little advice I could on behalf of the Society. I cannot tell you the intense indignation with which I listened to this tale of heartless desertion. Were a relative of mine thus to disgrace himself' (she fixed the quivering Peter with an eye), 'I should die for very shame.' Mrs Bunshaw had almost said 'alter my will' before she succumbed to the painful ordeal referred to, but thought that might look too pointed, for Peter had not done anything depraved so far.

'How shocking!' cried Miss Terripeg.

'Dreadful!' added Peter, in a cold perspiration. Suppose Cornelia came to hear of Miss Cressburn and his proposal to her! He shivered.

'To encourage hopes you do not mean to fulfil, Peter, is a crime but one degree less profligate than desertion,' said Mrs Bunshaw meaningly to him afterwards, when Miss Terripeg had gone home; 'but I know that you would never be guilty of such conduct.'

Peter did not reply; he went up-stairs and sought refuge from his troubles in bed, where he dreamed that Cornelia made him deliver a speech to the Society advocating the infliction of capital punishment upon lovers who prove untrue.

'PAUL'S WALK.'

WE find in the literature of the earlier part of the seventeenth century constant allusions to St Paul's Cathedral under the abbreviated title of Paul's, or as it was then commonly spelt, 'Powle's.' These allusions seldom refer to the sacred or ecclesiastical character of the building; they are for the most part in connection with the everyday affairs of secular business or pleasure. Indeed, it is clearly evident that business of every possible description was regularly carried on in 'Powle's Walk,' as the nave and aisles of the great cathedral were called, not even excluding the somewhat scandalous traffic in church livings and benefices. There is a well-known passage of Dryden in his *Character of a Good Parson* which says of the subject of the poem:

Nor rode himself to Paul's, that public fair,
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where bishoprics and sinecures are sold.

Paul's Walk was a general exchange for business men, and a public resort for idlers whether fashionable or the reverse. Even the font itself was impressed into the service of business, and appears to have been used as a kind of counter or telling-table. This appears in the writings of another author, who, referring to a loan or a proposed loan, says: 'I should ere this hour have seen a good piece of money told here upon

the font.' St Paul's was also the common resort of people seeking employment:

Get thee a gray cloak and hat,
And walk in Paul's among thy cashiered mates.

But quotations might be multiplied to show the many different kinds of business, and the different classes of people who were to be found in Paul's. Suffice it to say that it was the resort of all the idle, profligate, or necessitous people in London; but it was in addition the chosen haunt of all the young men of fashion or the 'gallants' of the day. In connection with this fact there is a celebrated allusion to a prominent object in the cathedral contained in the well-known words, 'dining with Duke Humphrey.' Perhaps the origin of that expression is not so well known as to render an account of it superfluous. There stood in the church a monument to the memory of one Sir Guy Beauchamp, but which was erroneously supposed to be the tomb of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was in fact buried at St Albans. From this mistake, the part of the cathedral in which the monument stood was called 'Duke Humphrey's Walk;' and here the gallant who had not the means to procure a dinner lingered, in the hope of an invitation to dine with some more fortunate friend. Failing this, he spent the dinner hour in company with the inhospitable monument, or, as the vulgar expressed it 'dined with Duke Humphrey.' Here, then, in Paul's the gallant was accustomed to show himself and his finery daily for a certain length of time.

The cathedral itself was at this period in a somewhat dilapidated state. In 1561 it had been struck by lightning, and the magnificent spire and part of the nave were destroyed. Not until 1633 were steps taken for its restoration; but, as is well known, the whole cathedral perished in the Great Fire of 1666.

Of the character and habits of some of the frequenters of St Paul's, a very good description is given in a curious little work written by Thomas Dekker, the celebrated dramatist. This book, which perhaps may not be very well known to the general reader, is called the *Gull's Horn Book*, and was published in 1609. It professed to be a guide to the fashionable follies of that not very refined but pleasure-loving age. Although it is written in a satirical spirit, it has nevertheless no small value for the light it throws upon the manners and customs of bygone English life. There is in this book an interesting chapter entitled 'How a gallant should behave himself in Powle's Walk,' which gives a minute description of how a young man should best parade himself and his finery, and pose before onlookers as an undoubted man of fashion. He is assured that if he walk by the rules given in this book, and there is no reason why he should not, Paul's may well be proud of him. Having chosen the door by which he intends to enter, he must in the first place be careful on entering to avoid the pillar where the serving-men congregate, and to bend his course directly to the middle line of the church with an air as if the whole body of the building belonged to him; where he may show off his clothes to the best advantage. One other warning is given, that by no means should he remain too long in the church at one time,

by which proceeding many are made cheap and ordinary, on account of their clothes becoming 'stale' and accustomed to the spectators. Rather should the gallant retire to a tobacco office or a bookseller's, where, if he cannot read, he can occupy himself with tobacco-smoke, and inquire who has writ against the divine weed. But if in departing from the church he should meet a knight or a squire, he must salute him familiarly as Ned or Jack, as by this means he will raise himself in the estimation of great men; and he is to be careful if possible to let it be known that he intends to dine at some well-known and expensive ordinary. After dinner, having changed his suit, if he have one to change, he must again appear in the Walk, this time using a toothpick in public, whether he has dined or not, for that secret is known best to his own stomach.

St Paul's was also a refuge for the unhappy gallant who was deep in his tradesmen's books, as the Duke's tomb was a sanctuary, and there the debtor might spend a winter afternoon very comfortably in talking, plotting, and laughing, and might even jest at his creditor to his face; while in the evening he might steal out by lamplight, and so cheat the bailiffs. But a true man of fashion must never enter the choir when divine service is being celebrated except on a high festival, and then only the better to show off his clothes. When the choir-boys, catching sight of his silver spurs, flock round him like a cloud of white butterflies to claim 'spur-money,' he is to take out his perfumed purse and to 'quoit silver into the boys' hands, that it may be heard above the first lesson, although it be read in a voice as big as one of the great organs.' This behaviour of the choir-boys actually during service would show a carelessness in the conduct of divine worship which would account for the poverty of the music in St Paul's, so much complained of by Mr Pepys in his *Diary*.

Another direction is curious. By no means is the gallant to lift his hat to another, unless the other's hatband be of a new fashion and three degrees quainter; but as all the fashions are to be seen for nothing in Duke Humphrey's Walk every day in the week, if any one fashion be fancied, the gallant has only to bring his tailor into the church and point out the fashion he prefers, whereupon the tailor may make his notes, and forthwith can immediately prepare a suit of clothes of the admired colour and pattern.

A mere country gentleman should by no means presume to walk in the principal part of the church until he has paid a visit to the steeple, where he may scrawl his name on the leads with his knife; or, if he cannot write, he may make the mark he puts upon his sheep, as by this means his name will lie in a coffin of lead when he himself is in his winding-sheet.

The last visit should be to the great dial, when the curious motion of the clockwork will repay the visit, besides the opportunity which it affords of showing the world the possession of a watch by taking it out and comparing it with the time of Paul's.

Such were the principal features of St Paul's and the occupations of its frequenters, a place of gossip, idleness, and business, which has passed away as though it never was. Since its day, manners and customs have undergone a vast

change, and even if much of the change be only external for the most part, none can deny the great improvement in our modern way of treating sacred places and buildings.

THE STOWAWAY.

A FEW years ago an affecting incident occurred in connection with the loss of a ship at sea. The vessel was wrecked in sight of land, and the captain, as in honour and duty bound, was the last to leave. When he was about doing so, he was suddenly confronted by a wretched-looking lad who had been concealed below—in other words, 'a stowaway.' Finding the lad could not swim, the captain deprived himself of his life-belt and gave it to the boy saying: 'Take this! I can swim.' The stowaway's life was saved; but that of the noble and generous seaman was lost. Much admiration was expressed at the time for the captain's heroic deed.

Yet it must be said that masters of merchant-ships have long felt these stowaways to be an intolerable nuisance, creating a difficulty with which it is hard to grapple. Ships sailing across the western ocean, Australian-bound vessels, and coasting steamers, are more particularly exposed to this constantly recurring annoyance than those for other destinations. Stowaways are not, as is generally supposed, working-men, who, failing to obtain employment at home, and unable to pay for their passage, conceal themselves in the hold of a vessel until she has left the port and the pilot is discharged; but consist principally of loafers and idlers who are too lazy to work, and thieves who have made their own country too hot to hold them.

The captains of ships which carry only cargo, and are not certificated to carry passengers, are liable to heavy penalties for landing stowaways in a foreign port, and are often deemed hard-hearted for putting them in irons and bringing them back to England. If a man is found in a railway train without a ticket, with intent to defraud the railway company, he is quickly handed over to the authorities and punished; and justly too.

In many instances where a stowaway is found, the captain makes the best he can of the case, and sets the man or boy to cleaning the brasswork or doing work which the stowaway does not relish; and before arriving at the port, causes him to sign the ship's articles at the nominal pay of one shilling per month, and on arriving at his destination, discharges him with a seaman's certificate for conduct and ability marked D, which can be of no subsequent use to him. In cases where the captain is brutally inclined, the stowaway is treated with much harshness. The writer of this has known many instances of stowaways, one of which, rather comical than otherwise, we will here recount.

The ship *A*—, commanded by Captain B., a good sailor and a kind-hearted man, sailed from the Tyne bound for Quebec for timber. The weather was very boisterous at the time, and owing to head-winds it was three clear days before she got through the firth and discharged her pilot. On the fourth day the mate reported that a stowaway had been found concealed in the hold,

and Captain B. decided to interview him forthwith. He proved to be an Irishman, in fair condition, and about thirty years of age.

'Well,' said the skipper, 'where did you come from?'

'Shure, and I came from down there, sorr;,' pointing to the hold.

'What do they call you?'

'They call me Mickey.'

'Well, Mickey, what do you work at on shore?'

'Shure, and I work at anything I can get, sorr.'

'How came you on board this ship?'

'Why, I was doing odd jobs in the docks, sorr, and I was tired, and I wint down there, and I fell asleep.'

'Do you mean to say that you have been down there asleep all this time?'

'Shure, and I have, cap'en. First whin I woke I heard the wishwash of wather, and it quite dark; so I lay down and wint to slape agin, and whin I wakkened it was dark; and ivery time it was the same, till somebody opened the trap there, and a chap came down and lugged me up here.'

'Have you had nothing to eat all this time?'

'Shure, I had a bit of bread and mate wid me.'

'Have you eaten it all?'

'I have, cap'en.'

'How much bread and meat did you take with you down there?'

'Och! a biggish loaf and about a pound of mate.'

'Had you nothing to drink, then?'

'Yis, I had a bottle wid some wather and a sup of whisky in it.'

'Is that the only coat and shirt you have?'

'Shure, and I have an ould coat and a shirt down there in me bundle.'

'Do you know where this vessel is going to, Mickey?'

'Shure, and it's going to Ameriky! Isn't it, cap'en?'

'It's going to Canada, man!'

'They told me, sorr, that Canady was in Ameriky.'

'Is there any one you know in America, Mickey?'

'Yis, sorr; there's my brother in Baltimore, and he wrote me a letther and said he could get me work.'

'How will you get to him from Canada, Mickey? You'll be as far from him as you were in England.'

'I'll walk it, sorr.'

'Well, Mickey, you're a stowaway, that's certain.—What shall we do with him, Mr H.?' turning to the mate.

'Pitch him overboard, sir,' answered the mate.

'Shure, cap'en, you won't do that for the sake of the wife and childher,' ejaculated Mickey in a tone of alarm.

'How many children have you?'

'Three, sorr; and I want to save up and sind for them, if me brother gives me work.'

'Well, Mickey, for the sake of the wife and children I'll not throw you overboard this time; but I'll tell you what I will do. You shall have the same to eat as the men, and sleep

in the fo'c'stle; you will turn out at five o'clock every morning; you will keep all the brasswork like gold; keep the fo'c'stle clean; get the coals up for the cook, and make yourself useful until the first dogwatch; and if I find a scrap of dirt on the deck at any time I'll stop your grub.'

'God bless you, cap'en; I'll do all you say, and more.'

Mickey became a paragon of iudustry, and was always at work, and the men kept him at it: 'Mickey, fetch me this;,' 'Mickey, fetch me that,' and poor Mickey was constantly on the trot. At last, one afternoon, the ship having entered the St Lawrence after being over forty days at sea, the captain sent for Mickey. 'Now, Mickey,' he said, 'it seems that you have behaved very well, and I am going to make a sailor of you.' Accordingly, Mickey made his cross upon the articles. The captain then told him that if he would promise to keep from the drink, and work steadily when he got to Baltimore, and save until he had sufficient to send for his wife and children, he, the captain, would pay his fare to Baltimore, and give him a few shillings to keep him on the way.

Mickey was very profuse with his thanks, and went on deck. 'Mickey, fetch me my tea,' shouted one of the hands from the forecabin; 'Bring me mine too,' called another; 'Get me a bucket or two of coals,' called out the cook.

Mickey looked quietly round. 'Och! be jabers,' he said, 'yez may fetch your own tay and coals, for I am a sailor now like yourselves.'

A short parley, accompanied by a kick or two, speedily induced him to resume his usual duties; and in due time the ship anchored off Byron's Wharf in Quebec. On the day following he was told to go to the shipping office, where the captain would discharge him. This was accordingly done; and giving him half-a-crown, the captain said: 'Now, Mickey, that will get you a bed to-night and something to eat. Be at G——'s store at six o'clock in the morning, and Mr G—— will take your ticket and see you off by the train to Baltimore, and give you a few shillings besides, for I have given him the money for that purpose this morning.'

Mickey took his departure in apparently anything but a satisfied mood at not handling the cash himself; but that same night, at about ten o'clock, some eight or nine roughs, accompanied by Mickey, invaded G——'s store and demanded the money. Failing to obtain their object by threats, they proceeded to violence; and the work of destruction had proceeded to such an extent that Mr G—— was fain to comply with their demands, and he gave up the money, which exceeded twenty dollars.

Some three days after, while the ship was lying at her anchorage, a wretched-looking object might be seen making his way to her across the booms, and, on reaching the deck, proved to be Mickey himself, embellished with blackened eyes, his nose knocked out of shape, his clothes in rags, and presenting altogether a most pitiable appearance. 'Is the cap'en aboard?' was his first inquiry. 'I want to see him.'

The second mate naturally asked him what he wanted him for. 'Never you mind. I want to see the cap'en.'

The officer went below and informed the captain of the unwelcome visitor.

'Tell him,' said the skipper, 'to wait on deck; and in the meantime tell the boatswain to stand by quietly with a good stiff rope's-end.'

On reaching the deck the captain was greeted with: 'Good-morning, cap'en! How are ye, sorr?'

'Who are you?' was the demand.

'Shure, don't ye know me, cap'en? I'm Mickey that yez brought all the way from England.'

'Oh! you are the vagabond, are you, that nearly smashed up Mr G——'s store with the help of your blackguard companions?'

'Shure, cap'en dear, what could we do? The bhoys and me wor drinkin', and we had no more money, so we only got what you left for me.'

'Well, what do you want now?'

'Well, cap'en, you see I can't get on in this country at all, and I want yez to give me a passage back to England.'

'I'll give you a passage, you vagabond, but not to England.—Boatswain, show him the way, and start him.'

The rope's-end came quickly into play; and the last that was seen of Mickey, he was stumbling and falling over the booms on his way to the shore, yelling vociferously as thwack after thwack was administered by the boatswain's muscular arm.

'The next stowaway I find on board my ship I'll treat Yankee fashion,' was the skipper's quiet remark as he dived below.

Whether Mickey remained at Quebec, or managed to reach his brother in Baltimore, or stowed away again on some 'homeward-bound,' history does not say.

PAPER-HANGING BY AMATEURS.

IN these days of artistic furnishing and decoration there is perhaps hardly any part of the subject which takes a more important place than the covering of the walls, which is usually accomplished by pasting over them patterned paper, and the art or trade of so doing is commonly called paper-hanging. We do not propose to bring forward in this article any art views about choice of paper or hangings, but rather to give a few practical hints about how to hang wall-paper in a neat and workman-like manner.

In the first place, it is well worthy of notice that the covering of walls with paper is a very cheap method of decoration. The same effect produced by any other means would be at a manifold increased cost. English wall-paper is twenty-one inches wide, and is sold in lengths of a dozen yards, varying from threepence or fourpence a length, or 'piece' as it is called, to half-a-crown and upwards. The more expensive papers are usually very thick, and have a quantity of gilt; but in these days of art workmanship, the designs and colours of the cheaper papers are often excellent. The cheapest papers are usually printed on a drab or gray ground, in very few colours; but in other qualities the ground varies according to the pattern, and is frequently of a very delicate shade, which it would be impossible to produce on a common thin paper. The amateur will also find that thick papers are

easier to hang than thin ones, and if he tries his hand at first on cheap papers, he will very likely find his attempts unsuccessful. Paper with a mottled surface is also easier handled than perfectly smooth paper. The thick Japanese paper which is now so much used is easy to hang. Of course it is a more difficult matter to hang a long strip than a short one, so, if you break up your wall, so to speak, with a frieze under the cornice at the top, and a dado at the bottom, you will, instead of having one long strip reaching from the cornice to the skirting-board, have three short strips—the frieze at the top, the dado at the bottom, and the body, as it is called, in the centre. The edges where these different papers meet will have to be covered horizontally with a border—that is, a narrow strip from one to four or five inches deep, according to the size of the room and the style of the decoration.

Naturally, the first question, when it is proposed to paper a room, will be: how much paper will be required? To find the quantity proceed as follows: Measure round the room, omitting doors and windows, with a measure of twenty-one inches. Next take the height of the room in yards. Never mind having a little margin to spare, as you will need something extra to paper over the tops of doors, and perhaps over windows; and it is well to have something to spare with which to make allowance when cutting the slips, so that the pattern may match. Multiply the number of yards by the number of twenty-one-inch breadths, divide the sum by twelve, and you will find the number of 'pieces,' of twelve yards each, which you will require. If you are going to do your work in three portions, you must work separate sums for frieze, body, and dado, when you have determined the depth of each. As a rule, an ordinary room of three yards high should have a dado of about a yard above the skirting-board, and a frieze of about half the width of the dado.

Now we come to the actual work. There is nothing in this which is beyond the powers of any one who has patience, and will make up his mind to work with deliberation, even if that means slow progress, and will not be tempted to go at the work slapdash. Everything which will be required is to be found in most houses, and there is therefore in amateur paper-hanging hardly any expense beyond the cost of the paper. There are only two stages of the work—the preparation of the wall, and the putting on the paper.

If there is only one paper on the walls, it is hardly necessary to remove this; but the joinings where the paper overlaps must be rubbed down smooth with sand-paper. Should there, however, be several papers, saturate them with water applied with a large brush, and when they are well moistened, tear them off. All picture-nails and hooks must be taken out. Bell-pulls and such things will be arranged for by cutting holes in the paper. The small holes left by nails will be sufficiently covered by the paper; but if there are any larger holes, they can be stopped with plaster of Paris, which only requires to be mixed with a little water to make it fit for use. Do not prepare more plaster than you require, as it cannot be mixed a second time.

We now come to the papering. It is supposed

that you have already a pair of steps high enough to allow you to reach comfortably to the top of the room; you will only require in addition paste and a large brush, the largest pair of scissors you can get, a soft banister brush, and a large square kitchen table. When you undo your rolls of paper, you will find that there is a blank margin on each side. One of these margins will have to be cut off, but which of the two is to be removed is a matter for consideration. When cutting off the margin, hold the scissors obliquely, so that the edge of the paper slopes to the under side. Lay the paper so that the margin which is left will be ready to receive the cut edge of the next strip laid over it. Begin the work at the corner of the room farthest away from the window, so that each strip as it is laid has its cut and overlying edge *away* from the light. This matter is not always attended to, but its object is to remove all appearance of the joinings as far as possible, for if they are towards the light they are sure to show. When you come to a corner, do not try to bend the paper round it, but cut it down as straight as you can to fit the wall, and lay the next piece on with the slightest possible overlap. A minute disturbance of the symmetry of the pattern will not be observed in the corner. It is far better in every case to make the pattern overlap a little, than to leave any portion of the wall or margin visible, the result of which would be entirely to destroy a neat appearance.

There are three processes in paper-hanging—measuring, pasting, and putting-up. It is a comparatively easy matter to measure the first slip, and we therefore begin with describing the proper way of pasting. The paste must have been thoroughly boiled and be free from lumps. It should be stiff, and should be laid on with a good-sized brush. Cut the slip to the required length, and lay it face downwards on the kitchen table. The strip will be probably too long to allow of its whole length being on the table at once. When you have pasted all that is on the table, do not draw that portion off, but turn it over pasted side to pasted side, and draw up the unpasted part on to the table. Turn over every part of the pasted paper, and gently pat it, so that the paste may be evenly distributed in any places which have not been completely covered by the brush. Take up the paper carefully, still turned over if it is a long strip; and if it is the first strip, fix it against the corner where you are going to begin. Bring the top edge under the ceiling or cornice or frieze-line, as the case may be; let the paper unroll itself, which it will do by its own weight; and gently pass the banister brush over it, so as to make it lie smooth to the wall. It will not lie perfectly flat while it is damp; but in a very short time you will find that it has contracted in drying, and is quite smooth and hard.

You will most likely be well pleased with the appearance of the first strip; but the difficulties have not yet begun. The second strip and succeeding ones have to be carefully measured and pasted on, so that there is an accurate joining of the pattern. To measure, proceed as follows: Go up the steps holding the end of the paper in the hands, and leaving the roll lying against the wall. Fit the pattern accurately at the top part; there will be a piece to

cut off at the top, and then keeping the paper in its place, mark off where it is to be cut at the bottom. Paste as before; proceed to hang, getting the pattern quite accurate, and not allowing any line or joining to appear between the two pieces. If the pattern does not quite match, it is of no use trying to make it do by forming a pleat or wrinkle. You must pull it off and try again. It is easy to pull the paper off without tearing it before the paste is set; but it must be handled gently. Take care that no paste gets on to the face-side of the paper, and never pass a duster across it, especially one damp with paste. There is no objection to patting down the edge, however, with a perfectly dry duster. Get the paper to lie against the wall by giving broad sweeps across it with the banister brush, and take care that no paste gets into the hairs of the brush. If the strip does not join up to the ceiling, it is easy to slip a little piece in underneath. Give your attention to getting a good upright joining and to keeping out wrinkles and creases, which, unlike the air-spots, which disappear as the paper dries and contracts, will remain on the wall, not a thing of beauty, but the opposite.

THE OLD HOME.

In the quiet shadows of twilight
I stand by the garden door,
And gaze on the old, old homestead,
So cherished and loved of yore.
But the ivy now is twining
Untrained o'er window and wall;
And no more the voice of the children
Is echoing through the hall.

Through years of pain and sorrow,
Since first I had to part,
The thought of the dear old homestead
Has lingered around my heart:
The porch embowered with roses,
The gables' drooping eaves,
And the song of the birds at twilight
Amid the orchard leaves.

And the forms of those who loved me
In the happy childhood-years
Appear at the dusky windows,
Through vision dimmed with tears.
I hear their voices calling
From the shadowy far-away,
And I stretch my arms towards them
In the gloom of the twilight gray.

But only the night-winds answer,
As I cry through the dismal air;
And only the bat comes swooping
From the darkness of its lair.
Yet still the voice of my childhood
Is calling from far-away,
And the faces of those who loved me
Smile through the shadows gray.

ARTHUR L. SALMON.

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SOME CHRISTMAS PLEASURES.

IF life were all like Christmas Eve, what a splendid time of it we should have! Not Christmas Day; that is too much rest to be prolonged; but the busy Eve brimful of good-will. Good-will is the Christmas spirit; his face is smiling; the breath of his wings is warm; and wherever he is made at home, he brings the Christmas gift of peace, about which the angels sang long ago.

Now, though we can idealise good-will, as a festive spirit with light in his face and warmth in his wings, we must not stop at the poetry, or the real invisible spirit will not come and sit by our hearths. Some people do stop at the poetry; we all know that. Their good wishes end with the cards. Let us not be of the number. The words of greeting are all very well; but if they mean anything, they turn into deeds. The contriving and doing of these loving deeds is the best pleasure of the season; it is the secret of a merry Christmas. Let any one try the two plans, and practical experiment will prove the truth of our suggestions. Plan for one's self-enjoyment, and chiefly for one's self, and the best of feasting is but refined gluttony; plan to share all pleasures, and there is what Mrs Browning calls the lifting of things common till they rise and touch the spheres.

We are not going to deal here with bounty to the poor: from time immemorial, charity has outpoured during the great home festival, and outpoured, one might almost say, as a debt of the rich, from the royal dole down to the offering of the well-cared-for child to needy children. This we take for granted, to begin with; and turn to the other method of giving—the giving not of necessities, but of pleasure; and simple pleasure, after all, may be perhaps counted as a necessity, too, for human nature.

To look first at the home circle. There is a charming custom, coming, like the Christmas trees, from Germany: each member of the family smuggles into the house a gift for every one of the

others—not a present chosen at haphazard in a hurry, but something known to be desirable, sought out with care long beforehand, or made in secret, but in any case purchased out of trifling savings, and sometimes at the cost of little acts of self-denial on the children's part. Meanwhile, the parents have prepared the laden and lighted fir-tree; and the whole exhibition of universal present-giving is spread round the room, when at the first bell all assemble outside, and at the second bell the door opens and lets in the merry crowd to their feast of surprises.

The visit of Santa Claus is another custom that ought to be cultivated. The merest trifles please the little ones, if those trifles have got into their small stockings, hung ready on the end of the bed. Santa Claus came down the chimney in the night. To the children it is no superstition; in the depth of their mind they put him with the fairies, and with the doll that is half believed to be alive. Such a belief is understood to be a thing of imagination, like their plays of pretence.

Talking of children—among Christmas pleasures is the giving of a children's party on a sensible plan. The hours might be about four to eight; the meal simple and pretty; the playroom empty; a programme arranged to avoid awkward pauses; and lastly, perhaps, a Father Christmas. The mysterious figure enters with white wig and beard, and long brown cloak and hood dotted with artificial snow. He carries a holly branch for a sceptre, and a basket is slung on his shoulder. Out of this basket come various little treasures for the children; and while the younger ones accept them with awe, the elder ones begin to guess who is the visitor in masquerade.

To a certain extent, all sensible folks are inclined to be more simple and hearty, more like children, at this time of the year. Perhaps that is why the pantomimes still keep going. Now, if the pantomime has to be seen, how is it to be made into a great Christmas pleasure? Why, by securing the company of some hard-

working young acquaintance who otherwise could not go, who, perhaps, has never gone before, and who will be strengthened by an evening's amusement that will brighten half the coming year. This extra one in the party will give worth and value to the whole excursion, and the transient play will become precious. First, there is the clear cold night, the gay anticipation only more cheery for the frosty weather. Then the drive—at least to one of the party an unusual indulgence; the gayest spirit irrepressibly singing scraps of opera amid the jolting and rattle of glass, as the fun becomes infectious; then the anxiety about being in time, which is only a pretended anxiety, as everybody knows the rush has been made a whole delicious hour too soon, instead of a minute too late. Then breathless excitement—the street of the theatre is crowded from end to end. Wilder excitement still; the very last reserved places are secured, and by the most delightful chance, they are the very best in the whole house—at least the party think so, of course, and tell each other with much congratulation, for all goes smoothly to-night on the golden wheels of that one tender little kindness. Then there is the pleasant hour for cakes and programmes, and to our hard-worker it is, oddly enough, a treat to have tea at a marble table with a trim waitress in attendance. And at last, at last, back to the theatre, and up goes the curtain! The presence of the happy friend is as magic, turning that poor old tinsel pantomime into a most magnificent show. There never were such glorious scenes, bewildering to mortal eyes. There never was before, or since, so much to laugh at in a pantomime. We sit it out like children till the nursery tale has dissolved in confusion of splendour, and the clown has brought us down to earth with the string of sausages, and done his worst with the red-hot poker. And then we come out under the sparkling stars. Titania herself in fairyland,

Lulled by the flowers around her
With laughter and delight,

shall not sleep on happier pillow than ours after such a night. The joy of a tired heart has done it all; and by the touch, our tinsel pleasure turns to gold.

The time of holiday-making ought to last by rights from Christmas Eve till Twelfth Night. We may have to return to our occupations long before the twelfth day; but let us keep up the glow of mirth and rejoicing, and end with some home celebration, though we may not aspire to the old rites of the figured Twelfth Cake and the King and Queen.

During the first part of this festal time it is still not too late for carol-singing. The beautiful old carols ought to form part of the evening music in the house. Venturesome singers have before now surprised village neighbourhoods by singing with trained voices, incognito, outside the country-houses. A good deal of fun and daring accompanied the freak, and the money sent out to the minstrels was scrupulously forwarded to some local hospital.

Before the Christmas season ends, the New Year has begun. As the months pass, it takes one's breath away to remember with a sudden pause that this was the year we wished happy

for every friend we met. Before the autumn, if we consider our friends one by one, how little have our wishes turned into deeds! But here is a fresh chance; here is the truce of kindness, that comes in mid-winter like a strong sunshine for a fortnight. Let us make up our minds that 'a merry Christmas and a happy New Year' are to be empty words no more. It may be in our power to make them into realities.

And lo! while we have been thinking and planning, the angel of good-will has come to sit at home beside our hearths; and hidden in the folds of his raiment he holds the gift of peace. Why should he ever go away? Why should not the presence of good-will make life be all like Christmas Eve?

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XI.

'I FAIL to understand you, Mr Vampy,' Wilmot contrived to stammer. It seemed to him that his strange visitor, who was now nibbling a quill pen, had all at once taken leave of his senses.

Diving deep with one hand into an inner breast-pocket of his coat, Mr Vampy drew therefrom a tiny phial filled with a colourless fluid, which he held for a moment or two in front of the lamp and gazed at with his peculiar enigmatical smile.

'You would not'—gasped Wilmot.

'Nothing is further from my thoughts,' returned the other dryly. 'We may all live to be hanged, for aught we know, but it would be folly to hasten the day.' Then resting his elbows on the table, but retaining the phial in his hand, he said: 'What we have to do is simply to retard Mr Esholt's recovery for a little while, which is exactly what the contents of this phial will do for us.—No doubt, an overdose of it might prove fatal, but the same might be laid to the charge of half the specifics in the pharmacopœia. It is a vegetable essence, the secret of which was confided to me by an Italian whose life I had saved in a street brawl when I was a student at the Hôtel Dieu—for, strange as it may seem to you, I was originally intended for the medical profession. Curious way for a fellow to show his gratitude, wasn't it? Well, sir, such are the properties of my essence that six drops of it, mixed with an ordinary sized bottle of medicine, will induce in the patient who imbibes it a certain languor, a lethargy both of mind and body—a sort of lotus-eater's feeling carried to excess—which, so long as he continues to take it, will render him totally indifferent to all the ordinary duties and responsibilities of life and crave only to be let quietly alone.' Mr Vampy scratched his chin reflectively with his little finger. 'Unless I am mistaken,' he went on, 'I saw a bottle of medicine on the hall table as I came in.'

'I daren't do it,' exclaimed Wilmot in a hoarse whisper.

'As you please, *mon ami*, as you please,' answered the other as he put the phial back into his pocket. 'The twenty-fourth will soon be here. Should *Persephone* come in first, though

only by a neck, of course you'll be as right as a trivet; otherwise— But no; the reverse of the picture may be left to your own imagination—especially with Mr Esholt back at business.' He rose and pushed away his chair. 'I won't ask you to put your name to that little document for the extra hundred just now. I must, in fact, consult my firm before taking any further steps in the matter. It may perhaps become a question with them whether their wisest policy will not be to seek an interview with Mr Esholt himself in the morning, and at once bring the affair to a climax either in one form or another.' He moved towards the side-table on which were his hat and umbrella.

'Stop!' cried Wilmot as he sprang to his feet. 'Sit down again, Mr Vampy, I beg of you.'

Mr Vampy shrugged his shoulders slightly and did as he was asked.

Wilmot crossed to the door and, half opening it, stood for a moment or two listening; then he went quickly out, and after an absence of about a quarter of a minute, came back, carrying Dr Pyefitt's last bottle of medicine in its white paper wrapper. Resuming his seat, he said: 'Give me the phial. Six drops, you said, didn't you?' He broke the seals and drew the bottle out of its wrapper, but making a tear in the latter as he did so. His whole air and manner were those of a man wound up to the utmost degree of tension. Vampy handed him the phial without a word.

Wilmot uncorked the bottle and then the phial; but when he held them up in front of the lamp for the purpose of pouring the requisite number of drops from one into the other, his hands trembled so much that it was an evident impossibility for him to do so. Twice again he essayed, but to no purpose. Looking across at Vampy, he said: 'If you were to offer me a thousand pounds down I couldn't do it just now.'

'Infirm of purpose! Give me the bottles,' cried the other lightly. Wilmot needed no second bidding.

The ex-student's hands lacked nothing in the way of steadiness. In less than two minutes the transfer was effected and the bottle recorked and sealed up again in its wrapper with a stick of Mr Esholt's wax. Wilmot had looked on with fascinated eyes. When the sixth drop fell from the lip of the phial, a shudder ran through him. He felt at that moment as if he had just bargained away the immortal part of himself to the Evil One—or, which came to the same thing, to one of his agents in the guise of a little podgy man, dressed in shiny black, with two great black studs in his shirt front and an ill-concealed grin, half sarcastic and half contemptuous, contorting his commonplace features. What bliss it would have been to be able to clutch the little animal by the throat and fling him bodily out of the window!

'There is the bottle, which it may be as well to take back at once,' said Mr Vampy blandly. 'And here is the phial. Remember, six drops—no more and no less—to-morrow and every evening. There's enough here to last you a week; but before then I shall doubtless have seen you again.'

Wilmot left the room and replaced the bottle where he had found it. When he came back, Mr Vampy was drawing on his gloves. 'I won't say good-bye, but *au revoir*,' he remarked. 'As I'm so much overdue at another place, I will defer getting you to sign that note for the extra hundred till our next meeting.'

At this moment there came a tap at the door, and then a servant appeared. 'Mr Esholt would like to speak to you, sir,' she said to Wilmot.

'Good-night,' said Mr Vampy, holding out his hand, which the other took half unwillingly. Then in a whisper: 'Let us hope and pray that *Persephone* may win in a canter.'

'Mary, the door for this gentleman,' was Wilmot's sole reply.

Left alone, he stood for some moments with bowed head, one hand pressed to his heart, the other resting heavily on the table. 'And this is what I have brought myself to!' he muttered, with the concentrated bitterness of one in whose heart the fountain of goodness has not yet been wholly choked by vile weeds. 'Why did not that African fever kill me? Better so a hundred times than that I should have lived to sink to this!' With a sigh that was half a groan, he gathered up a handful of papers and slowly left the room.

Scarcely was the door shut behind him when the *portière* was lifted and Agnes emerged from her hiding-place. She was chilled to the bone through standing so long in the fireless room, but she had no consciousness of it. Heart and mind alike were overwhelmed by the terrible revelation to which she had been an unwilling listener.

'O Wilmot, Wilmot!' broke from her in a low agonised cry; and with it were scattered to the winds the dead ashes, never to be rekindled, of her first love.

She passed out of the room like a woman half tranced, with distended eyes, and hands that unwittingly touched the furniture as she passed. But when she reached the entrance-hall and her glance fell on the bottle, which was still where Wilmot had left it, her mind came back with a vivid shock to present actualities and all that it behoved her yet to do. Taking up the bottle, she hid it away in the pocket of her dress, then hurrying up-stairs to her room, she rang the bell. To the servant who answered the summons, she said: 'Let some one go at once to Dr Pyefitt's and obtain a fresh bottle of medicine. The one already sent has met with an accident.' The bottle she had brought up-stairs she locked away in her writing-desk.

She bathed her hands and face and fastened up her hair afresh, but it was all done automatically. She felt a strange sense of elation; she knew not whence it came, nor why, neither did she care to know. It was that species of mental elation, not necessarily allied to gladness, which comes to us at times after some great crises in life. She had parted from the past for ever. The time of weakness and doubting fears had gone by. Clear before her shone the path her feet must henceforth tread, not bordered with flowers, indeed, nor gladdened with sunshine as far as it was yet visible, but by no means unbeautiful to her eyes.

Mr Esholt's rooms opened out of a corridor

on the right of the landing, hers out of one on the left. She waited, listening, for nearly half an hour, till she heard the door of her husband's room open and shut; and then, standing in her own darkened doorway, her lamp having been turned down to a mere spark, she watched Wilnot go down-stairs. Now was her opportunity; her courage was high within her.

She had crossed the landing and reached the other corridor, when her husband's door was again opened, and Miss Esholt appeared, in the act of being wheeled out in her chair by Davry. Agnes came to an abrupt stand till Davry had shut the door behind her mistress and herself. Then, pale, resolute, defiant even, but never more beautiful than at that moment, she went a few steps nearer and said: 'Is that woman, that nurse, whom you engaged, coming to watch to-night by my husband's side?'

'I expect her here almost at any moment,' replied Miss Esholt with icy composure.

'Then you may request her to go home again. Her services are no longer required. From this time forward I shall nurse my husband myself.'

'If you choose to take the responsibility'—

'I do choose to take it. From this hour Mr Esholt will be under my care, and no stranger shall come between us.'

'You seem to have arrived at your determination rather late in the day,' answered Miss Esholt with an almost imperceptible sneer. 'You have doubtless been told that my brother is recovering; and if you choose to come forward now that the danger is over, and take all the credit of nursing him to yourself, you are of course at liberty to do so.'

'I did not come here, Miss Esholt, to bandy idle words. I have told you my intentions, and I mean them to be carried out.' Without a word more she passed the chair and its occupant and went forward into her husband's room.

'Well, I never!' exclaimed Davry with a sniff, as she began to propel the chair again. 'It was an ill day for us, mistress, when that peart young thing took it into her head to set her cap at th' master.'

'She has done to-day what she ought to have done at first. I admire her for it,' was Miss Esholt's reply.

Davry shook her head. Her mistress's speeches often puzzled her: this was merely one more added to the number. 'I've something to tell you about her when we are in our room and the door shut,' was all she replied.

Agnes passed through the dressing-room and, pushing the bedroom door softly open, looked in. Mr Esholt, gaunt and wan, his back propped high with pillows, lay staring at the opposite wall, but seeing nothing save with the mind's inward eye. His wife stood for a moment or two before advancing, and tears came into her eyes as she gazed. He started when she moved, and turning his head, welcomed her with a faint smile. She took his hand and pressed it to her lips, and then bending forward, kissed him very tenderly. Looking at her with a little surprise, he read in her eyes something he had yearned to see there ever since he had made her his wife, but had never beheld till now.

'Are you come to stay with me a little while?' he asked.

'I am come to stay with you a long, long time, dear Robert, if you will let me,' she whispered softly, with her cheek laid close to his. 'I have neglected you too long. Can you forgive me? I will never neglect you again.'

It was not the words merely, though they sounded like sweetest music in his ears, but the tone of heartfelt tenderness with which they were spoken that moved him to the depths of his being. A faint flush stole into his white hollow cheeks: he lay for a little while, her hand tightly pressed in his. 'But we must think of your health, dear,' he said at last. 'The nurse is used to sitting up, and'—

'You must let me have my own way in this. I do not intend that woman to come near you again; I do not intend to lose sight of you again till you are quite well; but I do intend to be obeyed. So not another word, if you love me.' She beamed down upon him with such a beautiful smile, that all the gloomy thoughts and forebodings which had held possession of his soul but a little while before fled before it, as the weird shapes which haunt the darkness flee before the coming dawn.

A little later Mr Esholt fell asleep, still holding his wife's hand. It was one of those refreshing childlike sleeps which sometimes come after the turn of an illness, and do the patient more good in a few hours than long days of nursing. Looking round after a time to note the arrangements for the night, Agnes all at once bethought herself of the bottle of medicine she had ordered to be fetched from Dr Pyefitt's. It ought to have been brought up-stairs before now, but this was Bridget's evening out, which perhaps accounted for the delay. She would go and fetch it herself while her husband was asleep; to ring the bell and summon a servant might disturb him.

When Wilnot Burrell was summoned for the second time to Mr Esholt's room, just as Mr Vampy was taking his leave, it was to receive his employer's instructions with regard to a certain statement, overlooked by him before, which he wished to have ready for Mr Kimber by the morrow, all the data for which were contained in certain papers Wilnot already had by him. When Wilnot came down-stairs again on his way to the study he was too much preoccupied to notice that the bottle of medicine was no longer on the hall table. The statement asked for by Mr Esholt involved a number of intricate calculations; but when he sat down to work them out, he found his mind so thoroughly unhinged by the scene he had gone through with Mr Vampy that the figures became a wild jumble in his brain; nor, despite all his efforts, could he reduce them to any sequence sufficiently coherent to enable him to work out the required result. At length he flung the papers aside. 'I'll turn out at six in the morning,' he muttered. 'My head will be as clear as a bell by that time. Meanwhile, a three or four mile stretch and a cigar will do me no harm. Confound it all! *Persephone must win*.'

He turned out the lamp, and taking the papers with him, he quitted the room. On crossing the hall this time his eye was attracted by the bottle on the table. It was singular, he thought, that it had not yet been taken up-stairs. Then something seemed to whisper to him: 'It is

not too late. There is a chance still left you. Take the bottle—hide it—break it, as if by accident—do anything rather than leave it to work out its fell purpose on the man to whom you owe so much!’ For a few moments there was a struggle within him; his fingers even closed round the bottle; but then came a thought which strangled his half-born purpose and hardened him again to the point of desperation. ‘Dare you face the chances of the twenty-fourth, unless you do this thing?’ and he acknowledged to himself that he dare not. He was on the point of putting down the bottle, when a sudden flash across his mind nearly blinded him.

This was not the same bottle as that into which Vampy had poured the six drops of his essence! The wrapper of that one was torn—he himself had torn it in breaking open the seal—while the wrapper of this was intact. Dr Pyefitt would hardly send two bottles in the course of an hour—that seemed absurd on the face of it—yet this was certainly not the bottle that had been tampered with. Why was this one here, and what had become of the other? He put back the bottle and went to his room, feeling more disturbed in his mind than he cared to own. A few minutes later he left his room, dressed for going out. As he reached the head of the stairs, Agnes was coming up with the bottle in her hand. He stood for a moment to allow her to pass. As she reached the topmost stair, her eyes met his. Never had he seen such an expression in them before—and it was on him, Wilnot Burrell, that the look was bent. He read in it repulsion, loathing, and contempt unutterable. ‘Agnes!’ he exclaimed, and then he stopped in utter amazement. But she swept past him without a word. A spasm, the like of which he had never felt before, constricted his heart as he gazed after her. What was the meaning of that look? Was anything suspected—anything known? And yet, how could there be? His interview with Vampy was enough to reassure him on that score. Still, Agnes’s inexplicable look, following so close on his discovery in connection with the bottles, was enough to render him seriously uneasy. He lighted his cigar and went forth into the cool night-air with many disquieting thoughts gnawing his heart-strings like so many birds of prey.

Agnes, finding her husband still asleep, sat down to think. The sight of Wilnot brought to her mind the necessity for at once asking herself a certain question which had already been floating vaguely in her mind. Ought she, or ought she not, to warn him?—that was the question. Ought she to tell him that all was known—that his nefarious scheme had come to naught—and that if he did not dare to face the consequences, he had better fly while there was yet time to do so? In a few hours at most, everything must be told to Mr Esholt, and it was impossible for her even to guess what action he might choose to take in the affair. She knew which course approved itself both to her heart and her conscience; but there was the duty she owed her husband to remember as well. Then there came over her the recollection of those old happy days at the vicarage when Wilnot and she were boy and girl together, before any whisper of love had been breathed between

them, and she hesitated no longer. ‘Surely it is impossible that he can be altogether vile,’ she said to herself. ‘There must be some “soul of goodness” in him yet.’ Taking a scrap of paper, she wrote on it, ‘All is known.’ Only those three words. They would suffice to warn him. Whatever action, consequent thereon, he might choose to take was a matter for himself to decide. Having sealed the paper, she rang the bell, and then went as far as the head of the stairs to meet the servant who answered it, to whom she gave the packet with directions to place it in Mr Burrell’s room where he would be sure to see it. Then she went back to her vigil, feeling as if a weight had been lifted off her heart.

THE DAILY PRESS AT THE ANTIPODES.

BY AN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST.

I SUPPOSE, in most particulars journalism, is carried on in Australia after much the same fashion as in England; but there are a few important differences, and under any circumstances the information I am about to give may be of interest to those who aspire to a high place in the ‘fourth estate,’ and who are looking outside the tight little island for a career. Nearly every large town in Australia has its daily; but what I shall refer to chiefly are the newspapers issued every morning or evening from the capitals; the others partaking of the character of local papers, and therefore being worked on an entirely different basis.

Probably few Englishmen are aware that in proportion to population, some of the Australian city dailies have a much larger circulation than any of the London papers. A Melbourne daily guarantees a circulation of over sixty-two thousand, and the colony of Victoria has a population of only a million; while an Adelaide office which issues a morning and an evening paper sells one copy to every eleven inhabitants of South Australia. The proportion is also very large in the case of the chief New South Wales and Queensland papers. Taking the whole issue of the dailies in the principal capitals into account, the circulation may be estimated as follows: Melbourne, one hundred and thirty thousand; Sydney, one hundred and thirty-five thousand; Adelaide, fifty thousand; and Brisbane, forty-seven thousand. Melbourne has fewer dailies in proportion to its population than any other capital; while Adelaide has, I believe, the most. Nearly all the dailies in the important capitals are very wealthy concerns, the net incomes in two or three cases averaging over forty thousand pounds each. I do not propose, however, to deal with the papers from a commercial point of view, but to allude to the conduct of the literary department, with the object of affording information to young British journalists.

The managers of the Australian dailies differ from those of the great European and American dailies in attaching relatively very much more importance to local than to general news. This preference is, however, gradually wearing away with the improvements in the means of communication, and the increasing attention given to the colonies by the outside world. A great change

has taken place in this respect in the last few years. The London and intercolonial telegrams occupy three or four times the space in a daily of the present time than in one of ten years ago. Still, on first coming to the colonies, Englishmen think it very strange that more general British news is not given in the colonial papers. Men soon get used to this, however; but I am afraid it takes years before English ladies cease to wonder how it is that the editors of their morning papers prefer local news to British politics and London gossip. The papers devote a considerable portion of their space to outdoor pastimes, particularly cricket and football, on account of the intense interest taken in these games by a very large section of the colonial public. Football is especially popular, every match in a capital between any two of the leading clubs being attended by thousands, comprising all classes of the community.

The editors of the Australian dailies vary considerably in their opinions upon the class of leading article most suitable for colonial readers. Those of some of the best papers care little about commenting upon the events of the hour, but set all their energies to work to obtain well-written leaders that compel the reading. It matters little whether the articles refer to social, scientific, or political subjects, so long as they are capable productions. Of course, when an important event, such as a great colliery disaster, occurs, a leader or sub-leader thereupon is required for the following day; and when parliament is in session, debates will often be immediately dealt with; but as a rule, subject gives way to treatment. Other editors, again, consider it their duty to fill two, three, or four columns of bourgeois type every day with leading matter upon current topics, and these do not appear to rank good writing as the first desideratum in a leader. Such articles are usually written in the office by permanent members of the staff, and are simply 'ground out,' as must necessarily be the case. A leader-writer goes to his office at eight or nine o'clock in the evening without perhaps the faintest idea of what his night's work will consist of; and he may then be called upon to write a leader upon almost any subject 'under the sun' for the paper of the following morning. It may be upon a boat-race, the discovery of a mine, a new code of police regulations, the weather, the arrival of distinguished visitors, the latest development in the theory of evolution, an unwise speech by a bishop, statistical tables, marine insurance, agriculture, something in regard to one of the Acts of Parliament, or, in fact, any subject which the imagination of the editor can conceive as being important just at the time. It may or may not be a subject upon which the writer is well informed; but in any case he takes the matter calmly from habit, and is soon setting his pen going. Such a paper has always a local subject for the first leader, and if there should happen to be nothing in particular stirring, the Blue-books are resorted to. The third class of Australian editor is a combination between the two already cited. He likes a local subject to lead off with, and keeps one or two stock leader-writers; but for the other leading matter he will have contributions from outside the office. He has always at his command half-a-dozen or more of the most able writers in the city for general

subjects; while he seldom fails to find a specialist to assist him when required.

The system of management of the literary staff varies throughout the colonies. In two or three of the principal papers in Melbourne and Sydney, the staff contains several members whose work is confined to one department, as in the case of the London dailies. But in the dailies of the other capitals there is seldom to be found a man who is the sporting editor, the dramatic editor, or the agricultural editor and nothing else. The sporting editor, for instance, may also be the dramatic editor, and may be called upon to report upon almost anything that does not require mere note-taking, from a new painting to a system of sanitation. Thus, it comes about that in cities of lesser importance, such as Adelaide, Brisbane, and Hobart, reporters gain a comparatively wide experience. Adelaide has the reputation of being the best Australian training-ground for reporters; and journalists who have been brought up or have gained their colonial experience there are to be found in responsible positions on nearly all the leading papers of the other colonies. From a reporting point of view, the experience of Australians is much the same as that of English scribes; but there is one department which has not, I believe, its parallel in the old country; this is what is technically known as 'doing the ministers,' or 'doing the departments.' On every daily paper in the colonial capitals one or two reporters are told off for this work, which consists of interviewing the members of the government and the heads of sub-departments, to ascertain if there is anything of public importance to make known. For instance, the reporter will ask the Commissioner for Trade and Customs whether any new light has been thrown upon a certain smuggling case; the Premier will be asked for the latest development of the New Hebrides question; the Minister of Water Supply for particulars of an irrigation scheme proposed to be carried out; and the Commissioner of Crown Lands for his opinion on a new rabbit exterminator. And colonial ministers are not particularly reticent, unless there is special cause for being so. The daily press has enormous power, and the ministers like to please the reporters. Moreover, they are mostly gratified if their names can be kept before the public, especially in connection with financial or land-law reforms. Often there is a perfect *rapprochement* between ministers and reporters. The reporter knows what he may ask and how he may ask it; and the minister knows that he is quite free in explaining a political puzzle to his interviewer, who will publish nothing likely to compromise his informant. After many years of experience, I never remember a falling-out between a minister and a reporter on account of a breach of faith. 'Doing the departments' sometimes occupies a reporter several hours in the course of a day; so it will be understood that the work is not light. The particular qualification required for this kind of interviewing is, of course, diplomacy.

Coming to the question of pay, a subject upon which perhaps British journalists are the least enlightened in regard to the Australian press, I may say that the editor of a daily gets from five hundred to one thousand pounds a year. I know one who had twelve hundred and fifty pounds; but the average may be taken at about seven

hundred and fifty or eight hundred pounds. On two or three papers there is a literary manager as well as an editor, but usually one of the proprietors fills this post. Sometimes, also, as in the case of the Adelaide dailies, the editor is a proprietor. A good manager when not a proprietor will get from six to eight hundred pounds per annum. Permanent leader-writers (on the staff) have from four to seven hundred pounds a year, and for this they each write perhaps five leaders a week. Outside leader-writers get paid from a guinea to three guineas an article. On some papers the usual pay is two guineas; on others, thirty shillings; and others, again, a guinea. For general contributions one pound a column is paid by some journals, and by others so much for the article according to its character and length. I have known a Melbourne paper pay five pounds a column (minion type) for a series of descriptive articles. Sub-editors get from eight to twelve pounds a week, the amount varying not so much in accordance with the ability of the sub as with the wealth of the proprietary. The work of the subs is much the same everywhere, and indeed if there is any difference, the worst paid have the most to do, inasmuch as on wealthy papers the sub-editor is allowed an assistant, who is paid from five to seven pounds a week.

The pay of reporters varies up to ten pounds a week, this wage, however, only being paid to one or two leaders of staffs. The leader of the staff on an average daily will receive seven or eight pounds a week; and capable reporters from five to nine pounds; but more than seven pounds is not often paid. The latter sum is the wage of the parliamentary hands in Melbourne; but such reporters must be good general writers, apart from their proficiency in shorthand. In Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, there are government Hansard staffs who give close reports of the proceedings in parliament, and are also called upon to report the doings of Royal Commissions and Select Committees of inquiry. The head of a government Hansard staff receives about six hundred pounds a year; the second in command, five hundred pounds; and the others from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty pounds. It will thus be seen that good general reporters are not paid so well as government 'Hansarders,' though the qualifications of the latter are little more than a knowledge of shorthand writing. It is certainly an anomaly that a good descriptive writer who is also a fast stenographer should in the same city receive less remuneration for his services than one who can perhaps do nothing beyond the mere mechanical shorthand routine. It may be remarked, however, that many of the best government stenographers have been obtained from the newspaper offices.

There is no regular scale of pay for junior reporters. It used to be the custom of some newspaper proprietors in Australia to take articulated pupils for a term of from four to six years. There would be no premium, but, on the contrary, the indentured youth would receive a small salary—about thirty pounds a year to start with—which would increase by annual instalments until he was out of his time, when he would perhaps be taken on the regular staff at a wage of three pounds a week. If he showed himself capable, in three or four years he would be getting five pounds a

week; but it would depend entirely on his own exertions. The system of apprenticeship is, however, now dying out; but there is no lack of youths willing to enter upon the profession of journalism. From a monetary point of view, there can be no doubt that a lad has a better chance of moving forward in a newspaper office if he enters it as an ordinary beginner than by signing articles. But he must work exceedingly hard, be at the beck and call of the office for twelve or fourteen hours a day for months at a stretch, and at the same time must increase his general and local knowledge. The harder he works and the less he grumbles, the better it is for him.

I must not leave the question of salaries without referring to the special departments on the daily newspapers, such as sporting, commercial, agriculture, mining, &c. The commercial editor is usually some one outside the office, who is paid at rates varying from fifty to three hundred pounds per annum for supplying every day a short summary of the various market proceedings. The work required of the commercial editor varies greatly with the different papers, hence the wide margin between the lowest and the highest rate of pay. Only two or three Australian dailies have some one specially told off to look after the mining; but this department is becoming every day of more importance here, and ere long all the leading papers will require to have a mining editor. The remuneration of the share editors varies from fifty to two hundred and fifty pounds a year. It is usually a stockbroker who supplies the daily share list, with, in some cases, a few comments upon the state of the market. Then there is the shipping man, who is, except in South Australia, a member of the permanent staff, and is paid at reporters' rates. In regard to agriculture, sporting, the drama, and other departments, it is necessary to explain that each of the dailies issued in the Australian capitals publishes also a weekly paper (at sixpence, except in one instance where the price is fourpence). In some cases, the weekly is made up almost entirely from matter that has been used in the dailies; and in others nearly the whole of the reading is specially written for the weekly. The latter system necessitates a separate staff, and thus it is that the same proprietary may employ two sporting editors, two dramatic editors, and so on. There is, however, never more than one agricultural editor whose special province it is to write the weekly, this being considered essentially a country newspaper; but he also occasionally writes for the corresponding daily. Sporting editors on the most flourishing weekly papers receive about ten pounds a week, and in one or two cases assistants get about seven pounds a week. On the dailies, the sporting editor is not usually paid so highly, and if he has with sporting to combine dramatic and other work, he takes rank as a general reporter and is paid as such. Sporting editors are always members of the permanent staff; but dramatic and musical editors are not invariably so. The pay of an agricultural editor who is a member of the permanent staff is about ten pounds a week; but, as in the case of a sporting editor, if he has to mix up other work with his special duties, his remuneration is much less, the reason of course being that a special knowledge is required in the one case, while in

the other a smattering is sufficient. A good sporting and agricultural writer acquires a name throughout the colonies, which is at any time worth a fair income to him.

There is another class of men who have to be paid for services rendered to the dailies; these are the country correspondents. Each daily in the capitals must have a correspondent in every town, or even village (township is the Australian word for village) throughout its colony, some papers having as many as one hundred and fifty of these communicants. Every correspondent is supplied with a free paper, and is paid at the rate of one pound per column for reports, or a small fixed sum per annum by arrangement. In a fairly large country town—for the colonies—say of four thousand inhabitants, a correspondent may earn from forty-five to seventy pounds per annum; but the average is probably not more than ten pounds, for scores of small places in the farming districts might be deserted villages for all the history they make. As for correspondents abroad, a good daily will have two London correspondents—one for despatching cable messages, and the other for writing news-letters. The former will receive a salary of from four to six hundred pounds a year; and the latter will be paid at per letter usually three guineas. Sometimes the cable correspondent also writes the news-letters. Each of the dailies has also a correspondent at Paris, New York, San Francisco, and Port Louis, and some at other places. The intercolonial correspondence is performed on the exchange system throughout, except in the case of one Melbourne paper, which has a special Sydney reporter.

A word as to the class of men most likely to earn a living on the daily press in the colonies. Men who have failed at every other profession, and take up leader-writing as a *dernier ressort*, are of no use in the colonies. A middle-aged Englishman, no matter how good his education may have been, might wait for years before he secures a position on an Australian daily, unless he is a particularly brilliant writer, or comes with good credentials from a well-known British newspaper. A university degree carries no more weight in Melbourne or Sydney in respect to journalism than it does in London. A man is judged here, as elsewhere, by his work alone. Moreover, it takes a long time before an Englishman fresh to the colonies can become acquainted with the many phases of colonial politics, and consequently if he be ever so good a writer, the sphere within which he can work is very limited for, say, two or three years. As to reporters, smart young men who are good shorthand writers and who have had a little experience might do worse than come to Australia. The colonies are not overcrowded with good reporters, and the scope for journalists is rapidly widening. Two things must be remembered, however: one is, that the market could very easily be flooded; and the other is, that reporters with colonial experience are invariably preferred to others. If, however, a reliable and capable reporter comes to either colony and takes the first appointment that offers on a good daily whatever the salary, while he looks around and learns something of colonial life and politics, he will probably not regret the step. But he must not be afraid of hard work; and if he is of a genial temperament, so much the better.

In conclusion, I may point out that apart from the prospect of ascending the ladder of journalism itself, for an energetic young man the daily press here is not a bad stepping-stone to more remunerative occupations. A reporter in an Australian city becomes acquainted with the best men there; if he has his eyes open, he perhaps soon finds out whether there is a more profitable but equally congenial means of livelihood available than the one he is engaged in; and if he has a little money by him into the bargain, he has exceptional chances of turning it over to advantage. The number of reporters who have risen to good positions in colonial life is surprising. Two members of the Victorian government and the Minister of Education for South Australia were once reporters. A late premier of New Zealand, now a K.B., was also a reporter. This gentleman entered parliamentary life under rather strange circumstances. The story goes that he was sent to report a meeting of electors held 'to consider the most fit and proper person to represent them,' at which candidates were invited to attend. At the appointed time, no candidate put in an appearance, and the late premier, who was the only representative of the press at the reporters' table, was recommended by some one in the hall to come forward. He at once acted upon the hint, ascended the platform, made a brief speech, and at the election was returned unopposed.

MR MAGSDALE'S COURTSHIP.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER IV.—THE CRISIS.

A SMALL, frightened-looking man was making his way down Holborn at a rapid irregular trot; his hat was crammed well home on the back of his head, and his coat-tails streamed ungracefully behind him as he hurried along, edging and pushing his way amongst the throng of passengers. He carried a paper in his hand, at which from time to time he glanced nervously, as though its folds contained some dangerous explosive which might burst with disastrous results at any moment. It was Peter Magsdale; and the paper he held was Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter, which he was taking post-haste to Allan for his inspection. He stopped at a door whose brass plate bore the legend, 'Magsdale, Architect,' and at once proceeded to knock double-knocks industriously until he was admitted.

'What on earth has happened?' asked his cousin as he rushed into his room. 'Sit down, and if anything has gone wrong, say so.'

Peter made a supreme effort to steady himself, and took a chair. Speech could not do justice to his errand, so he handed Allan the letter with as few words as possible.

'Read that,' he said—'read that, and tell me what to do. I got it this morning.'

Allan unfolded the paper, and leisurely began to study it, whilst Peter sat, holding on by the edge of the table, watching him with hungry eagerness.

We will exercise our privilege and look over

Mr Allan Magsdale's shoulder at the storm-fraught communication.

'CRESSBURN versus MAGSDALE.'

SIR—We are instructed by Miss Emily Parkins, the guardian of our client, Miss Mary Cressburn, to claim from you, on behalf of her ward, the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, in the name of damages for non-fulfilment of your promise to marry her said ward. We are authorised to accept the above sum in settlement; but should you repudiate liability, we shall be glad to be informed of the address of your solicitors, with a view to the institution of legal proceedings.—We are, &c.,
CARREL & STALKER.

TO PETER MAGSDALE, Esq.

Allan Magsdale read the letter through, and lay back in his chair, facing his cousin. 'I wonder you aren't ashamed to show that to me,' he said with infinite scorn.

Peter looked more wretchedly crest-fallen than before, but said nothing.

'When did you last see Miss Cressburn?'

'About a month ago,' faltered Peter.

'Not since you promised to take her to see Cornelia?'

'No,' was the half-whispered response.

'I can't trust myself to tell you what I think about it,' said Allan with indignant contempt; 'you'd better take it away.' He threw the letter at, rather than to, his cousin, and rising from his seat, turned his back on him, to gaze out of the window, with his hands in his pockets.

'Won't you tell me what I ought to do?' asked the miserable man after a long pause.

'Go to your solicitors,' said Allan without turning round.

'She thinks I've thrown her over,' said Peter.

'I never meant—I didn't intend to do that.'

'I don't know what else she could think.'

For two minutes Peter sat silent, staring at the carpet, and listening to the monotonous ticking of the clock: he cannot be said to have been thinking; he was lost in dazed dreams as to his position, not planning escape from it, but looking at it idly, as though it were the heading of a chapter he had not the inclination to read.

'For Heaven's sake, help me, Allan!' he wailed at length.

'What could I do, supposing I wanted to help you?' said his cousin, turning fiercely upon him.

'What shall I do?' moaned Peter. 'I'll marry her now if she will take me.'

'Wisest proviso you can make,' sneered Allan. 'How on earth you allowed things to come to such a pass, I can't think.'

'I thought perhaps she'd give way about knowing Cornelia, if I didn't go and see her for a time,' he said, a little less dolefully, for he thought that Allan was relenting, and would at least advise him how to act.

'Oh, you did, did you?'

'I did indeed. I never wanted to give her up.'

'Then you had better go and tell her so.'

Allan Magsdale returned to the table as he spoke, and looked over Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter again. 'I don't believe Mary Cressburn has any thing to do with the despatch of this precious document.'

'Why?' asked Peter eagerly.

'Because,' replied his adviser, weighing his

words with sarcastic care, 'because she wouldn't pay you the compliment of saying you're worth the money.'

It was unpalatable; but Peter was too much engrossed with the theory itself to pay much attention to the manner in which it had been propounded.

'I'll go and see her to-night,' he said. 'Perhaps it isn't too late to—to make it all right still.'

'Perhaps it isn't,' said Allan. 'Meantime, you'd better go and ask Cornelia to lend you seven hundred and fifty pounds.'

Peter's face fell again. 'Do you really think they will press that?' he asked.

'I don't know; it would serve you right if they did; and you had better be prepared—unless you mean to let them take action.'

The shudder this shaft produced told Allan it had gone home, and he followed it up with another one.

'I shall like to hear what your sister says about the business; you might come and tell me, if you survive it.'

Peter squirmed like a piece of scorched leather, and feebly offered himself a shred of doubtful comfort. 'She need never know about it?' he said.

'I rather think she will, if she doesn't already, my friend. But I can't spend any more time over it just now; I'm busy.' And Allan sat down, and made a demonstration of selecting a pen.

Peter rose to go, but lingered about the door. 'Why do you think she must know?' he asked.

'Of course she'll hear about it,' answered his cousin sharply. 'Here, take your letter, and don't bother,' he added. He didn't want to console his cousin as well as 'advise' him, and was purposely dismissing him in as uncomfortable a frame of mind as possible—a worthy object, in which he quite succeeded.

Peter Magsdale went back to Somerset House, and pondered over the terrible muddle his procrastinating folly had led him into. He must see Mary Cressburn that evening at any cost, and so convinced was he of the necessity of this, that he did what he had never ventured to do before: he telegraphed to Mrs Bunshaw saying that an engagement would detain him until late. He could not trust to the chance of getting out after dinner if he went home as usual. When Miss Terripeg was not with them, his sister had always some good reason for keeping him at home: the Society's accounts to audit, or its correspondence to attend to. Anything but a direct exercise of her inflexible will, which that astute woman knew better than to bring into too frequent use.

'She won't believe it, and there's sure to be a row,' he sighed as he sent away the message; 'but I can't help that. I wish to Heaven I could see the end of it all!'

This threatened action for breach of promise looked dreadfully formidable; but surely he had nothing to fear from that. If he went down to Queen's Road and explained that he wished to adhere to his engagement, and had never any intention of throwing Mary Cressburn over, he could cut the ground from under her feet. If she consented to receive him again, he would be very much where he had been before; and if she refused to have anything more to do with him,

no proceedings she could institute would hold water for a moment. For the present he would continue to regard himself as engaged to her in spite of the solicitors' letter.

The day dragged slowly on; and at five o'clock he muffled himself up in his coat and went out to seek a restaurant where he could get his dinner. He dawdled over the meal until it was time to go down to Putney, and uncomfortable as he was about the meeting before him, he was almost glad that he had not much more time to brood over it.

He felt terribly nervous when he found himself once again in the little sitting-room he knew so well, where everything reminded him of Mary Cressburn. There over in the corner was the sofa on which they had been seated when he told his stumbling tale of love. That was the identical book she had trifled with whilst she listened to his professions of eternal devotion. Here was—Miss Parkins coming in, with hostility written on every line of her face. Any little remnant of courage he had brought with him vanished like smoke. Miss Parkins bowed to him without speaking, and seated herself rigidly on a chair, whilst Peter collapsed into the farthest seat he could find.

'Well, Mr Magsdale,' she said, 'what is it?'

'I wanted to see Mary,' replied Peter, with a very pale face.

'Mary does not want to see you, Mr Magsdale.—Did you happen to receive anything from Messrs Carrel and Stalker?'

'I came about their letter,' he said hesitatingly.

Miss Parkins' manner was so stern and uncompromising that his nervousness increased, and he could not go on.

'Yes, Mr Magsdale?' said the lady, by way of encouragement; then, seeing his disquietude, she continued: 'I am indebted to Mrs Cornelia Bunshaw for the recommendation to take legal steps.'

The shock was too much for Peter. 'Mrs Bunshaw!' he screamed, bounding from his chair—'Mrs Bunshaw!'

'Yes, Mr Magsdale. I called at Astley Villa a few days ago, and had the pleasure—Mercy on us!' exclaimed Miss Parkins, rising in her turn. 'Is he going to have a fit?'

It looked exceedingly like it, for Peter's eyes were starting from his head and he was trembling like a leaf. His faculties were hardly clear; but light was breaking in upon him: that must have been the 'case' she had spoken of so feelingly to Miss Terripeg and himself. But why had she concealed the fact that she knew him to be the sinner? He pulled himself together with a great effort, and turned to Miss Parkins. 'She didn't know you were referring to me?'

'Most assuredly she did, Mr Magsdale,' replied the lady, recovering her composure as Peter grew calm, 'though I did not know, when I first saw her, that she was your cousin.'

'Her cousin!' Cornelia had imagined that Allan was the faithless lover! She would soon be enlightened; it was only another slight addition to the muddle; a small one, perhaps, but still it would not improve matters. It would answer no purpose to explain the mistake to Miss Parkins, and he hardly thought of doing so; he

was too anxious to strike a blow at the impending legal measures.

'I came to say that I never meant Mary to suppose that I had deserted her,' he said.

'I'll tell her,' responded Miss Parkins tersely.

'I'm quite as anxious to marry her now as I ever was.'

'I'll tell her,' repeated the old lady.

'I still consider myself engaged to her,' continued Peter, to whom confession brought relief.

'I'll tell her,' was the only answer vouchsafed.

'May I not see Mary?'

'I think not, this evening, Mr Magsdale. I will speak to her, and let you know whether she wishes to renew your acquaintance or not.—Now you had better go.'

It had been an unsatisfactory visit on the whole, though he had accomplished his object in making it. Miss Parkins clearly understood that there were no real grounds of action against him, and his readiness to fulfil his engagement completely dissolved any that she believed to exist. He could not go home just yet; it was only half-past nine, and if he returned before Cornelia had retired for the night, he would have to submit to a searching cross-examination on the business which had kept him late. Moreover, if Miss Terripeg were there, he should be obliged to walk home with her, and the events of the day had not been of a nature to endear that task to him.

He turned northwards, and set out, striving to rest his brain by wearying his limbs. He walked far and fast, and it was long after eleven when he stood before his own gate. Everything was in darkness, and the household had evidently gone to bed. It was rather a nuisance, for Mrs Bunshaw had deprived him of that reveller's friend his latchkey soon after Allan's departure, and he would have to wake them up before he could get in. He rang once, softly, but disturbed no one. Then again, harder. Still no result. A third time violently, without producing any effect. He set to work and tugged at the handle until he heard the bell pealing wildly in the back premises, but still nobody appeared to be roused by it. He was very tired; and after his last effort, he sat down on the doorstep to rest, wondering what had happened within. Now sitting on one's doorstep is not a congenial occupation, or one conducive to health when indulged in at midnight in December, and before Peter had been there five minutes he had sneezed twice with resounding vehemence, and recognised with rising temper that he was 'catching cold.' Sternutation, however, did for him what the bell had failed to accomplish—a fact which would appear as inexplicable to us as it did for the moment to him, did we not know that Cornelia had been seated all the time behind her closed shutters, waiting with judicial patience until she considered it advisable to admit him. She heard him sneeze and remembered his delicate chest. It would never do to have him laid up; so, just as he took hold of the bell-handle again, a window was thrown open, and Mrs Bunshaw looked out, demanding to be informed who was there. When Peter saw his sister, he grasped the situation, and comprehended the singularly profound repose which enwrapped the rest of the household.

'It is I,' he answered irritably.

'Well, what's the matter?' asked Mrs Bunshaw in tones which would have led a casual hearer to suppose that it was Peter's acknowledged habit to sleep on the doorstep when he came home late. 'What do you want?'

'I—I want to get in,' replied her brother, with chattering teeth.

'Pray, do you know what time it is?' she asked.

'I don't know. I was detained (sneeze). I really couldn't get home any sooner' (sneeze).

Mrs Bunshaw referred his appeal to the higher court of Principle to obtain its views about the propriety of entertaining it, and a long pause was thus necessitated. 'I will let you in this time, Peter,' she said at length, as though by doing so she incurred grave responsibility. 'Miss Terripeg was here this evening, and I am much vexed at your behaviour.—There is the key,' she continued, throwing it down to him. 'I will speak to you about this in the morning.' Peter clutched the key, and let himself in, breathing a silent but earnest prayer of gratitude for the whim which had moved his sister to let him go to bed in peace.

The next morning he awoke with a cold so severe that he could not get up, and as Cornelia considered suspense had a softening and beneficial effect, she delayed calling him to account until the evening; but before then she had a visitor in the person of Miss Parkins, who came to tell her of the result produced by the solicitors' letter.

'I knew it would bring him on his knees,' said Mrs Bunshaw at the end of Miss Parkins' story.

'He is willing, nay, anxious to adhere to his engagement; and I think Mary will forgive him, being unaware of the means with which we have brought him back.'

'Our sole object of course is to secure your niece's rights,' said Mrs Bunshaw, after a minute's thought. 'If you will bring her to see me to-morrow, we will see what more can be done, though I do not think we can do anything further now.'

Miss Parkins took her leave, promising to bring Mary Cressburn the following day, and Cornelia went up-stairs to see the recalcitrant Peter. She found him seated by the fire, a hoarse and woe-begone victim of catarrh, and took up her station opposite him in solemn silence. 'I will say nothing about your late return last night, Peter,' she began after a time, 'nor will I refer to the occupation which detained you; for that you are sufficiently punished already. I feel it my duty, however, to speak to you very seriously about Anna Terripeg.'

Peter fidgeted and looked a shade unhappier than he did when she came in, but said nothing.

'You know that your demeanour towards her has not been that of an ordinary acquaintance.'

'I don't know how; she is no more than an ordinary acquaintance.'

'I can't believe that you mean what you say, Peter. During the past month I have looked upon her in the light of a sister.'

Peter muttered something about his willingness to look upon her in the light of a sister too; but the concession was unacceptable, and earned him a severe snub for his improper levity.

'She will be here to-morrow. She has never doubted that you mean to make her your wife; and to draw back now would be to jilt her—yes, to jilt her,' for he started at the word. 'You must speak to-morrow.'

The time had come to put an end to this dream of Cornelia's, and Peter roused himself to do it. Engaged as he was to Mary Cressburn, he could not allow it to go any further. 'If Miss Terripeg has any idea of the kind, Cornelia, your words, and not mine, have given it to her. I've shown her the usual civility due to a friend, and nothing more, in spite of your palpable efforts to throw us together, which I couldn't prevent.'

'I know what Anna thinks, and how she has come to regard you. She has opened her heart to me and shown me her inmost thoughts.'

'She wouldn't have done that unless you had given her sympathy and encouragement.'

'How could I refuse to sympathise with her, knowing her as I do, and believing in your honesty?—I will say nothing more now,' said she, rising; 'but before you meet her again, weigh carefully what I have said.'

'I have never said a word to Miss Terripeg that might not be said to any acquaintance.'

'Though you have bound yourself by no promise,' said Mrs Bunshaw in her most impressive platform tones, 'she has your unspoken pledge, which is as sacred, in the eyes of an honourable man. A relation of mine who breaks his word to a woman, need expect nothing from me when I have done with this world's goods,' she added, and she left him, after firing this as a parting shot. In her own mind she knew well that there was great truth in Peter's assertion that she had encouraged her friend to believe that he meant to marry her. 'But his attentions were so patent,' she argued to herself; 'he was always begging me to have her here, and used to be quite restless until he could have her to himself to take home.'

Up-stairs, Peter was reproaching himself with his share in the business, in happy ignorance of the crisis which was impending the next day.

Mrs Bunshaw had arranged a little tea-party, at which all our friends were to be present to witness the reconciliation of Allan and Mary Cressburn, and, if possible, the betrothal of Peter to Anna Terripeg. With regard to the latter couple, Cornelia had very grave doubts, but she meant to do her best to bring the engagement about.

Every one has arrived, and Mrs Bunshaw has gone away for a moment to call Peter; so Allan takes advantage of her absence to say something to Mary Cressburn. 'His sister simply rules him. I am certain that nothing but his dread of her interference made him so reluctant to let you know her. He came to me the other day after I last saw you, and was half mad at the idea of losing you, as he thought you meant to give him up.'

Allan was doing all he could to patch up the quarrel, and was on a fair way to success, for Mary knew nothing of Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter.

She did not answer his arguments. She had told Miss Parkins that she had done with Peter and his love when her last letter to him remained unanswered. Had she been too hasty? Was he the poor weak but faithful creature his cousin

made him out? She loved him still, in spite of his neglect and the unmanly feelings which had caused it. Yes; if he would make amends now, here before his friends and her own, she would forgive him, but it should be his last chance.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the entry of Mrs Bunshaw and her brother. He did not know Miss Cressburn was in the house; but on being told that Miss Terripeg was there, he silently resolved to declare his engagement to the former in the presence of the latter. Whatever unpleasantness might result, it would put a final stop to the scheming which could only be productive of pain to one and vexation to the other.

Cornelia was posing for an opening speech, and did not see the start he gave when he found Miss Cressburn in the room; she gave rein to her organ of language at once, and proceeded to make everything nice and comfortable before she descended to domestic affairs and rang for tea. She addressed her cousin first, and the magnanimous kindness of her remarks would have moved most men of good feeling to tears. We deeply regret to record that the effect upon Allan was far otherwise. He grinned; openly and undisguisedly grinned.

'I was most unwilling to believe, Allan, that you had laid yourself open to suspicions which, if just, would have thrown so dark a shadow upon the hitherto unblemished name of Magsdale. I have invited you here this evening to meet Miss Mary Cressburn. I trust you have explained your conduct towards her, and earned my forgiveness by obtaining hers, for causing her to doubt that your promise'—

The looks of blank astonishment on three faces brought her speech, which was only gathering way, to an abrupt termination. Everybody looked at everybody else, and then stared so hard and meaningly at Mrs Bunshaw, that she paused.

Miss Parkins was the first to recover the use of her tongue, and she hastened to put Cornelia right. 'You are making some unaccountable mistake, Mrs Bunshaw. Your cousin, Mr Peter Magsdale, was engaged to my niece.'

'Peter!' shrieked Mrs Bunshaw and Miss Terripeg in a breath—'PETER!!'

The hero of this story saw that the moment had come. He walked across the room and took Mary's hand with doubting gentleness; she let him retain it, and he knew he was forgiven. Her presence strengthened him, and he spoke firmly: 'I am engaged to marry Miss Cressburn,' he said.

For a moment there was a dead silence. Cornelia stood pale but calm, gazing sadly on the pair before her. Her hopes and plans had been defeated; and she, in her blind anxiety to do what she thought right, had done much to destroy them. She would not betray her disappointment; she had undertaken to obtain justice for Mary Cressburn, and the identity of the lover was an element which must not be allowed to affect her pledge. She had, only yesterday, solemnly charged Peter to remember that a promise spoken or unspoken was a thing sacred, and she must not bid him retract the one he had given, now.

'Is this true, Peter?' she said in a low voice.

'It is quite true.'

Miss Terripeg, who had been eagerly waiting for his reply, fell back on the sofa in hysterics;

and Cornelia said her last word as she moved over to her assistance: 'You might have trusted me to stand your friend, Peter. For the sake of the girl you have allowed to suffer, and to whom you have so tardily made amends, I will not turn your enemy now. The mistake was mine.'

And this was the end of Peter Magsdale's Courtship, for he married Mary Cressburn three weeks later.

FIGHTING-COCKS IN SCHOOLS.

It is highly probable that the Romans introduced cock-fighting into England. This cruel sport was for a long period extremely popular amongst men and boys. One of the earliest if not the first account of the pastime being practised by school-boys occurs in a *Description of the City of London*, by William Fitzstephen, who wrote in the reign of Henry II., and died in the year 1191. He records that it was the annual custom on Shrove-Tuesday for the boys to bring to the schools their gamecocks, to turn the schoolrooms into cockpits, the masters and pupils spending the morning in witnessing the birds fight.

In many instances, teachers derived much of their income from payments made by their boys for providing fighting-cocks for this cruel and barbarous amusement. The masters generally claimed as their perquisites the runaway birds and those killed in battle. Our old school regulations and accounts contain many allusions to this subject. In the town accounts of Congleton is a payment: '1601. Payd John Wagge for dressynge the schoolhouse at the great [Congleton] cock-fyghte, 0. 0. 4.' Wreay School, on the banks of Windermere Lake, was famous for this pastime. Mr Graham, a Westmoreland Squire, bequeathed to the school a silver bell, to be fought for every year. 'About three weeks previous to Shrove-Tuesday,' says a well-informed writer, 'the boys fixed upon two of their schoolfellows for captains whose parents were able and willing to bear the expense of the approaching contest; and the master on entering school was saluted by the boys throwing up their caps and the exclamation of "Dux! Dux!" After an early dinner on Shrove-Tuesday, the two captains, attended by their friends and schoolfellows, who were distinguished by blue and red ribbons, marched in procession from their respective homes to the village green, where each produced three cocks; and the bell was appended to the hat of the victor, in which manner it was handed down from one successful captain to another.' This custom lingered until 1836.

A clergyman informed Mr William Henderson, for publication in his *Folklore of the Northern Counties of England*, issued in 1879, that when he was a scholar at Sedbergh grammar-school, Yorkshire, the master used to be entitled to fourpence-halfpenny yearly from every boy on Shrove-Tuesday for purchasing a fighting-cock. At Heversham, near Milnthorpe, says Mr Henderson, the cockpit was in existence close to the school a few years ago. The regulations of the Kendal grammar-school provided that it 'be free to all the boys resident in the parish of Kendal, for classics alone, excepting a voluntary payment of a cock-penny, as aforetime, at Shrovetide, &c.'

At the grammar-school of Grange-over-Sand, it appears from a local historian that gratuitous payment was expected from the parents of each pupil. It varied in amount according to the social standing of the parents, and at the commencement of the present century ranged from two shillings and sixpence to five pounds. The money was known as cockpence, and doubtless originated with the old practice of providing gamecocks.

Debts of fighting-cocks often formed important items in old school accounts. Here is an example drawn from Sir James Mackintosh's bill, from the master of Fortrose School: '1776-7. To cocks'-fight dues for 2 years 2s. 6d. each, 5s. 0d.'

The Duke of York in the year 1681 introduced the sport into Scotland. Two years later, a cock-pit was set up at Leith, and it attracted so much attention that, in 1704, the town-council of Edinburgh prohibited it as 'an impediment to business.' After much debate, it was finally agreed to confine the sport at Leith to one day yearly. The barbarous pastime soon became popular in schools, and masters managed to profit by it. In Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, published in 1792, in an article by the minister of Applecross, county of Ross, it is stated the schoolmaster's income is 'composed of two hundred merks, with 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. per quarter from each scholar; and the cock-fight dues, which are equal to one quarter's payment from each scholar.' The Rev. Dr Edgar, in his *Old Church Life in Scotland*, referring to the school at Mauchline, states that 'the owners of the cocks paid to the schoolmaster a small sum in name of entry money; and those who did not provide a combatant had to pay an extra sum for admission to the spectacle. It was a gala day in the schoolmaster's calendar, for not only had he the benefit of pocketing the entry and admission money, but had the privilege of picking up the carcasses of the slain and seizing the persons of the fugitives.' 'Daddy Auld' stopped the sport at Mauchline in the year 1782. It was continued in other schools to a much later time.

Hugh Miller, the famous geologist, who was born in the year 1802, in his popular volume, *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, gives a graphic account of the amusement in the Cromarty grammar-school where he received his education. 'The school,' says Miller, 'like almost all other grammar-schools of the period in Scotland, had its yearly cock-fight, preceded by two holidays and a half, during which the boys occupied themselves in collecting and bringing up the cocks. And such always was the array of fighting birds mustered on the occasion, that the day of the festival from morning till night used to be spent in fighting out the battle. For weeks after it had passed the school floor continued to retain its deeply stained blotches of blood, and the boys would be full of exciting narratives regarding the glories of gallant birds who had continued to fight until their eyes had been pecked out; or who, in the moment of victory, had dropped dead in the middle of the cockpit.' Miller at some length denounces the cruel sport.

Church bells were often rung in England in honour of winning cocks. Kings frequently attended the battles. Henry VIII. encouraged the sport, and James I. greatly enjoyed it.

Cromwell prohibited it in the year 1658; but no sooner had the Second Charles ascended the throne than it was revived, and under royal favour was a popular diversion, and battles were fought in most unlikely places. It is stated in the parish register of Hemingborough, Yorkshire, as follows: 'Feb. 2, 1661. Upon fastene day last they came with their cocks to the church, and faught them in the church—namely, Thos. Middleton, of Cliff, John Coats, Ed. Widhouse, and John Batley.'

Several attempts were made to check this cruel pastime, and it was finally prohibited in the year 1849.

In the days of old, throwing at cocks was a popular sport. Its origin is almost lost in the dim historic past. Some writers trace it back to the time when the Danes ruled England. The foreign masters were hard on the Saxons, and held them in subjection which was as bad as slavery. The inhabitants of an English city determined to make a bold attempt for freedom, and formed a conspiracy against the Danes who were placed over them. It was resolved that on a certain dark winter's night a dozen brave men should secretly repair to the town-house, overpower the guard, and seize the arms which were kept there. When that had been effected, a signal was to be made, and the English were to leave their houses and slay the invaders. The operations had no sooner been commenced, than the noise made disturbed the cocks roosting in the building, and a loud crowing was the result. The unusual circumstance put the guard on the alert, who speedily ended the well-planned scheme of liberty. The Danes, it is said, doubled their cruelty to the conspirators.

After the English were freed from the Danish yoke, they are said to have instituted in the city the sport of throwing at cocks, in revenge for the misery their crowing had occasioned. The pastime became popular, and soon spread throughout the land. Shrove-Tuesday was set apart for the sport, being the day the effort was made to murder the Danes. In course of time, cock-throwing became an amusement recognised by parish officials, and it frequently figures in old accounts. The profits from the sport were frequently given to the churchwardens for the relief of the poor. The parish accounts of Pinner, near Harrow-on-the-Hill, may be quoted as an example: '1622. Received from the cocks at Shrovetide, 12s. 0d. 1628. Received for cocks in Tounne, 19s. 0d. Out of Tounne, 0s. 6d.'

The cock was tied with a piece of string to a stake driven into the ground, and a small sum was charged for throwing at it with short clubs. In later times, three throws for three-pence was the ordinary price. If the marksman killed the bird, or knocked it down and run and caught it before it regained its feet, it became his property. The cocks were trained to evade the blows of the throwers. It was a common practice for schoolmasters to provide cocks for the diversion of their pupils. Kings even engaged in the sport. In a copy of some household accounts we read: 'March 2, 7 Hen. VII. Item to Master Bray for rewards to them that brought cokhes at Shrovetide to Westminster, xxs.'

Many attempts were made to stop this sport. There is a charge of 2s. 6d. in the corporation accounts of Worcester in 1745 for crying down cock-throwing. A paragraph in the *Northampton Mercury* of February 1788 states: 'We cannot but express our wishes that persons in power, as well as parents and masters of families, would exert their authority in suppressing a practice too common at this season of the year—throwing at cocks, a custom which, to the credit of civilised people, is annually declining.' It lingered until a late period in many parts of the country, and was finally prohibited. At Wakefield, the magistrates stopped it about the year 1865.

THE LOST WAGER.

FORTUNE has queer methods of distributing her favours, and the way she showed her partiality for Gustavus Chuler was to give him a rich father. The head of the Chulers was not only an Alderman of the City of London and a Warden of a great Company, but he was also in the running, as Gustavus somewhat figuratively put it, for the Mayoralty Plate. In attending to his many offices, Chuler senior so succeeded in exhausting the labour market that nothing was left for Gustavus to do but play pool, billiards, stroll down Pall-Mall, and take to himself other soul-stirring and vigorous recreations. In this walk of life he was ably aided and abetted by a companion in leisure named Nathaniel Blossom, an ingenious inventor of expedients, not to catch Time by the forelock, but rather to push him along. By a stroke of fate, it happened that Gustavus one fine morning came across Mr Blossom in Bond Street, and after remarking on their happy conjunction, invited Nathaniel to walk with him. Some way down the street the pair stopped before the plate-glass front of Tompkins, their trusty and trusting tailor. Behind the window, in addition to the 'newest in tweeds,' there had lately been arranged a miniature Madame Tussaud's of stony-faced waxen figures.

'I say, Gus,' said Mr Blossom, in a thoughtful tone, 'what a lot of dummies Tompkins has got in his window! That's the way our money goes, old fellow, to clothe those wax beggars.'

Considering the many vain overtures Mr Tompkins had been making to Nathaniel for the settlement of his last little account, the providing of raiment for dummies could only by a stretch of the imagination be said to affect Mr Blossom's exchequer.

'I do believe,' went on Nathaniel, 'that our respected creditor puts them in the window to stare us out of countenance. There is one in the middle whose glassy eye goes through me. He seems to say: "Now, pay up, Nat, or into court you go." I can't stand it. I must quit the scene. Come!'

'Stop a minute,' cried Gustavus, detaining him. 'Have you ever noticed, Nat, what a resemblance even a living man bears to a dummy when he is standing in a tailor's window? I would

bet ten pounds that I could stand there all day and never be taken for anything but a dummy.'

'It is possible,' answered Mr Blossom dryly; 'but for all that, I'll take you. Ten or twenty?'

'By Jove,' exclaimed Gustavus, 'you didn't think I meant it as a bet, Nat?'

'I certainly did, dear boy; but of course if you say you didn't, why'—Mr Blossom made a movement with his hand, and blew in the air, as if he wafted Mr Chuler's rashness to the clouds.

'No,' replied Gustavus firmly; 'I am not going to slip out of it that way. Having made the bet, I stand by it, and, win or lose, I'm your man. Let it be ten.'

'Done!' cried Mr Blossom joyously.—'And now, friend of my soul, the goblet sip; let us seal the compact in the flowing bowl. Let an agile hansom convey us swiftly through the madding crowd to Italia's son, the dark-browed Tavalio, who is compelled by circumstances over which he has no control to conduct a restaurant in the Strand. There we will carouse.'

That night, due to the receipt of mysterious messages, the friends of both Mr Chuler and Nathaniel Blossom assembled in unwonted numbers at the house of entertainment presided over by the dark-browed Tavalio. Amidst the greatest excitement, Mr Blossom set forth the subject of the bet, and placed Gustavus in the position of a man of mark. A committee was hastily formed to promote the undertaking; and it was resolved that the time allowed for Mr Chuler to carry out his impersonation of the Living Dummy be one hour, and the place, the window of the suffering Tompkins, who, under threat of the loss of the whole custom of the gathering, was to give his consent. Then the party grew exceedingly merry, and the bosom's lord of Mr Chuler sat so lightly on its throne that he insisted upon standing champagne all round.

During the early part of the next day, Nathaniel Blossom received private information that his friend, Mr Gustavus Chuler, had, after much labour, won over the tailor to his cause, and that at three o'clock the same afternoon, the sartorial Tussaud's in Tompkins' window would be augmented by his living presence. A post-script further informed Mr Blossom that the bet would be declared 'off' if there were any grimacing through the window.

A trifle after three o'clock that afternoon, a curious proceeding might have been witnessed in Bond Street. Never before had so many fashionably dressed young men been known to take such an absorbing interest in the various samples of 'checks' and 'diagonals' in Tompkins' window; and never, in the memory of the oldest assistant, had there been such a review of impenitent debtors past the open door. The attitude of Mr Chuler was decidedly striking. Placed in the very midst of the tailor's dummies, and displaying to the utmost advantage the artistic cut of a suit of tweed 'Cheap at £4, 10s.,' his limbs had adopted a painful rigidity, and his countenance a fearful vacancy. Amongst those acquainted with the subject of the bet, the impression prevailed that it was a marvellous resemblance, and that Gustavus would win in a canter.

One of the most assiduous of the window-gazers was, as might be expected, Mr Nathaniel Blossom; and a quarter of an hour short of the time of winning the wager, this gifted gentleman was admiringly eyeing the motionless form of his accomplished friend. 'It's nearly over,' he said below his breath. 'He'll do it now, sure enough. He has acted a dummy to the life.—Why, what the dickens is the matter with him?'

The last ejaculation of the astonished Nathaniel was called forth by an extraordinary transformation which suddenly came over the countenance of Gustavus. The face of the Living Dummy grew ghastly pale, and his eyes became set in wild and terror-stricken frenzy, while his limbs visibly trembled beneath him.

'He is going to have a fit,' thought Mr Blossom. 'It has been too much for him. I had better go in at once and alarm Tompkins before he falls through the glass.' Turning round with this benevolent intention, Mr Blossom immediately became aware of a presence which caused him to become almost as violently agitated as his unfortunate friend; for, gazing directly over his shoulder, with every feature denoting amazement and fury, stood the portly form of Chuler senior. What the general public had failed to discover, had been quickly detected by the paternal eye. For a second or two Chuler senior stood as if petrified, as if discrediting the evidence of his senses; then, casting a lowering and awful look upon his unhappy offspring, he bounded into the shop. Hardly knowing what he was about, Nathaniel followed. Tompkins was standing in the middle of the shop rubbing his hands. With a wrathful brow, the scandalised candidate for first-citizenship strode up to him. 'Are you the proprietor of that peepshow in the window?' he asked in a choky voice.

The tailor, with a bewildered look, bowed obsequiously; he seemed in doubt as to whether the title of showman was meant as an honour or otherwise.

'Then,' thundered Chuler senior, turning an apoplectic tint, 'what inducements have you held out to my son to make an ass of himself amongst your wax monstrosities? What is the meaning of his ridiculous position, sir? Have you no better advertisement of your miserable tweeds and checks? Or is this a deliberate insult to me—to me, sir—an Alderman of the City of London?—Speak! or I'll do you a mischief on your own premises!'

Tompkins drew back and turned pale. 'It's only a little bit of a lark, sir,' he said soothingly. 'Some young gent's bet. Mr Gustavus is impersonating the Living Dummy.'

'The Living Dummy!' cried Mr Chuler, stupefied. 'A son of Mine—the Living Dummy!' He glared at Tompkins as if the tailor had answered him with a parable.

Further explanation, however, was unneeded, for at this moment the glass door which divided the shop from the window slowly opened, and the Living Dummy himself, looking very dazed and forlorn, stepped into view. The spectacle was too much for the author of his being, and the Alderman sank upon a chair. Gustavus followed his example, and, without a word, they sat and gazed at each other. For a while Chuler senior seemed in danger of suffocation; but at

last he found his speech. 'Send for a cab!' he gasped faintly.

Gustavus threw an imploring glance in the direction of the sneaking figure of Mr Blossom, and that friend of his soul instantly responded to it by going outside and hailing the vehicle required. Meanwhile, the news had got abroad that a member of the swell-mob had been taken in the act of impersonating one of the tailor's dummies with the object of a night-attack. As the alderman was the first to come out, he was identified with the culprit, and the remarks that were made upon him drove him nearly frantic. It was only when the abashed form of Gustavus crept into the cab, still unconsciously wearing the condemnatory card of 'Cheap at £4, 10s.,' that this illusion was dispelled.

By the next day's post Mr Nathaniel Blossom received from his friend Gustavus Chuler a lugubrious epistle, which set forth that the writer's state of health necessitated an immediate trip to the Highlands of Scotland. The envelope contained, in addition to this afflicting information, a Bank of England note for ten pounds, forfeit to Mr Blossom for a lost wager.

'SLOYD.'

OUR educational system, in one way and another, has recently been attracting a good deal of attention. One of the most significant signs of movement with the times is the Association just forming for promoting the teaching of 'sloyd' over the United Kingdom. This system has for some time past been an important factor in the educational systems of several European countries. The great beauty lies in the fact that it educates a child morally, physically, and mentally. Sweden was the originator of this system of manual instruction, which is not, as is frequently supposed, merely wood-carving, but is the system applied to the different kinds of handiwork for educational purposes. *Sloyd*, the Scandinavian word, which is termed 'sloyd' in England for convenience, means originally 'cunning,' 'clever,' 'handy.' The results at which the system specially aims is to implant respect for work in general, even for the coarser forms of manual labour; to develop activity; to foster order, cleanliness, neatness, and accuracy; to encourage attention, industry, and perseverance; to develop the physical powers and to train the eye and the sense of form. It is intended to teach all classes, from the highest to the lowest, how to use their hands as well as their heads, so that each man and woman may be placed in a position of independence and be capable of earning an honest livelihood.

We have been particularly fortunate in obtaining one of the chief Swedish authorities on the system in the person of Miss Myström, who has been engaged in London in adapting the system to English requirements. Active preparations are being made to instruct those desirous of becoming teachers. The course is arranged in series. The first article which learners have to make is a little pointer, using merely a knife

and glass-paper ; from such articles they proceed to more difficult ones—making rulers, inkstands, brackets, and so forth. Attendance at the classes is voluntary on the part of the pupil, so that there are certain conditions which the work must fulfil. It should be useful, and not too fatiguing ; the articles made should offer variety, and should not be articles of luxury ; they should be accomplished without help, and they should be real work, and not play. A necessary feature, too, is that they should demand thoughtfulness, and not be purely mechanical work. Many will no doubt here say, 'It is nothing more nor less than ordinary carpentering.' On consideration, however, it will be found there are several differences—first and foremost comes the difference in the *object* of sloyd, which is not to turn out young carpenters, but to develop the faculties, and especially to give general dexterity, which will be of value no matter what line of life the pupil may afterwards pursue. Other differences are—the character of the objects made, which are usually smaller than those made in the trade : the tools used ; the knife, for instance—the most important of all in sloyd—is little used in ordinary carpentry ; and lastly, the manner of working is not the same : the division of labour employed in the carpentering trade is not allowed in sloyd, where each article is executed entirely by each pupil.

Truancy has almost been done away with in Swedish schools since the introduction of sloyd. It has been found in all the schools where it has been introduced that greater and more intelligent progress has been made in the ordinary school-work. It makes children think for themselves. The system demands individual supervision and instruction, which is an advantage, as the teacher is enabled to gain an insight into the character, and to establish a personal relation between himself and his pupils.

In regard to the statement that it promotes the physical, mental, and moral development, we find that morally it implants respect and love for work in general ; it strengthens the bond between home and school ; and it fosters a sense of satisfaction in honest work, begun, carried on, and completed by fair means. Mentally, sloyd acts in drawing out and exercising energy, perseverance, order, accuracy, and the habit of attention ; it causes pupils to rely on themselves, to exercise forethought, and to be constantly putting two and two together. Physically, the system brings into action all the muscles, and exercises both sides of the body. Pupils work with the left hand and arm, as well as with the right, in sawing, planing, &c. Sloyd is particularly useful to the girls of our higher schools, and is more important for them than their sisters of the working classes. The former are sadly in want of some interesting active work to counterbalance the continual sitting and poring over books and exercises. Besides the general development it furnishes, the positive knowledge gained is of the greatest service, and serves to stimulate a growing experience of sympathy with men's work.

The first course for training teachers in England commenced in August, at the Ladies' College at Sydenham, which has been kindly lent for the purpose. Hitherto, those who would be teachers of sloyd have had to travel to the seminary

at Mäås, on the beautiful shores of Lake Savelingen ; and after going through the course there, have had to face the difficulty of applying the system to English tastes and customs. Now, they will not have quite so long a journey to undertake to gain instruction ; and the knowledge they do gain will be such as they can impart straight away to pupils. In order to counteract the evil of spurious teachers cropping up, there will be inspectors appointed, who will be allowed to visit any places where sloyd is taught at any time, to see that the system is carried out properly and faithfully.

From the foregoing sketch, some idea of the importance of this new feature in our educational system may be gleaned. The British people are slowly awakening from their lethargy, and are at length making a stir to place themselves on a more equal footing with our wary continental brethren. Sloyd is one step in the right direction ; for we want *whole* men and women whose faculties are developed to their fullest extent, and who have learnt to apply their knowledge not only in emergencies but in the daily events of life. We must not overlook the fact that all skilled work, however humble it may appear, is brain-work too. In a system of tried value like sloyd, if it is successful in taking firm root here, it is destined to influence a wide moral and social influence, and raise us in some degree out of our deplorable state of coma. In addition to its social and moral value, it is now widely recognised as the basis of technical education. Great things must not of course be expected all at once ; for not only have children to be made interested in such occupations, but teachers have to be trained to initiate them into successful methods.

IN THE TIME OF YULE.

ONCE more the dear old Yule comes round,
And hands, heart-warmed, close fast again,
While far and wide rings out the sound :
'Peace upon earth—good-will to men.'

New life, new strength, for coming years,
When souls are knit, in days to be,
By griefs and joys, by hopes and fears,
Of one great, grand humanity.

The common tie of common need,
The human tie of suffering,
May bind together hearts that bleed,
When life's glad bird no more can sing.

No bird can sing the whole year through,
No rose can bloom in Winter's blast,
And yet o'er hearts both brave and true
Some errant beam of light is cast.

And generous trust that looks above,
With noble aims and sympathies,
Shall teach the wounded heart that love
An infinite forgiveness is.

HARRIET KENDALL.

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DARK DECEMBER DAYS.

As we reckon them, December days are the first of the winter ones; but from a climatical point of view the honour properly belongs to those of the previous month, when, as Burns said, 'the wind blows loud wi' angry sough,' and 'when chill November's surly blast made fields and forests bare.' But be that as it may, then the autumn has waned and winter is waxing, the almanac-makers notwithstanding. Some of the ancient weather-guides used to put this month down as having what they called 'halcyon days' in plenty, and yet others of them characterised it as stormy, squally, and most variable. As a matter of fact, there is a certain uniform strain of sombrous gravity about the days of December, with an occasional storm to dispel the monotony. Martial called those days smoky, and they are almost as misty and foggy as those of November, so that it is only by a considerable stretch of imagination that they can be styled anything like 'halcyon days.'

The evening of a December day has been pictured somewhat fantastically by the author of *Pickwick* in a striking sentence: 'The evening grew more dull every moment, and a melancholy wind sounded through the deserted fields, like a distant giant whistling for his house-dog.' It is not to be wondered at that the scene imparted a sombre tinge to the feelings of Mr Winkle, for this 'winter-month,' as our Saxon ancestors termed it, had a similar effect upon the poet Cowper. In December 1780 he wrote: 'At this season of the year and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divest it from sad subjects.'

Dark, indeed, are the December days when the exceptional storms come on, for they are intensely realistic. As Chatterton forcibly put it: the 'rising whirlwinds, blasting, keen, and loud, roll the white surges to the sounding shore.' The snow, driving onwards, seems to alight nowhere, and it appears as if determined to hide every-

thing but itself from view. It is wonderful to see, yet not at all easy to stand, and that in a double sense. Nay, at such a time we are glad to be, as Emerson says,

Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

No herds go forth to seek the pastures now, either through the vales or over the mountains. Every warbler is silent except the friendly Robin, who now and then appears to forget what month it is, and so lets out his song quite unawares. The bee is no more heard, not even when the sun for an hour shines warmly, for there is no floral feast to entice. Not even a daisy is seen. Still, with all this dearth, there is something sublimely beautiful before us. On trees and shrubs thousands of crystals sparkle, and on a spotless robe of white at times we firmly tread. That robe, so downy, soft, and warm, serves as a coverlet, underneath which are tucked the plants and seeds for future bloom, and there they are sleeping and dreaming their dreams of the sunshine to come in the days of the spring.

It is not easy to keep from depression at this season. The days, now shortened to the briefest span, come tardily on, and as quickly get away again. The sun seems far off now, and its slender rays with great difficulty illuminate our sky at all. Indeed, John Keats summed December up accurately when he said:

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.

Cold, of a truth, are the dark December days. Although the average temperature is said to be thirty-nine degrees, yet, as the farmers say, 'it is sometimes too cold even to snow.'

Low hang the clouds; and if there is gloom on the spirits or mist on the mind, then the icy chill which is in the air so influences, nay, even glammers the sight that wood and hill and field alike appear to wear the weary pallor and the painful stillness of despair. In some such condition the poet of the *Seasons* must assuredly

have been when he exclaimed of these days, 'Horror wide extends his desolate domain.' An old Minnesinger said truly, 'Men frown at these phenomena.' There is no real reason, however, why the variations of December should cause such a tinge of distaste; nay, the highest testimony tells the other way. The Bard of Ayr said of the storm itself, 'The tempest's howl it soothes my soul;' while the thoughtful singer of *In Memoriam* declares that

Well roars the storm for those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm.

But the dark December days are not altogether unlovely and unattractive. The skylarks collect in flocks, the woodcocks put in an appearance, and the rooks follow the plough with a most remarkable tameness. Flowers are not entirely absent either. Byron, we know, in a satirical mood, considered it as foolish to 'seek roses in December' as to 'trust in critics;' but it is not so unwise as the poet thought to seek, for 'the Christmas rose shall blossom, though it be 'mid snows.' Other flowers, too, display themselves occasionally. True enough, the trees would be leafless, mere 'rattling branches,' as Ambrose Philips called them, 'bare ruined choirs in which the sweet birds sang,' as Shakespeare inimitably expressed it, were it not for a few sear ones which cling as if with the clutch of death; but the mistletoe berries are ripening to transparency, while the hellebore, the protected polyanthus, the sheltered snowdrop and wallflower are in bloom; and the wading birds, as Gilbert White designates them, assume their winter plumage. There are always plants and flowers of which it may be said, as Shakespeare made Perdita affirm of rosemary and rue, 'these keep seeming and savour all the winter long.'

Confidence comes to us even in what have been styled drear-nighted December days. We know that it will not always be thus. The shadows will not continue to lie at such length across our path, the birds will not perpetually sit brooding on the snow, nor the milk constantly come 'frozen home in pail.' Nay, although the pastures lie in silence, like a deep calm sea, each morn and eve brings new promise of the glory that shall be hereafter, for to the imagination, even

In cold December fragrant chaplets blow,
And heavy harvests nod beneath the snow.

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XII.—CONCLUSION.

It was during the early hours of the following morning before any of the household were astir that Agnes made her confession to her husband. Mr Esholt had slept soundly during a great part of the night, but whenever he woke up for a few minutes there was his wife by his side, smiling and ready to minister to all his requirements. When he finally awoke there was upon him a sense of deep content and restfulness; the phan-

toms, bred of weakness and much solitary brooding, which heretofore had haunted his pillow by day and flitted on huge dusky wings through his dreams by night, had vanished utterly; instead, there breathed round him soft summer airs, and all his being seemed filled with sunshine and sweet music. 'O Love, of all magicians thou art chief.'

Then it was that Agnes began to tell her tale. First of all, she told by what chance she became a listener at the interview between Wilmot and Mr Vampy; and then she went on to repeat all that passed between the two, which, with that feminine gift of memory where dialogue is concerned, she was able to give nearly word for word. After that, she proceeded to narrate how she had locked up the first bottle of medicine and had sent for another to replace it; how she had met Wilmot for a moment on the landing; and how, after much inward perturbation, she had taken upon herself to send him three words of warning. Then she sat silent, not knowing whether her husband would approve or disapprove of this last action on her part.

He had listened to her in silence, but with the deepest attention. His first words were a great relief to her. 'You did quite right, dearest, in acting as you did. You have relieved me of a disagreeable duty. It would have been most painful to me to have to tell him verbally that which three words from your pen have made known to him. Forewarned is forearmed. His hand has been forced; he must needs make his next move within the next few hours, whether he likes it or not.'

He lay silent for a little while, evidently deep in thought; then he said: 'Poor Wilmot! Poor misguided young man! With all his faults, and they are many and grievous, I cannot help pitying him. Why did he not come to me when he first found himself beginning to flounder among shoals and quicksands? A helping hand held out to him at that time might have changed the whole course of his future life. And then how attractive he was—how every one seemed to take to him! Who could have believed such depths of dissimulation—and worse—lurked under so fair an outside! That he was in monetary difficulties I had some reason to know, and my intention was to challenge him on the point to-day, or, at the latest, to-morrow; but I could never have credited that he would lend his sanction to a plot so nefarious as that propounded by his last evening's strange visitor. But "smooth runs the water where the brook is deep."'

Agnes had not yet said all that she had made up her mind to say. 'Robert, are you aware that Wilmot Burrell and I were at one time engaged?' A vivid blush dyed her face as she put the question.

'It is only since I have been ill that I have become aware of the fact,' he replied. 'When I first asked Miss Granby's permission to speak to you about marriage, she told me that you had already been engaged, but that, owing to the change in your fortunes, the person to whom your promise had been given had seen fit to change his mind. I believe that at the time I expressed my opinion of his conduct rather strongly. Not for a moment had I any suspicion that young Burrell was the man in question; had I been aware of it, as a

matter of course he would never have set foot across my threshold. On this point, as on others, I was led away by his frank, sailor-like bearing, his contagious laugh, and his manner, which seemed as open and candid as the day; no doubt also, to a considerable extent, by my predilection for one who, leaving his own qualities out of question, was the son of one of my dear brother's oldest friends. My suspicion of the truth was first aroused by some trifle, I scarcely now know what, that day at Rushmere, and I then and there made up my mind to ascertain the facts of the case. Just at that time, however, I was much put about in business matters; and shortly after, as you will remember, I was called from home; while on the heels of my return came my present illness. Still, the subject had by no means escaped my memory; but it was not till Friday in last week that I ascertained, through a confidential channel, that which I wanted to know. I will not dilate on the feelings with which I heard the news. Unwittingly, I had done you a great injury, exposed you to a great temptation. But my faith in you never wavered for an instant. "Although it was my hands that thrust her into the fiery furnace, she will emerge spotless and unscathed." That was what I said to myself times without number. I could do nothing just then, my weakness was so extreme, but I never trembled for you in the least.' He lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it with all a lover's devotion as he ceased speaking.

There was still one matter more on Agnes's mind respecting which she felt that she ought to say something to her husband, and yet she hardly knew how to begin. She wanted to tell him about the torn letter she had found in his private drawer. It had been much in her mind during her long nightwatch, but the thought of it no longer rankled there as it had before. 'It was my fault that the letter was written which brought forth such a reply,' she said to herself. 'He loved me when he married me; and had I been a different wife to him, he would never have had occasion to make a confidant of any man.'

'There is one thing more I wish to confess to you, Robert,' she said with downcast eyes, for she recognised now what a breach of confidence she had been guilty of in reading the letter at all, although at the time the temptation had proved too strong for her.

'Confess away,' he answered with that smile in his eyes which softened his face so wonderfully. 'I promise you plenary absolution before you begin.'

'You remember that day when you gave Mr Burrell your keys and sent a message by him, asking me to open the private drawer in your study and give him a certain memorandum book I should find there? Well'—

'Stop a moment. I have no recollection of sending any such message.'

'But you must have sent it, dear, otherwise how should I have known anything about it?'

'Proceed.'

'On opening the drawer I found lying close by the book I had come for a torn portion of a letter, one of the paragraphs of which caught my eye. Then my curiosity overpowered me, and I took it up and read the whole of it.'

'There was no harm in that: you are my wife.'

'It was very wrong on my part. It was a great breach of confidence.'

'Tut, tut! It was nothing.—But do you happen to remember the contents of the letter?'

Did she not! She had felt at the time as if it would be impossible for her ever to forget them. 'I read the letter more than once,' she answered, flushing a little, 'and I have a good memory.' Then she repeated the letter to him almost word for word.

'My poor darling! and this has been rankling in your mind ever since? No wonder, either.'

'Had I been the wife I ought to have been to you, dear, had I been all that you had a right to expect, the letter would never have been written which called forth that reply.'

A curious expression flitted across Mr Esholt's face. 'If you don't mind the trouble,' he said, 'I should like you to go at once and fetch me that letter.'

Three minutes later she was back again. 'The letter is no longer there,' she said a little blankly.

'Of course it isn't,' he coolly answered. 'The same hand that put it there took it away.—Do you not comprehend?'

'No,' she said with a shake of her head. 'I am very stupid, I know.'

'To speak plainly, then—no such message as the one given you by Wilmot Burrell was ever sent by me. No such letter as the one read by you was ever received by me; consequently, it could not be an answer to anything written by me. Wilmot Burrell was the author of that precious effusion, or some one else for him. It was he who put it there; and it was he who took it away after it had served his vile purpose, which was neither more nor less than to sow dissension between the woman he once professed to love, but had cast off, and the man who had befriended him and at whose table he had broken bread. This is worse, infinitely worse than all that has gone before.'

Agnes was overwhelmed—powerless to give utterance to a word. What must her husband think of her after her confession that she had taken the forged letter as being in answer to one written by him! Blind idiot that she must have been to dream for one moment that Robert Esholt would under any circumstances have penned anything which could have elicited such a reply! Oh, how she had misread him! And yet, neither by word nor look had he reproached her.

By this time it was past eight o'clock. Mr Esholt rang the bell which hung by the side of his bed. To the servant who came he said: 'Go to Mr Burrell's room and tell him that I wish to see him as soon as possible.' Then, when the door was shut, he added sternly: 'Not another hour shall he remain under this roof.'

Presently the servant came back, looking somewhat scared. 'Mr Burrell is not in his room, sir, nor anywhere about the house. His bed has not been slept in; and his carpet bag, which was in his room last night, is not there now.'

'That will do, Bridget; thank you,' said Mr Esholt. Then turning to his wife: 'It is better so,' he said. 'Your brief warning was enough.'

He has solved the difficulty after his own fashion, and in all probability we shall never see him or hear of him more.—And now,' he went on, 'I will tell you something which may perhaps surprise you a little. Mr Vampy was a private detective employed specially by me. Some doubts having arisen in the mind of the holder as to the genuineness of the bill for the two hundred and fifty pounds, it was submitted privately to Jabez Kimber, who at once pronounced it to be—what it was—a forgery. Without a hint to Burrell, he at once came to consult me in the matter. After some consideration, I determined to take up the bill, although it would not fall due for some time. I was determined to so far shield the culprit that the settlement of the affair should become a matter between himself and me alone; but at the same time I was anxious and curious to know by what means he had proposed to himself to meet the liability when it should fall due. Behind the one transaction so fortunately brought to light might possibly lurk others more dangerous still. Hence my employment of Vampy—whose real name, however, is something altogether different—and I shall no doubt receive his report of last night's interview in the course of to-day. The idea of frightening Wilmot into consenting to tamper with my medicine was an emanation of his own over-ingenious brain, and ought in itself to have aroused the other's suspicions. I can only suppose his object to have been to ascertain to what extremes Wilmot would be prepared to go in order to screen his own turpitude. But it was rather absurd to suppose that a man who had come on the errand he was presumed to have come on should happen at that particular time to have about him a drug, or essence, possessing the remarkable properties attributed to it by him, and that they should be precisely the properties needed for carrying out the object he had so insidiously suggested. I think that had I been in Burrell's place the proposition would have had too much of the air of a prearranged scheme not to make me feel sure there was something more in the background. But one can never tell. No doubt Wilmot had been goaded to the point of desperation, and was scarcely master either of his thoughts or his actions. In any case, it is just as well that he has cut the Gordian knot in the way he has.'

When Dr Pyefitt arrived two hours later, he found his patient so much better that he was quite jubilant. 'Aha!' he exclaimed as he rubbed his hands gleefully; 'our last change of medicine seems to have effected a remarkable improvement. We cannot do better than persevere in it, I think.'

'Indeed, you can't, doctor,' replied Mr Esholt with a smile. 'The last medicine has done me more good than all that went before.'

But before this Agnes had gone to her own room. She had passed through so much during the last dozen hours that she was worn out both mentally and physically; besides, as Mr Esholt sensibly remarked, if she did not take a few hours' rest now, what would she be fit for when evening should come round again?

Dr Pyefitt had not been gone many minutes, when Miss Esholt was wheeled into her brother's room, Davy having first reconnoitred to make sure that Agnes had vacated her post for the time

being. Of course the sister's first words framed themselves into an inquiry after her brother's health.

'I am better, very much better, this morning. Even Pyefitt was struck with the change.'

'I am truly rejoiced to hear it, Robert.'

'I am sure you are, Janet.—By-the-way, I had a fresh nurse last night, *vice* Mrs Jukes superseded. But probably you are aware of it already?'

'Yes. Agnes told me what she was about to do. Seeing her so self-willed in the matter, I made no attempt to dissuade her.'

'You must make it right with Mother Jukes as regards money matters. She's a good creature; but when asleep, she certainly does snore like a trooper.'

'I have something to say to you this morning, Robert, which I would much rather have left unsaid, if the affection and duty I owe you would have allowed me to do so.'

'That's rather an ominous beginning, Janet; but go on.'

'What I have to say refers to Mrs Esholt.'

'To Agnes!' He raised his eyebrows slightly, and there came into his face a look she knew well—the keen, hard, slightly aggressive look which he habitually wore when at business, and sometimes forgot to lay aside at home. 'I am all attention.'

'Yesterday evening, a stranger—a gentleman, I suppose he would term himself—called to see Mr Burrell. Wilmot conducted him to your study, where the two remained shut up together for more than half an hour. Two minutes before the stranger's arrival, Mrs Esholt entered the study; three minutes after his departure, she quitted it. Consequently, she must not only have been present at the interview, but have known beforehand at what moment the stranger might be expected, and, one may reasonably assume, have been equally well acquainted with the object that brought him here.'

'Who saw all this? From whom did you derive your information?'

'From Davy. She saw Mrs Esholt both enter and leave the study.'

'So.—Anything more?'

'There's one thing more which I think you ought to be made acquainted with. About an hour later, Mrs Esholt gave Bridget a note for Mr Burrell with special instructions that it was to be sure to reach him.'

'Anything else?'

'Nothing else, Robert. I have thought it my duty as a sister to make these circumstances known to you, more especially following as they do upon certain other circumstances which I ought, perhaps, to have brought under your notice long ago—indeed, I now see how weak it was on my part not to have done so.' She paused, as if to draw a longer breath than usual. 'Brother, from the first hour Wilmot Burrell set foot under your roof my suspicions were aroused that there was some secret understanding between him and your wife, that they had, in fact, at one time been, even if they were not still, in love with each other, and that'—

'Janet, not another word, I insist!' broke in Mr Esholt in his harshest tones. 'All that you have told me since you entered this room is already known to me.'

'I have a little history to relate to you,' resumed Mr Esholt after a silence which to one at least of the two people there must have been anything but a pleasant one; 'and it may be as well that I should tell it you now, because it will serve to open your eyes on many points respecting which I was equally as blind as yourself only a few hours ago.'

The story Mr Esholt had to tell will readily be guessed, but not so easy would it be to divine with what varying emotions his sister listened to the recital. As it happened, she had not heard of Wilmot's disappearance, and now that she was told of it, it seemed only a fitting and natural climax to the strange story which had just been poured into her ears.

'Robert,' she said after an interval, 'I shall have something to say to you and Agnes in the course of the day, but for the present I will leave you.' With that she rang for Davy.

For two hours she sat in her room deep in thought. Had she, in truth, wronged her brother's young wife in her own mind from first to last? Robert's narrative had moved her far more deeply than he suspected. The girl must love her husband, love him sincerely, devotedly, whatever her feelings might have been towards another in time gone by, otherwise she would never have acted towards him as she had; she would never have revealed to him that which she had overheard by accident unless he, and not her former lover, held whole and sole possession of her heart. Could it be possible that she, Janet Esholt, had misread this simple-minded country parson's daughter from the first? If so, what a grievous wrong had she done her!

Pride and prejudice were two important factors in Miss Esholt's mental idiosyncrasy, but dominant over both was a strong inherent sense of justice. Hitherto, she had secretly prided herself that, whatever the cost might be to herself, she had never knowingly wronged or injured any one in word or deed; but could she truthfully affirm the same thing now? From the first, she had wronged her brother's wife, if not in word or deed, then in her thoughts, which are the unwrought actions of the mind. She had seen her, as she believed, walking straight towards a precipice (the word was her own), whether consciously or unknowingly she had never cared to ask, and had uttered no warning cry, had held out no saving hand. Had that catastrophe come about which she now shuddered to contemplate, would not the recollection of it have overshadowed her last moments, and have clogged the aspirations on her dying lips?

What her brother had told her had gone a long way towards breaking down the barrier of prejudices she had erected of her own free-will between herself and Agnes, and now her strong sense of right and justice did battle with her pride, and in the end overcame it. She acknowledged to herself, not without extreme bitterness of spirit, that she had been in the wrong; but with her such an acknowledgment did not fail to bring with it an unflinching determination to make such amends as lay in her power. That morning's solitary communion with herself was one she was not likely ever to forget.

When Miss Esholt was wheeled back to her brother's room, she found Agnes there, and for

the first time in her life she was glad to see her. She had never been a woman to hesitate or beat about the bush when she saw what she deemed her duty clear before her, and she was not going to begin now. She had a disagreeable task to perform, and the sooner she got it over the better for all concerned.

'Agnes,' she began, and it was very rarely she had ever called her by that name before, 'I have to ask your forgiveness for the wrong I have done you in my thoughts. I have been unjust towards you from the first day I saw you; but I promise you I will endeavour never to be so again. I have been blinded by prejudice, but am so no longer. Robert has told me everything. From first to last you have behaved nobly, and I respect you for it. I offer you my friendship, if you care to accept it.'

Agnes was deeply moved. Tears gathered in her eyes, and it was all she could do to keep them from falling. Crossing to Miss Esholt's chair and kneeling on one knee, she took one of her wasted hands and pressed it tenderly to her cheek. 'Not your friendship only, dear Janet, but your love—a sister's love. Nothing less will satisfy me. Ah! how I have longed for it and prayed for it since the first hour I knew you.'

Miss Esholt laid her other hand, which trembled strangely, on the young wife's glossy hair. 'Who can forecast the future,' she said gently, 'or say what may or may not come to pass in the days yet unborn?'

But little more remains to be told. Through Mr Esholt's liberality, Mrs Strake was enabled to take a much larger house, and in a much superior locality to the one in which she had vegetated for so many years. She was thereby made one of the happiest of women, for her house was always full of lodgers, indeed it was a common saying with her that if she had twice as many rooms to let she could find tenants for them; but in that case it is to be feared that she would have killed herself in her anxiety to please every one. Dear, kind-hearted Miss Maria—I ask her pardon—Mrs Ludford, who spent a month in Liverpool every year, never failed, accompanied by Agnes, to call upon her, on which occasions one may be sure there was much talk over old times, and trials which had now happily become mere bitter-sweet memories of the past.

After all, the Croxton Cup was won by *Persephone*. A few days later, Mr Esholt received two hundred and fifty pounds in bank-notes in a sealed envelope, accompanied by these words: 'From one who, being tempted, fell; who wronged you, but repents; and who now bids you and yours farewell for ever.' And a farewell, indeed, it proved to be, for no further tidings ever reached the ears of our friends with regard to the after-career of Wilmot Burrell.

A few years went by, and then a tiny Janet was toddling about the house, and a small Bobby was doing his best to tyrannise over everybody; and, strange to say, no one was more completely under their sway than the Aunt Janet whom they both loved so dearly. Infant caresses and the soft kisses of baby lips had broken down the last bolts and bars of the dungeon in which for years she had sat apart from all the hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows of her kind, and had let

in the blessed sunlight and the free sweet air of heaven.

Sometimes Davry would say to her mistress: 'Them bairns—bless 'em!—twist us round their fingers just as they like, and make right-down sillies of both of us.'

Miss Esholt seemed quite content that it should be so.

CONCERNING DOLES.

FEASTING at funerals may be traced back to remote times in the history of various nations. Amongst the Jews at an early period we find a commendable custom prevailing. It was the practice when one of their race died for the friends and neighbours to prepare the feast for the burial, so that those in the house of mourning might be spared additional trouble in their days of sorrow. Under the Greeks and Romans, the feasting in course of time took the form of sumptuous banquets. A redeeming feature of the usage was the practice of giving a portion of the provisions to the poor—a charitable custom, which induced the early fathers of the Church to continue funeral feasts. 'Doles were used at funerals,' we gather from St Chrysostom, 'to procure the rest of the soul of the deceased, that he might find his judge propitious.' The Christians were not content merely to give food; other alms were also distributed. St Chrysostom observes in one of his homilies: 'Would you honour the dead? Give alms.' Under the early Christians, 'this festival,' according to Mrs Stone, in *God's Acre*, 'was of quite a religious character, generally at the tomb of the deceased. There was divine service; the holy sacrament was administered, and a collection of alms made for the poor. There was a feast, shared both by the clergy and people, but more especially bestowed on the widow and orphan. The softening influence of grief was ever directed by the Church into heart-opening channels of charity and good-will. In time the amount and quantity of such doles came to be specially described and appointed in the will of the dying person.' The distribution of doles in England at funerals has come down to comparatively recent times. Even to the present day, in not a few instances bread is given at the graves of the persons who bequeathed it, and in this manner a custom is maintained which was instituted before the Christian era.

Torchbearers usually attended funerals in the days of old; they were poor men and women, who carried lights before the dead, emblematic of the glorified existence the departed were to enjoy beyond the grave. These people often received articles of dress in addition to food and money. Some interesting details have been recorded in which torchbearers played an important part. We find it stated that 'Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, in 1399 appointed that fifteen poor men should bear torches at her funeral, each having a gown and hood lined with white, breeches of blue cloth, shoes, and a shirt, and twenty pounds amongst them.' In 1411 we learn

that 'Joan, Lady Hungerford, appointed poor women to bear torches, and each to be clad in russet with linen hoods, stockings and shoes.' Twelve was the number of people in 1428 to bear torches at Thomas, Lord Poyning's funeral, and each was to receive a gown of black cloth and twelvence in money. Coming down to 1543, we find at the funeral of Andrew, Lord Windsor, twenty-eight poor men attended, and were rewarded with a frieze gown and sixpence.

At some places, doles were sent to the homes of the inhabitants; and bearing on this subject there is an important note in the *History of Leicestershire* by Nichols. In the account of Strathern, in Framland Hundred, it is stated: 'In 1790 there were four hundred and thirty-two inhabitants, the number taken by the last person who carried about bread, which was given for dole at a funeral; a custom formerly common throughout this part of England, though now fallen much into disuse. The practice was sometimes to bequeath it by will; but, whether so specified or not, the ceremony was seldom omitted. On such occasions, a small loaf was sent to every person without any distinction of age or circumstances, and not to receive it was a mark of particular disrespect.'

Of the many doles to be distributed on the tombs of the donors, a few may be named. On the 8th of October 1708, died at Hull, William Robinson—a gentleman who had formerly filled the office of sheriff of the town, a position only held by the leading inhabitants—left sufficient money to purchase a dozen loaves of bread, costing a shilling each, to be given to twelve poor widows at his grave every Christmas Day. Money was left at the commencement of the seventeenth century by Leonard Dare for purchasing bread for the poor of South Pool. In his will, dated November 28, 1611, he directed the churchwardens on Christmas Day, Lady Day, and Michaelmas Day, 'to buy, bring, and lay on his tombstone threescore penny loaves of good wholesome bread,' and to distribute the same to the poor of the parish. If the instructions were not observed on the foregoing days, the will provided that a pound a year be paid to the mayor and burgesses of Totness. John Smith of Acklam, Yorkshire, died in 1681, and left two pounds per annum to the poor of the parish, to be paid on his tombstone. Over the remains of another Yorkshireman, in the churchyard of Kildale, is a tomb bearing an inscription as follows: 'Here lyeth the body of JOSEPH DUNN, who dyed ye 10th day of March 1716, aged 82 years. He left to ye poor of Kildale, xxs.; of Comboundale, xxs.; of Danby, xxs.; of Westerdale, xxs.: to be paid upon his gravestone by equal portions on ye 1st May and ye 11th November for ever.'

Two quaint customs are still enacted annually in London on Good-Friday. The vicar of St Bartholomew's the Great, Smithfield, drops in a row twenty-one sixpences on a certain lady's grave. The money is picked up by the same number of widows kneeling, having previously attended service at the church where a sermon is preached. The details of the other charity are singular. Peter Symonds, a native of Winchester, who followed the trade of mercer in London, by his will, dated 1586, left a sum of money for a sermon to be preached in the parish church of

All-Hallows, Lombard Street, London; and at the close of the service, sixty scholars of Christ's Hospital are to be presented with a bunch of raisins and a bright penny. He further left property for purchasing sixty loaves of bread to be given on Whitsunday to poor persons on his grave in Liverpool Street. The railway now covers the site of his tomb, and the bread is distributed in front of the schoolroom in Bishopsgate churchyard. Symonds did not forget the claims of his native city, and left to its inhabitants several charities, including the founding of an almshouse for the perpetual maintenance of six poor old unmarried men and four poor young children. He also provided for keeping a poor scholar at Oxford and one at Cambridge. Respecting another of his bequests, some strange directions were contained in his will, as follows: 'Leave was to be obtained from the bishop or the dean to place his picture in the body of the cathedral, with a small table before it, on which were to be placed twelve penny loaves of good wheaten bread, which immediately after the service were to be given to twelve poor persons at the will of the mayor; except on one Sunday in each quarter, when the bishop or dean was to nominate the recipients.'

At a little later period, another remarkable bequest was made to the city of Winchester. Richard Budd, a native, and a resident there, left a sum of money to the dean and chapter on condition that they had tolled the great bell of the cathedral, and had read certain prayers prior to the execution of condemned prisoners in the city.

Robert Dowe, on the 8th of May 1705, gave to the vicar and churchwardens of St Sepulchre's Church, London, fifty pounds on the understanding that through all futurity they should cause to be tolled the big bell the night before the execution of the condemned criminals in the prison of Newgate. After tolling the bell, the sexton came at midnight, and after ringing a hand-bell, repeated the following lines:

All you that in the condemned hold do lie,
Prepare you, for to-morrow you shall die:
Watch all and pray; the hour is drawing near
That you before the Almighty must appear:
Examine well yourselves; in time repent,
That you may not to eternal flames be sent:
And when St Sepulchre's bell to-morrow tolls,
The Lord above have mercy on your souls!

Next morning, when the sad procession passed the church on its way to Tyburn, a brief pause was made at the gate of St Sepulchre's Church, and the clergyman said prayers for the unfortunate criminals, and at the same time the passing-bell tolled its mournful notes.

Sir Roger de Tychborne was a valiant knight who lived in the days of the second Henry. He resided in a stately Hall in Hampshire. His wife, Lady Mabella, was the means of the celebrated 'Tichborne Dole' being instituted. 'This dame,' so runs the old legend, 'being bedridden and extremely ill, petitioned her husband for the means of establishing a dole of bread, to be given to all poor persons who might ask for it on every succeeding feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He promised her as much ground as she could walk round in the neighbourhood of the house while a certain brand or billet was

burning, supposing that, from her long infirmity, she would only be able to go round a small portion of his property. The venerable dame, however, ordered her attendants to convey her to the corner of the park, where, being deposited on the ground, she seemed to acquire a renovation of strength, and to the surprise of her anxious and admiring lord, who began to wonder where the pilgrimage might end, she crawled round several rich and goodly acres. The field which was the scene of her extraordinary feat retains the name of the "Crawls" to this day. It is situated at the entrance of the park, and contains an area of twenty-three acres. Her task being completed, she was reconveyed to her chamber, when, summoning her family to her bedside, she predicted the prosperity of the family while that annual dole existed; and left her malediction on any one of her descendants who should be so mean or covetous as to discontinue it, prophesying that when this happened, the family would become extinct from failure of heirs-male, and that this would be foretold by a generation of seven sons being followed immediately after by a generation of seven daughters and no son.'

In years ago, about nineteen hundred small loaves of bread were baked and given to those who made application for them, and if any persons remained unserved after the doles had been distributed, they were presented with twopence each. Men and women came from all parts of the country; and even a week before the doles were given away, a number of folks assembled in the neighbourhood to await the event. It gave rise to much rioting; and about the commencement of the present century, the doles were discontinued, and in their place a sum of money was given to the neighbouring poor. Superstitious people used to preserve the bread as a certain remedy for several ailments, notably ague.

In Anthony Trollope's novel *Barchester Towers*, there is a graphic picture of the Hospital of St Cross, near Winchester. It is called 'The Almshouse of Noble Poverty,' and no wayfarer has presented himself at the door of it since the days of King Stephen to the present hour who has not been entitled to receive a meal of bread and beer. The stranger has only to knock to receive a horn of ale and a dole of bread, known as the 'wayfarers' dole.' These charities were once common in this country; but we believe the Hospital of St Cross is the only one which remains. In the days of yore, a charity existed at Sprotborough, near Doncaster, somewhat similar to that at Winchester. On a cross bearing a brass plate were the following lines:

Whoso is hungry, and lists well to eat,
Let him come to Sprotborough for his meat;
And for a night and for a day,
His horse shall have both corn and hay,
And none shall ask him when he goes away.

Mr Tuke of Wath, near Rotherham, died in the year 1810, and he bequeathed one penny to every child that attended his funeral. Nearly seven hundred were present. To every poor woman in Wath, ten shillings and sixpence. Instructions were left by him for the ringers to ring one peal of grand bobs, which were to strike off while he was being put into the grave. He left seven of the oldest navigators one guinea for 'puddling him

up' in his grave. Several other bequests were included in his will, including forty dozen penny loaves to be thrown from the church leads at twelve o'clock on Christmas Day for ever.

Doles of bread are given every Sunday in the parish church of Hessele and in several other churches in the neighbourhood of Hull. We have observed the same custom in other parts of the country.

Doles of fish are very numerous, and with particulars of a few examples we close our paper. John Thake, in his will, drawn up in 1537, left his house and land on condition that his heirs, annually on Friday, in the first week in Lent, gave to the poor of Clavering, in Essex, one barrel of white herrings and a cade of red herrings. At Dronfield, Derbyshire, in 1577, Richard Stevenson left half a hundred of herrings, and as much bread as could be made from a 'strike' of good wheat. The doles were to be distributed every Friday during Lent for ever. At Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, in 1664, David Slater gave money to purchase bread and herrings and a pair of kid gloves annually for the parson of the parish for the time being. The gloves were to be purchased ready for the first Sunday in Lent. At Newmarket, in Suffolk, there was a bequest of fish and fagots.

A FORECASTLE YARN.

THE long hot day was over, and with the setting sun had come a breeze, before which the good ship *Bristol* was silently slipping through the oily-looking water. Six bells had just been struck; the saloon was almost deserted, and the poop was peopled with weary passengers, revelling in the soft cool wind and the departure of our enemy the sun. The maindeck was alive with the midship passengers, and the watch on deck, who, mixing indiscriminately, lounged and chatted and smoked and slept as their inclination moved them.

I had come up on the forecandle-head to enjoy a quiet cigar and to delight my soul with the wondrous beauty of the night. Up here, everything was quiet, and I was alone, save for the man on the lookout, who leaned on the opposite rail as motionless as a statue, and evidently occupied with his own thoughts. Looking aft, the ship was almost in darkness, being shadowed by the mountain of canvas which rose dim and mysterious towards the sky. The murmur of voices was hushed into a kind of lullaby, under whose drowsy music both ship and ocean seemed to be dreaming. Overhead, the tropical stars hung out their white lamps against the violet sky, and sent long trails of light glittering across the dark water until they broke in crystal shivers on the hull. The light from the open ports of the saloon looked hot and yellow, and only enticed a dull reflection from the sea. Some one, who was playing on the piano in the music-room, had drifted into the loved strain of *Home, sweet Home*, and was sending it stealing out over the sea like a benediction. Round the sharp cut-water the spray was rising in a fairy fountain, whose drops rang like a chime of tiny silver bells as they met the waves again. Down in the cool depths a

shoal of fish were playing round the ship's head, looking, as they moved through the phosphorus-laden water, like fish-shaped fragments of solid rainbow gone mad.

Thus I rested and was at peace, until my reverie was broken by the sound of footsteps ascending the forecandle ladder. I turned, and was face to face with my cabin companion, Mr Ralph Stevenson. 'Glorious night, isn't it?' he said.

'Magnificent,' I answered; and then added: 'It's not only the present delight that I am thankful for, but for the memory it will be in days to come; for you know "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever."'

'I don't know about that,' he rejoined; 'it depends wholly on the circumstances under which one has seen it. Do you know this lovely night has called to my mind one of the most unpleasant incidents in my life?'

'Indeed: what was that?'

'Sit down here on this coil of rope, and if you care to hear it, I will tell it as we smoke.'

I gladly accepted his offer, and Stevenson began.

When I was a young fellow, years ago in London, I was in the employ of an uncle of mine who was at the head of a large firm of ship-owners. My health had broken down owing to hard work and a severe season, and the doctor ordered me a long rest and a sea-voyage. The firm at once gave me the required leave, and shipped me off as sole passenger in one of their best trading clippers. We had a fine passage, and arrived safely in the magnificent harbour of Rio de Janeiro. The port was crowded, and we had to anchor outside and wait our turn to be berthed. We lay for some days, during which the heat was intense; when, all unannounced, there burst over the city and the shipping one of those terrible outbreaks of yellow fever that are so common there. The disease spread with fearful rapidity, and soon our ship was one among the crowd lying at the quarantine anchorage and flying the hateful yellow flag.

It was terrible to lie day after day on the glassy sea and watch the doomed city through the haze, and the ships nearer at hand. Constantly the yellow flags were fluttering down to half-mast, as a signal to the shore-boats to come off and take away the bodies for interment. All our crew had deserted at the first, with the exception of the captain; the carpenter, a tall thin Scotchman from the Clyde; and a black cook, named Jacob. These with myself formed the whole ship's company. Suddenly the captain was struck down, and by influence we managed to get him taken off to one of the hospitals ashore. Next day, Chips—as they always call the carpenter at sea—was laid low. Jacob came and told me Chips was in his bunk, very bad, so I went on the maindeck and visited him. I found him raving in fever. We flew the signal for the doctor. After a while he came off, said it was a bad case, prescribed, gave directions as to medicine and disinfectants, and departed. Jacob and I took turns in watching poor Chips. On the evening of the next day I was pacing the poop, utterly weary and sick at heart. The red-hot sun went down at last, and the stars came out. The

night was brilliantly calm and still. The lights on the esplanade of Rio began to twinkle out into the darkness. Far above them on the overhanging terraces, clusters of lights—marking the position of countless villas—hung on the blackness of the steep background like diamonds set in jet. The dim outlines of the huge mountains which rise behind the harbour loomed through the darkness in the faint starlight. The Corcovada and the Gavea could be seen head and shoulders above the rest. Towards the open sea the black form of the Pao de Assacur, which guards the entrance of the harbour, stood like a solemn sentinel. Near it could be descried the glimmering of the light-houses, far away at the heads. I paced the deck trying to fight against a feeling of utter lassitude and depression. I had a terrible headache, a taste like blood in my mouth, and felt aching and feverish all over.

Presently the black cook Jacob came on to the quarter-deck, and touching his cap, said: 'Please, sir, won't you come down and have some tea? It has been ready for half an hour.'

'Thanks, Jacob.—But how is Chips?'

His black face became grave at once as he replied: 'Please, sir, he died nearly two hours ago; but I did not like to disturb you, so I laid him straight and still, tied a handkerchief round his poor thin face, and came away softly and shut the door.' Here the poor fellow's voice broke into a sob.

'Make the flag half-mast, Jacob.'

'No good now, sir; they won't come off till daylight.'

'Oh yes, you are right; I forgot it was dark.'

'But come and have something to eat, sir,' persisted the faithful fellow; 'you must be ready to drop.'

'All right, Jacob; I will,' I answered; and then, as he turned to go, I said: 'Jacob, come aft and have your tea in the saloon. To-night, we may as well keep each other's spirits up.'

'Thank you, sir,' he said, and disappeared.

After a little while, I went down into the saloon; and had the circumstances been different, I would have roared with laughter at the scene which met my eyes. Jacob had undergone quite a transformation, and how he managed it in the time, I was at a loss to guess. He was rigged out in his best suit, and in all the glory of a dress shirt of startling whiteness decorated with diamond studs. He had not seated himself until I arrived, and stood contemplating himself and his surroundings in the mirror over the sideboard, his ebony countenance shining with ineffable satisfaction. All through the meal, his look of self-satisfied importance amused me greatly; but when tea was over, the old feeling of depression returned with renewed force. King Death reigned over the ship, and the majesty and terror of his presence were all around.

'Come into my cabin, Jacob,' said I, 'when you have cleared up, and we will have a smoke together.'

He agreed cheerfully, and I left the saloon. My cabin was under the break of the poop, and had a window looking right on to the maindeck, as well as the usual seaward porthole. Before lighting my lamp I looked out at the quiet ship. The full tropical moon had risen while we were at our meal, and filled the deck and the rigging with

her white radiance. About ten yards from the window stood the deckhouse where the dead man was lying, and the moonlight glittered on its window and the brasswork of the door. While I looked, I wondered, 'Shall I die, too, during this awful visitation?' Then I thought I will just write directions as to what is to be done with my clothes and letters, now while I can.

I sat down at a small table at the other side of the cabin, kindled the little brass swing-lamp, and began to write. I had hardly begun when Jacob knocked at the door, and when I called, advanced into the room pipe in hand. Asking him to sit down, I told him I would finish writing soon. He went over, and sitting at the open window, began to smoke. The night was so utterly still that the scratching of my pen seemed loud and aggressive. Suddenly I was startled by Jacob's pipe going crash on to the floor of the cabin; and looking at him, I saw that his black face had become a light gray colour and that his eyes were starting out of his head. Before I could move or speak I heard the squeak of a door-handle softly turned. I crossed beside the negro, and gazed at the door of the house which contained the dead carpenter. As I looked, my heart ceased to beat, and my hair stood up. The door slowly opened, and out into the bright moonlight came the tall figure of the dead man! It seemed to pause and hesitate for a moment, and then advanced with muffled tread straight to the saloon entrance and my cabin. The moon shone full on the ghastly face, bound about with an old red handkerchief, from which the unclosed dead eyes shone as from under a cowl. On it came, nearer and nearer, while I remained frozen with horror. We heard the soft footstep approach the passage door, and then a heavy fall, and all was still.

At that moment Jacob gave a fearful shriek and fainted. This brought me to my senses; and stepping over the prostrate black, I seized the lamp and hurried out. There lay the ghastly figure across the doorway. I had not been dreaming, then, and it was no fancy. I almost dropped the lamp in my renewed terror. But I braced myself together, and stooping over the body, turned it on its back. As I did so, a faint sigh came from the white lips. I was a man again, and roared: 'Jacob, you idiot, come here; the carpenter is not dead at all.'

Well, my story is out. We carried him back to bed, and nursed him tenderly, and in the morning the doctor came; but we said nothing to him about the performance of the night before. The fact was, Jacob had mistaken the deadly trance of the yellow fever for actual death; and I, being so broken down with watching, had never questioned his statement.

Poor Chips had revived a little, and in the strength of delirium had wandered on deck; and so it all came about as I have told you.—Would you believe it? That carpenter afterwards recovered, and is alive at the present day. The captain, too, got better. Neither Jacob nor I caught the fever; and not many weeks later, we left that accursed place, and were bowling along for dear old England. A soft still night at sea like this always makes me think of that adventure, and I do not relish it even yet.

One—two, three—four, five—six, seven—rang out from the poop. The watch suddenly drops

his musing and answers on the deep-toned forecastle bell. I hop off the coil of rope and remark: 'I say, Stevenson, your wretched story has given me cold shivers all down my back, and I shall have the nightmare every night for the next month. Let us go to the ladies on the quarter-deck and try to forget it.'

He laughingly assents, and we throw our cigars into the sea and join the merry crowd aft.

APT ILLUSTRATIONS.

'SITTING on the fence' is rather a happy Americanism to express the position of politicians who are ready to go back or forward, to jump down on this side or that, as circumstances suggest.

'A scheme to enable the wealthy to spend several hundred pounds for diamonds and dresses in order to raise a few hundred pence for the poor,' is not a bad hit at a charity ball.—A comedy has been wittily likened to a cigar. If it's good, every one wants a box; if it's bad, no amount of puffing will make it draw.

A youngster who saw a steamer for the first time, exclaimed: 'Look! There's a railway-engine having a bathe!'—A locomotive has been called a professional place-hunter, and an underlined article. A school-girl defined a bustle as a 'hollow mockery,' and a boy described a lawsuit as the things a policeman wears.—A little girl was heard to say to her favourite doll: 'You know, dollie, if first you cry and then you smile, a rainbow will come on your face.'—Children have often a happy knack of making apt illustrations. A boy on being asked to describe a kitten, said: 'A kitten is remarkable for rushing like mad at nothing whatever, and stopping before it gets there.' The children at a Sunday school being asked, among other questions, what bearing false witness against one's neighbour meant, a pert little girl replied: 'It is when nobody hain't done nothing, and somebody goes and tells.'

That homely dish, tripe, has been compared to 'a specimen of inferior sponge;' while the useful article the needle has been called a rent-collector.—'The edge of night' is a provincial phrase for just before dark; and an adder is a polite euphemism for one who enlarges upon the truth.—Lies, we are told, are falsehoods that have been found out; gossip means putting two and two together and making five of them.—In the matter of speed there is great similarity between a flash of lightning and a bit of scandal, and it has been truly remarked that an unkind word easily falls from the mouth, but six coach-horses cannot draw it back again.

A small boy's idea of a reporter is summed up in the words: 'Any one who knows a thing before it happens.' One of those imaginative gentlemen in noticing a grocery shop kept by a woman, said: 'Her tomatoes are as red as her cheeks, her indigo as blue as her eyes, and her pepper as hot as her temper.'—More curious was the eulogy of a poetical lover, who, writing to his sweetheart and expatiating upon his affection for her, described his heart as being rolled out flat

like a pancake and folded round hers.—In the fashionable vocabulary, the bride may be described as a peg on which finery of all kinds is hung; the bridegroom, a sober, black object following the bride, of no account in particular, yet without whom there would be no fuss, and the fun could not go on. Matrimony has many similes. To the physician it may appear like an inverted fever, which begins with warmth and ends with chill; to the chemist, a simple affinity; the druggist, a cooling powder; the lawyer, a legal contract; the merchant, a speculation, as often unlucky as not; the poet, a romance which passes through several editions; the actor, a tragi-comedy which is always applauded by the public; the musician, a concert in which love plays the lute, the neighbours the trumpet, and the husband the solo cornet; and finally, to the soldier, matrimony will be a campaign which sometimes extends to a seven years', and sometimes to a thirty years' war.

A certain nobleman once said that social happiness consisted in being asked everywhere and going nowhere. Health, which is such an important factor in our happiness, has been defined as that state in which the body is not consciously present to us; in which it is joy to see, to think, to feel, to be; the state in which work is easy, and duty not over-great a trial; the state in which one goes forward on the journey of life, getting and giving joy. This is the secret of happiness, as we soon find from experience.—What is an apt illustration of a secret? Anything that has been made known to everybody in a whisper.—And what is experience? A poor little hut constructed from the ruins of the palace of gold and marble called our illusions.—A not unhappy illustration of the height of impudence is the calling up of one doctor to learn the address of another.

The ridiculous is memory's most adhesive plaster, and nonsense was well defined by Dr Johnson when he said: 'Sir, it is nonsense to bolt a door with a boiled carrot.'—The same authority, speaking of a quarrelsome fellow, said: 'If he had two ideas in his head they would fall out with each other.'—That obnoxious creature the prig has been defined as an animal who is overfed for its size. Another nuisance, a bore, is thus summed up in rhyme: 'Do you ask me what a bore is? I will tell you who is such; 'tis the one who knows too little, 'tis the one who knows too much.'—A bigot is a man who doesn't believe in allowing other dogs to wag their own tails in their own particular way.—A genius was pithily described by an old lady of great experience as 'a boarding-house keeper—as a man who knows more than he can find out, spills "vittles" on his clothes, and doesn't pay his board regularly.'—The clever wife of a Professor in a Western college once wrote, in one of those confession books where people put down their opinions on all sorts of subjects, in answer to the question, 'What is your idea of a heroine?'—'An educated woman who does her own housework.'

Goethe says of Shakespeare: 'His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hours like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible.'—John Stuart Mill aptly illustrates the difference between Science and Art: 'Science is a collection of truths; Art, a body of rules. The

language of Science is: This is or This is not; This does or does not happen. The language of Art is: Do this; avoid that. Science takes cognisance of a phenomenon, and endeavours to discover its law; Art proposes to itself an end, and looks out for means to effect it.'

Voltaire describes a physician as an unfortunate gentleman expected every day to perform a miracle, namely, to reconcile health with intemperance.—A female doctor has been punningly defined as a woman with a *patient* turn of mind.—An Irishman's idea of a rich man is one who bites off more than he can chew, and a poor man as one who chews more than he can bite off. Allusion to a son of Erin brings to mind the remark of an experienced landlady, who observed: 'I always notice that the Irishmen begin to live on the first-floor, and end in the garret; the Scotchmen begin in the garret, and end on the first-floor.'

Some odd but apt illustrations are the following: 'It is no great credit for the worm to turn when stepped upon, remarks a philosopher: a barrel hoop will do the same thing.'—'Faith is sometimes personified as a drenched female clinging to a sea-washed rock,' says an observer. 'But a better personification would be, a bald-headed man buying a bottle of patent hair-restorer.' Such a simpleton should be classed amongst the 'natural fools' described by Fuller as persons whose heads are sometimes so little that there is no room for wit, and sometimes so long that there is no wit for so much room.

An old judge told a young lawyer that he would do well to pick some of the feathers from the wings of his imagination and stick them into the tail of his judgment.—A servant who plumed himself upon being employed in a genteel family was asked the definition of the term. 'Where they have two kinds of wine, and the gentleman swears,' was the reply.—A curious description of his experience was given by a sailor, who on being asked to explain the difference between a hurricane and a typhoon, said: 'In a hurricane, the wind blows as hard as it can—right straight along; but in a typhoon, just as it is blowing its hardest, it gives an awful jerk.'

American advertisements are often very amusing in their attempts to illustrate aptly the art of puffing. For example a vendor of a new tobacco thus describes it: 'It is like your first love—fresh, genial, and rapturous. Like that, it fills up all the cravings of your soul.' The author of that advertisement would no doubt agree with the statement, that the tradesman who does not advertise liberally has been very appropriately compared to a man who has a lantern but who is too stingy to buy a candle. A man who is neither a free-trader nor a protectionist thus illustrates his charitable feelings towards his neighbour: 'I should like to have a hole in my fence big enough to let my hens get into my neighbour Jones's garden, but too small to allow neighbour Jones's hens to get into my garden.'—An hotel-keeper's idea of a pessimist is a man who would find fault with heaven, if he ever got there.—A humorist explained the meaning of a 'stony glare' to his little son as the expression which comes over a man's face in church when the contribution box is held before him and he has neglected to provide himself with a three-penny piece.'—'Dinah,

why doan you nebber wear white clo'es?' inquired one coloured lady of another.—'White clo'es!' was the reply. 'D'you think I want to look like a fly in a cream-jug?'

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ONE of the most remarkable enterprises in the history of geographical discovery has just been brought to a successful conclusion; and although we have not yet received full particulars concerning it, these will doubtless come to hand before long. We allude to Dr Nansen's remarkable journey across Greenland from east to west. The novel point in this journey is that it was undertaken on foot, but the feet were armed with *skydders*, or snow-shoes, which those of our readers who have been to Norway will recognise as the same six and seven feet long runners which are used in that country by sportsmen in pursuing various kinds of game over the snowfields. Dr Nansen happens to be the champion snow-shoe skater of the North, and it was his idea that the adoption of this novel mode of locomotion would solve several difficulties in his way. These anticipations have been realised, for a telegram has arrived saying that the journey has been actually accomplished; but as the last vessel from Greenland had left when the party of explorers arrived at their destination, they will probably be unable to reach Europe until the navigation is again open in the ensuing spring.

Professor Lanza lately read a paper before the Boston Society of Arts upon the important question of Heating Railway Cars. Our readers well know that a great many accidents in America have been intensified in their horrors by cars catching fire from the stoves that are commonly used in that country, and the plan of heating by steam generated by the locomotive is fast superseding the older method. Professor Lanza states that experiments show that a very small percentage of the steam generated by the engine is required for heating purposes. The supply-pipe should not be less than one inch and a half in diameter, and connections between the carriages should consist of rubber tubes. The steam should be used direct, as all attempts to utilise the exhaust from the engine have failed. The greatest difficulty that has been met with in applying this method of heating cars is the condensation which takes place in the pipes; but a method has been found for obviating this by the interposition of suitable traps. An Act of Congress forbidding the use of ordinary stoves in railway trains will presently come into force.

An uncommon accident, but not the first of its kind, is reported in the *Railroad Gazette*. This accident occurred in the Hoosac Tunnel, and was caused by the accumulation of vapours from passing locomotives; no fewer than sixty-nine workmen having been rendered insensible by this means. Luckily, the state of affairs was discovered, and further traffic through the tunnel was at once stopped, otherwise the loss of life would have been considerable, as the men actually were lying across the track. Happily, the victims were rescued in time, and no loss of life was incurred. This accident will serve to remind

Londoners of the risks they incur in a minor degree by travelling underground under present conditions of locomotion. And we believe the Directors of the Metropolitan Railway are fully alive to the necessity of providing some means of driving their trains other than by the steam-engine. Experiments have already been made with compressed-air engines, but there is a likelihood that electricity will eventually be employed for the purpose. Some very costly experiments have already been carried out in this direction upon the Metropolitan Railway, and the Directors, it is said, will shortly meet to come to a decision regarding this very important matter. It is probable that their action will be hastened by the consideration that cheap omnibus fares have tempted a number of their old passengers to take the more agreeable open-air route.

A great deal of correspondence has recently arisen as to the results obtained by the Competitive Examination system, and it is the opinion of most experts that this system fails in bringing the best man to the front. But although a great many condemn the system, they feel that they are not able to suggest anything which will satisfactorily supersede it. We are of opinion that if a Scientific Commission were appointed to consider the whole subject, a series of tests might be arranged which would effectually measure the brain-power of candidates for our different public appointments. The present system of cramming for examinations is certainly altogether wrong, for there are many men who possess the capability for passing a difficult examination, and there their talents cease. On the other hand, many men of higher attainments do not figure well at these examinations, often from nervousness, and also because their talents do not lie in the direction of assimilating knowledge from the close study of books. Still, they may have powers of observation and knowledge of men and things which will make them far more valuable public servants than if they were simply crammed with book-lore. We have already the means of testing the accuracy of sight and hearing by scientific means, and it might be possible to devise instruments which would show in a marked manner the amount of brain-power in different individuals.

In spite of the efforts of many thoughtful people to induce ladies to discard the use of dead birds as ornaments to their headgear, we observe with regret that these sad emblems of slaughter are still worn. A writer in the *Hospital* points out the cruelty of this senseless fashion. He says that most of the birds so utilised are females, and are taken in the nesting season, for at that period the feathers are more soft and beautiful; so that those who are ignorant and cruel enough to adopt these ornaments may be informed that their victim is often the mother of a nestful of helpless young, and that they have been left in the nest to die of starvation. Surely those who are members of what is called by courtesy the 'gentler sex' should not be blind to such a consideration as this.

Although much has been written on the subject of arsenical wall-papers and textile fabrics, it would appear that the custom of employing poisonous colours is by no means a thing of the past. The public analyst of Paddington has recently published some information upon this

subject. He has examined, he tells us, a number of imitation Indian muslins and cretonnes, and he found that twenty-three per cent. of these contained arsenic in an appreciable quantity; the colours in which the poison was found being principally terra-cotta reds and gall-nut browns. He also made experiments with a view to find out at what temperature these fabrics would give off arsenical vapours; but these experiments only gave negative results. In spite of this, he quotes two cases brought to him by medical men, in which well-marked symptoms of poisoning were ascribed to the use of these coloured fabrics; in one of these cases, several work-girls employed in making up the material being taken ill with all the symptoms of arsenical poisoning. He attributes this result to the fact that in the work-room the material was pressed with irons, which had a far higher temperature than that used in his experiments. The same authority also tells us that he found arsenic in a glazed cardboard box of a green colour which had contained chocolate. Without wishing to be an alarmist, he points out that individuals can do little in stopping this wholly unnecessary use of virulent poison, and he very rightly suggests that the law should make the manufacturer answerable for the evil.

In the Report of the United States Forestry Department, crude creosote is greatly recommended for its valuable antiseptic properties. It is shown that it is an efficient poison for both animal and vegetable organisms. But apart from its excellent service as an insecticide, it represents one of the best means of preserving timber. Painted upon wood or metal, it effectually protects both from damp or dry-rot; and if forced into the wood under pressure, it carries its preserving properties to every portion of the substance so treated.

Sir Robert Ball, the Astronomer-Royal for Ireland, in the course of a recent lecture on Comets testified to the useful aid which the Electric Telegraph rendered in the quick notification to the different observatories of the world of the discovery of any of those erratic bodies. He pointed out that in spite of the well-known care exercised by both transmitting and receiving clerks, the technical particulars which gave the exact position of the comet were often rendered unintelligible. To remedy this, a simple and most ingenious code has been arranged, by which the position of the wanderer in space is indicated by a single word. This is how it is done: A certain edition of a standard dictionary is used as a master-key to the code, and a copy of the volume is kept at each observatory. Now, suppose that an observer receives a telegram containing the single word 'Umbrella,' he turns to his dictionary, and finds that this word is found on, say page 143, and is forty-two lines from the top of the page. Translated into astronomical language, this means that a comet has been discovered in the position indicated by 143° 42'. The dictionary is certainly put to a use here that its compiler never anticipated.

A Belgian officer has devised a new form of fort, which will probably cause a revolution in the science of fortification. The particulars of this singular construction we give in a condensed form from a full account which recently appeared in

the French scientific journal *La Nature*. The fort, so far as its outward appearance is concerned, is a huge molehill constructed of concrete, and rising but little above the surface of the ground where it is built. On this mound, but flush with its upper surface, are three armour-clad turrets, each containing two powerful guns; four small turrets which can be moved up and down by hydraulic agency, and which contain machine guns; and finally, three conning turrets, which can be used for general observation, or for electric search-lights at night. The lower part of the fort is burrowed out like a veritable molehill, and contains magazines, provision-rooms, officers' rooms, &c. Entrance to the fort is obtained by means of a passage which is several yards below the surface of the earth, and the length and contour of which are of course governed by local circumstances. The door of this passage is of solid construction, is worked by hydraulic means, and is commanded by the machine guns in the turrets above. Altogether, the structure is as impregnable as it can be made. It has been evolved out of the necessity of providing adequate means of resisting the impact of the huge projectiles now in use, against which old-fashioned fortifications are all but useless.

Professor Spring of Liège has been making some curious and interesting experiments relating to the effect of compression upon metallic powders. With a simple piece of apparatus, consisting of a metal block in two parts, but held together by a removable collar, and a cylindrical rod working in a cavity in that block, any amount of pressure could be brought to bear upon a substance placed within the space indicated. With a pressure applied to the rod of thirteen tons to the square inch, lead in grains was compressed into a homogeneous mass; while by increasing the pressure, the metal was forced out as a thin sheet through the crack which marked the division of the block, the pressure-rod being forced completely into the empty cavity. As we have seen, lead-powder required a pressure of thirteen tons to render it into a solid mass. Tin particles were found to unite in the same manner at a pressure of nineteen tons; zinc required just double that pressure; while aluminum and bismuth yielded at the same pressure. Copper was solidified at a pressure of thirty-three tons to the square inch.

According to *Iron*, the surveyors of a railway which is projected between Kansas City and Mexico have come upon a tract of country which presents remarkable if not unique features. Here is a sea of black volcanic glass which has been chilled during agitation in some long-forgotten era, and which now stands up in crested ridges from ten to twelve feet in height. This mass of obsidian or vitreous stone forms a band about forty miles long, with a width of from one to ten miles. On either side of it the country is of the most barren and desolate description, the soil consisting of nothing but fine white ash. To the north of this lava-stream, the ruins of a city, known to the early Spanish explorers as Gran Guivera, were come upon by the surveying party. These ruins have not often been visited, for they are far out of the usual tracks, and water cannot be obtained within forty miles of their site. The city consists of stone buildings of large size, and has evidently at one time been in the centre

of a dense population. The presumption is that the city was overwhelmed by a violent volcanic outburst, which destroyed its inhabitants and diverted its water-supply.

On the 'Fairy Rocks,' Nova Scotia, certain hieroglyphic characters of very old date have been cut. The markings are about one-sixteenth of an inch in depth, and are cut on a surface of polished slate. The Smithsonian Institution at Washington has sent out an expedition to Nova Scotia to study this strange handwriting on the wall, with a view to discover whether it may lead to anything fresh with regard to the early history of America.

An electrical fire-engine has recently been invented, which certainly seems to have many advantages over the ordinary steamer, provided that the necessary current is at hand to work it. This current can be obtained from tapping the wires which supply street-lamps, or the engine can bring accumulators or secondary batteries with it from the engine-house. With such a motive-power, the engine can be started at once at full speed. It is of less weight than an ordinary steam fire-engine, while it is noiseless and cheap. These are advantages indeed; but until the electric current comes into more common use, we must be content with steam fire-engines. We have an example here of a good invention coming a little before its time.

The *Journal of the Society of Arts* gives a very interesting account of the great industry of Bath, in Somersetshire—namely, the quarrying of the famous Bath stone, which forms such a valuable building material. There are edifices still standing which were built in the early portion of the Christian era of this stone, which is remarkable alike for its warm-toned colour, its durability, and its easy working. Among these old buildings may be named the Roman baths at Bath itself; the Saxon church at Bradford-on-Avon (date 705 A.D.); and Lacock Abbey, which dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. The stone was used for merely local purposes, until, in 1841, the long Box Tunnel was made by Brunel for the Great Western Railway, when that famous boring revealed the existence of the Box and Corsham beds of stone, which are both valuable and extensive. The so-called quarries partake more of the character of mines, for a heading is driven into the side of a hill where the stone is found, and from that heading stalls are cut on either side. The blocks are taken out as large as possible, and are detached from the parent rock by the use of the pick and wedge.

The St Catherine's Point lighthouse, on the south coast of the Isle of Wight, is now illuminated by perhaps the most powerful electric light which has yet been applied to such a purpose, its luminosity being estimated by the Deputy-master of the Trinity House at rather more than seven million candle-power. The maintenance of such a light requires a powerful dynamo, and a steam-engine to drive it, and at St Catherine's lighthouse these necessary aids are in duplicate, in case of a breakdown. Even the old oil-light which electricity has superseded is kept in reserve, in case, by any unlooked-for accident, it should be needed. This is the fourth English lighthouse which has been provided with electrical gear, the other three being at Souther Point, on the coast of

Durham; at the Lizard, on the Cornish coast; and at the South Foreland, where the Trinity House experiments were carried out a short time ago.

An American inventor has patented an attachment to the ordinary bicycle which will enable that popular machine to be used on snow-covered ground, or even upon ice. The smaller wheel at the back of the machine is enclosed in a shoe, or runner, which slides over the slippery surface, the wheel itself being bound to the backbone of the bicycle. To the driving-wheel are attached at intervals little clamps with projecting flanges, which bite the ice, and so prevent the wheel from racing round without doing any practical work, as the wheels of a locomotive are often seen to do on a slippery rail. These clamps are so arranged as not to interfere with the working of the brake. Bicycling on the ice will probably now become a favourite amusement, should the nature of the coming winter admit of its practice.

We have already, says *Nature*, called attention to the fact that an effort is being made to secure for Bedford College (for ladies), York Place, Baker Street, London, new chemical and physical laboratories. The College has been among the most successful of the institutions which send up graduates to the science degrees at the University of London; but its students have hitherto been severely handicapped by the inadequacy of the laboratory accommodation. The opportunity has occurred of securing fresh building-ground adjoining the College, and plans have been prepared for the proposed additional laboratories. Bedford College is the only institution exclusively for ladies which provides first-class practical instruction of this kind.

Some experiments which have lately been conducted by the Health Board of New York indicate that steam is a far more effective agent in the destruction of disease germs than dry heat. These experiments were made with a view of testing the best means of disinfecting the clothing of fever-patients, the fabrics operated upon being placed in a closed tank. The steam had not any destructive effect upon the fabrics treated, except that in some cases the colours were altered or mixed. The Health Department of New York now collect free of all charge clothing and bedding which need disinfection. The articles are collected in iron cages, which are put bodily into the disinfecting tank, while the key of the locked cage remains in the possession of the owner of the goods.

WHAT LITTLE HANDS CAN DO.

EVERY year the ingenuity and the generosity of countless children are shown in the gift of an abundance of clothing and playthings to the suffering little ones in the hospitals. In hundreds of cases these Christmas presents are the work of their own hands; and it is perfectly amazing the things the little hands can do in cleverness and kindness. Children are in general called thoughtless; but if it comes in one's way to see much of their work for the hospitals, it leaves one a very high and beautiful idea of the amount of heart that is hidden under the thoughtless ways.

For weeks, or rather, indeed, for months before

Christmas the gay heads and the little hands all over the land are busy, in leisure moments, inventing and working out brilliant ideas in the way of toys for the sick and poor in the little cots far away. To give old toys is easy enough, and good too; but to *make* toys—that is the child's triumph. We once heard of a little girl who had no one to talk to and nothing to play with, and who amused herself on her sick-bed by keeping a pebble in a box and rattling it for music. We are past the time when such things could happen; the children's hospitals have been opened; daughters of rich houses undertake to make year by year all the clothing for the child who occupies each cot; and the Christmas supply of toys pours in to make the little ones forget their weariness and weakness.

It will be remembered that the Emperor Frederick when he visited the Throat Hospital saw there a little girl in whom he took a tender interest because her affliction was so like his own. She was recovering after a dangerous operation to the throat, and the voice was beginning to come back again. The Emperor saw her quite happy over a doll, which she was treating with such affectionate care that he pleasantly asked her which was the patient, the doll or herself; and with childlike shyness, she admitted, after some consideration, that she really did not know. Somehow, the presence of this doll takes a great deal of the sadness out of the picture, and puts in comfort and homeliness instead.

The kind little makers of the Christmas presents prepare dolls by dozens and scores; the dolls arrive at the hospital with their hats to one side, or poked down over their staring eyes, and losing their shoes like Cinderella; but they are quickly welcomed and cuddled and put to right by some eager pair of hands; and the doll walks on the bed and makes the poor little patient as happy as if she were a veritable fairy instead of a creature of wax and bran.

But the givers are often ambitious in the toys they design, and, leaving doll-world, they enter the animal kingdom, purchase patterns for elephants, pigs, and rabbits, and make solid and strong beasts with black beady eyes and bone tusks of crochet hook—serviceable companions, that can roll off the bed on to the floor and come up again 'not one penny the worse.'

Ingenuity goes still further. The plain deal box is divided by shelves into floors, enamelled on the outside and papered inside; and there is the shell of the doll's house ready. The floors are stained and varnished: the squares of coloured cloth are tacked down as carpets: the furniture is arranged, and the miniature dolls put in their places; the tiny books are on the bookshelves, the fans and mirrors on the wall; and then the generous maker with the gift complete puts the fund of amusement out of her own hands, and off it goes to make poor children glad for many a day. Other clever young people manufacture dancing figures of card and string, or books with moving pictures—the flower that grows, and the cat that appears and disappears in and out of the chimney. Woollen reins and balls of wool are also sent in large numbers, though it is difficult to see how they can be useful except in convalescent homes. Scrap-books and Christmas cards bring up the rear in immense numbers and variety.

While one admires the goodness of heart that prompts all these presents, if one sees much of them one cannot help wishing that the young givers had always sense enough to keep in mind the state of the receivers. They are sick, and more sensitive than the healthy and strong; therefore the plaything should not be fragile, or it will lead to three minutes of play and half an hour of tears. Again, they mostly cannot run about; hence such a thing as a kite is utterly out of place, and would only suggest a helpless longing for the fields. The best plaything of all is something of the soft and strong sort, like our friend the stuffed elephant, or like the doll for the girls. It must be a toy that can go to bed—though, of course, the more elaborate ones are magnificent in the stages of recovery.

The kindness of children goes further yet, and does not stop with amusing the little patients; the girls in happy homes are learning more and more to prepare clothing for use in the hospitals. These garments ought not to be of fanciful and easily spoiled colours or of very delicate stuffs: they are meant to stand hard wear, and not to trouble the wearers by being ruined in a few days. At the same time, clothing for little children ought not to be of coarse stuff because the children happen to be poor. Nor ought it to be of bad stuff when it is supposed to be given for love. A bad gift is no kindness; and 'a coarse thing—only for a poor child' is quite a mistaken idea, as there is no dispensation by which the baby born poor is provided with a tougher skin than that of little mortals in dainty nurseries.

'Something to do!' is the perpetual demand of young folks; and there is nothing that so delights their heart as an undertaking of their own, to be completed in time with grand results. It is part of education to learn to work and to complete the work. Who that has ever come across it can forget Carlyle's earnest exhortation to *do something, to make something*; doing and making being so much more glorious a thing than any amount of feeling, dreaming, thinking, and talking. He pointed out that in a life of ease and leisure there is little value to the world, and that it is quite a new sensation, a sensation of usefulness and of triumph, when first any one can say that he has turned thought into action, and made or done some one useful thing, no matter how humble it be.

When boys and girls clamour for occupation on wet holidays or winter evenings, would it not be well for them to learn Carlyle's lesson of beginning to be active in the world, and to complete some one useful thing that shall be entirely their own doing and their own gift?

Generosity is also cultivated by this charming custom. Generosity is the perpetual fount of joy, and it is well to begin early to let children find out for themselves that when our own pleasures are scant and transient, there is always possible in this world the grand pleasure of giving joy to some sadder heart. Sometimes in sending their Christmas offerings of clothing or playthings, children write most winning letters. 'I loved making it,' they say in their straight and simple language; or, 'I took great trouble to have it look nice;' and they go on to tell their pleasure in thinking that some other child will rejoice over what they have done.

A third good thing taught by this practice is the habit of perseverance. Whatever a child begins ought to be finished. It is part of the training of the volatile mind to constancy and to the determination necessary for the greater works of life by-and-by. To make a coverlet for a cot is a long work for a child; but how delightful is the first sense of finishing long labour, and how useful it is to have learned that little by little longest labours have an end!

The last grand part of the training given in making these hospital gifts is the most valuable part of all. Whatever political economists may say or do, they can never abolish affliction, helplessness, sickness, or poverty. And while these things remain in the world, the duty of charity will still rank first. The character is hard and imperfect in which it is forgotten; and very beautiful is the mind of man or woman that has learned it from the beginning of life, and in whom it has always grown with the growth, like an instinct or a second nature.

CHINESE MEDICINE.

THE medical art in China is mysterious and empirical. The medical profession is regulated by rules almost the opposite of those which prevail in England. In China the doctor receives a fixed salary as long as his patient is in good health. If the patient falls ill, the doctor's pay is stopped until a cure is effected. In England, a sick person usually tries to assist the doctor by explaining the symptoms of his case. In China, this would be considered an insult to the doctor. The doctor may feel the patient's pulse, examine his skin, and look at his tongue; but he may ask no questions. He is then expected to diagnose the disease from which the sick man is ailing, and to prescribe a remedy. The medicine prescribed is usually very cheap and very nasty; but some drugs are highly priced; and there are certain precious stones which are believed to be of wonderful efficacy in curing diseases. One of these expensive prescriptions consists of very costly ingredients. White and red coral, rubies or jacinth, pearls, emeralds, musk, with one or two earths in special quantities, are crushed into powder, rolled into pills with gum and rose-water, and coated with gold-leaf. This unique medicine is reported to be an infallible cure for smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, and all diseases which arise from blood-poisoning and break out in cutaneous eruptions. The strengthening qualities of this preparation are said to be quite remarkable. The Jesuits, who flourished in China in the early part of the present imperial dynasty, affirm that they have seen men snatched from the last convulsions of death by its judicious use.

Another remedy is called *Kiuchiu*, or bitter wine. This seems to be a strong tonic, and is not really of Chinese origin, as it is supposed to have been brought from India. It consists of spirit, aloes, myrrh, frankincense, and saffron. These are to be mixed, and exposed to the sun for one month, until the fluid becomes clear enough to be used.

The following is a prescription for a Chinese love-potion, but it is understood to be only a

burlesque of some of their ordinary medical prescriptions: Take the pistils of a white peony which has bloomed in the spring—of a white lotus that had bloomed in the summer—of a white poppy that had bloomed in the autumn, and of a white plum-blossom that had bloomed in the winter: of each of these, twelve ounces. The pistils are to be kept over till the vernal equinox of the succeeding year, dried in the sun, mixed into powder, and dissolved in twelve mace-weight of rain, and the same amount of pure dew, hoarfrost, and snow-flakes, all of which must have fallen on a particular day. These ingredients being mixed in equal proportions, they are to be made into pills the size of a dragon's eye, and placed in an old porcelain jar, which is to be buried under the root of a flower. When the love-sick patient feels unwell, she is to dig up the jar and swallow one of the pills in a hot decoction of juniper-bark. The Chinese author has omitted to state what effect is produced by this potion on either the love-sick maiden or her lover. But he proceeds to observe that the same prescription is also good for some cases of toothache; only, he adds, as it takes some time to procure all the ingredients of the remedy, some patients have

been known to die, and others have been cured spontaneously, before they could try its effect.

Under these circumstances, it is not astonishing to learn that the medical profession is held in rather low esteem in China. It is an hereditary profession, which receives few recruits from outside, and therefore prefers to stand on its own ancient ways and traditions.

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